



8 June 2009

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 00.01, 10 JUNE 2009

HMP HAVERIGG – NOT AN EFFECTIVE OR SAFE TRAINING PRISON

HMP Haverigg was not safe, nor was it an effective training prison, at the time of the inspection, said Dame Anne Owers, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an inspection into the Cumbria prison.

The prison was not performing sufficiently well against any of the Inspectorate's key tests, and was performing poorly in relation to safety. The design and supervision of the billeted accommodation, particularly one unit where even staff had to patrol in pairs, was a major obstacle to safety. So too was the availability of drugs. Though the assault rate had declined from previous extremely high levels, over 40% of prisoners had felt unsafe, and nearly two-thirds said that drugs were easily available.

Inspectors also found:

- Bullying and victimisation were rife, and the links between relevant departments needed to tackle this were weak
- Attempts had been made to tackle drug supply problems, but one in four prisoners randomly sampled either tested positive or refused to give a sample, and prisoners described the voluntary drug testing scheme as 'a joke'
- There were weaknesses in suicide prevention work, emergency call bells were not responded to quickly enough, and Listeners felt unsupported
- The absence of mental health provision during the inspection, and the lack of mental health awareness training for staff, were of serious concern

- Relationships between staff and prisoners were friendly and positive, but not proactive enough
- Most prisoners could access work or education, and had a good amount of time out of cell, but the quality of education provision was inadequate, and failings identified at previous inspections had not been addressed.
- In general there was insufficient vocational training, though there were some excellent opportunities for a few prisoners, for example in the smokers.
- Resettlement work was hampered by the distance from home of many prisoners, and there was no comprehensive strategy or offending behaviour programmes except for a drug programme.

Anne Owers said:

“At the time of the inspection, it was evident that Haverigg had come through a very troubled period, and that problems had been recognised and had begun to be tackled. Staff were, in general, committed to improving the prison and supportive of managers, and some recent improvements were evident in all four of our healthy prison areas.

“However, Haverigg was still not a safe prison and provided too little good quality training, education and resettlement opportunities for its prisoners. Some of those problems require tighter and more focused internal systems, but some – the quality and safety of accommodation, the provision of education, training and offending behaviour work - require investment from outside. If that cannot be provided, the role of Haverigg needs to be reviewed, as it cannot conceivably be an effective and safe training prison, whatever the efforts of its managers and staff.”

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

“I agree with the Chief Inspector that Haverigg has come through a difficult period and I am pleased that she has noted that the work to tackle the problems is under way and that there is some improvement in each healthy prison area. Further action has already been taken, since the inspection, to improve safety in the billet accommodation and this has resulted in more effective supervision of the units.

"A new drug Supply Reduction Strategy has recently been put into operation and a new compliance testing regime is being implemented."

Notes for Editors

1. The full report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 10 June 2009 at <http://inspectors.justice.gov.uk/hmiprisons>.
2. The announced inspection of HMP Haverigg took place from 2-9 February 2008.
3. The operational capacity at HMP Haverigg at the time of the inspection was 583.
4. The last inspection of HMP Haverigg took place from 21-23 August 2005.
5. HMP Haverigg is a category C training prison in a remote part of Cumbria, on a former RAF camp and is the only prison in Cumbria. Originally, 350 prisoners were accommodated in the RAF billets. Additional places were created through further new units and doubling of cells.
6. Anne Owers, Chief Inspector, is available for interview. If you would like to speak to her please contact Nicole Valentinuzzi in the Press Office on 0203 334 3527.