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020 7210 8803

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### **HMP DRAKE HALL – NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN FOREIGN NATIONALS ROLE**

HMP Drake Hall was largely safe and well-run, but had not properly developed its role as a specialist foreign national women's prison, said Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of a full announced inspection.

Drake Hall is a 'semi-open' women's prison in Staffordshire, and one-third of its population were foreign nationals.

Inspectors found that it was a safe and relaxed prison, with low levels of self-harm, where women were able to spend plenty of time out of their rooms. Education and training were good, there was a wide range of work and training, but allocation was not systematic and some jobs were of poor quality.

Staff-prisoner relations were generally good, but it was disappointing, given the prison's population, that there had been too little focus on diversity, and no effective strategy for meeting the specific needs of foreign nationals.

There were some good resettlement services, but this work lacked an effective strategy and there were gaps in provision to address the needs of some specific groups, such as young adults and foreign nationals.

Anne Owers said:

“Drake Hall is in many ways an impressive establishment, which provides a safe and respectful environment and offers plenty of purposeful activity.

“However, it is disappointing that, as in previous inspections, we found that the prison had not adequately addressed the needs of its large foreign national population, or developed the level of expertise in this area that should be expected, given its designated specialist function. The establishment's resettlement function also needed greater clarity and better strategic management. These weaknesses should not obscure the fact that overall there was much to commend.”

Phil Wheatley, Prison Service Director General said:

“I am pleased that the Chief Inspector recognises the excellent work being done at Drake Hall to create a safe and constructive environment.

Work is continuing to develop support for foreign national prisoners, including the formation of policy and guidance to ensure these prisoners’ needs are met.”

#### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

1. A full copy of the HMCIP report into HMP Drake Hall is available from <http://inspectors.justice.gov.uk/hmiprison/>
2. HMP Drake Hall is a semi-open prison for sentenced adult and young women in Staffordshire.
3. The full announced inspection took place between 3-7 September 2007.
4. Anne Owers has limited time available for media interviews. Please call 0207 210 8803 to arrange an interview.

**ENDS**