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**HMP BRISTOL – SUFFERING FROM POPULATION PRESSURE**

HMP Bristol had reversed its decline, but population pressure meant that it was still not performing well enough in some crucial areas, said Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the findings of an unannounced inspection of the local prison.

Inspectors found that:

- Population pressure meant that not all new arrivals were allocated to the first night centre, and therefore missed out on important first night support and procedures.
- There were weaknesses in safer custody work and a shortfall in relevant staff training
- Accommodation remained inadequate, with prisoners sharing cells meant for one, and no internal sanitation on one wing.
- While staff prisoner relationships were generally good, there was no effective personal officer scheme, and race relations work was significantly underdeveloped. Black and minority ethnic prisoners reported worse treatment than white prisoners.
- Healthcare had improved significantly.
- Purposeful activity had improved, with more education and better links with sentence planning. However, there was still too little vocational training and, at any one time, a third of prisoners were unable to engage in activity. . A role check found 45% of prisoners locked in their cells during the core day.
- Resettlement had improved, with an effective strategy and partnerships with local community groups and the prison was now performing reasonably well in this area. A planned new resettlement unit would further improve this work.

**Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons said:**

“Managers at Bristol had succeeded in reversing the decline we recorded at the last inspection in 2005. However, in spite of these efforts, the effects of continued population pressure meant that Bristol was not yet performing well enough in three crucial areas – safety, respect and activity.”

**Phil Wheatley, Director General of the National Offender Management Service, said:**

“Bristol is a busy local prison and works hard to provide a safe, decent environment. I am pleased that the Chief Inspector has acknowledged the hard work by managers and staff in raising the standards since the last inspection.

“There have been significant improvements in resettlement and healthcare provision at the prison and the Inspector’s recommendations on Race Equality and Purposeful Activity have been accepted and action is being taken to remedy these issues.”

**Notes for Editors**

1. The announced inspection of HMP Bristol was carried out from 3-6 March 2008.
2. HMP Bristol is a local prison serving the courts in Avon, Somerset and Wiltshire.
3. The Operational Capacity or the number of prisoners which can safely be held at HMP Bristol is 606. The number of prisoners held at the time of the inspection was 597.
4. The last full inspection of HMP Bristol took place from 10-14 January 2005.
5. Nigel Newcomen, the Deputy Chief Inspector of Prisons, is available for interview. If you would like to speak to him please contact Yasser Mehmood in the Press Office on 020 33 34 2804.