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**CAMPSFIELD HOUSE IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRE – COMMENDABLE
PROGRESS**

Following major disturbances in 2007 Campsfield House was now performing reasonably well in a number of areas, although more remained to be done, said Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced inspection of the immigration removal centre near Oxford.

The centre had returned to normal after some major disturbances in 2007 and there had been some improvements.

Inspectors found:

- Detainees generally reported feeling safe and there was little evidence of bullying, although procedures needed strengthening.
- Reception had improved, but still lacked an area for confidential interviews. The induction unit was understaffed and its role needed to be clarified.
- Immigration casework remained the principal cause of anxiety for detainees and legal advice was limited.
- Accommodation remained basic and some showers and toilets were inadequate.
- Staff-detainee relationships were reasonable, but staff were too stretched to interact easily with detainees and there was too little use of translation services
- The average length of stay had increased significantly, from 14 to 46 days. Despite this, the quantity and quality of education provision remained inadequate, though the centre had increased the amount of work available and there was good access to sports facilities.
- There were welfare surgeries, but the welfare officers were over-stretched. Access to phones was good, and free mobiles provided.

An additional report on an unannounced inspection of escorts carried out at Campsfield House found that all but one of the detainees reported respectful treatment by escort staff and most had felt safe on their journey.

Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons said:

“It is always very difficult for staff to recover from the trauma of serious disturbances, such as those at Campsfield House in 2007. It is, therefore, commendable that this inspection found the centre had not only returned to normal, but had made some improvements, for example funding extra paid work places and providing free mobile telephones.

“Clearly, a number of areas require further development but progress, especially given the centre’s recent history, deserves recognition.”

Notes for Editors

1. A copy of the full report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 02 December 2008 at <http://inspectors.justice.gov.uk/hmiprison>
2. The announced inspection of Campsfield House IRC was carried out from 12-16 May 2008.
3. The unannounced inspection of detainees under escort at Campsfield House IRC was carried out from 13-14 May.
4. The operational capacity at Campsfield House IRC at the time of the inspection was 216.
5. The last inspection of Campsfield House IRC took place from 30 October – 03 November 2006.
6. Campsfield House IRC was a young offender institution; the site became an immigration removal centre in 1993. At one time, it held up to 199 residents, including 36 female places. Since 1997, it has held only male detainees and capacity has increased to 216 following the introduction of bunk beds to some of the larger rooms.
The contract to manage Campsfield House on behalf of the UK Border Agency was awarded to the GEO Group UK Ltd in 2006 and it took over the day-to-day management of the facility on 29 May 2006.
7. Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, is available for interview. If you would like to speak to her please contact Andrew Winstone in the Press Office on 0203 334 3530.