

HM PRISON LITTLEHEY - A GOOD PRISON, BUT IN NEED OF RESETTLEMENT STRATEGY

HMP Littlehey needs to develop a clear and effective resettlement strategy and ensure that more prisoners are engaged in activity that addresses their needs, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons Anne Owers said today, publishing the report of a full announced inspection.

Praising the commitment of staff and management, Anne Owers said that managers and staff at Littlehey had created a good and dynamic environment, but that the effects of prison overcrowding were hampering the development of the prison.

Anne Owers said:

“Littlehey was overall a good Category C training prison, characterised by very good staff-prisoner relationships and a dynamic management team that was driving forward the prison's core business - its work, training and education provision - and was committed to improving the quantity and quality of the work that was available.

“Some was already of a high quality but it needed to reach more prisoners and be more closely related to identified needs and sentence plans. The prison was only starting to engage with the resettlement agenda, and this was an area in need of considerable development. There was no overall strategy and the prison needed to develop both its sentence planning and public protection work.”

The report points to the need for more effective work with those prisoners who would be released directly from the establishment. Almost a third of prisoners surveyed said they would be released within six months, and of those 43% had nowhere to live and 57% had no job; in very few cases had anyone spoken to them about these problems.

Healthcare was found to have improved significantly since the last inspection, but the report found there was a clear need for more effective liaison and support from the NHS for those prisoners with acute and chronic mental health problems.

Littlehey, like the rest of the Category C estate, was also found to be suffering from the effects of prison overcrowding. It was receiving prisoners for shorter periods, further from their homes, and whose needs had not necessarily been assessed before they arrived.

Anne Owers said:

“Undoubtedly, the prison was having to deal with more demanding, and more vulnerable, prisoners than previously; and its training and resettlement work was therefore made more difficult.

“However, it had a very good basis on which to build and with continued effective management, can develop even more effective outcomes for prisoners.”

The Director General of the Prison Service, Phil Wheatley, said:

“Littlehey is an establishment that is dynamically and positively engaging with the prisoners, and I am glad that the Inspectorate recognises the excellent achievements of staff.

“The Prison Service performs a vital function by releasing prisoners who are better equipped than ever to lead law-abiding lives in the community. Effective resettlement strategies are at the core of this, and I believe Littlehey is working towards the development and delivery of a strong resettlement plan that includes offering prisoners advice in areas such as housing and employment, and the creation of positive and constructive links with outside agencies such as NACRO.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The full unannounced inspection of HM Prison Littlehey was carried out between 2-6 December 2002. The last inspection was a short unannounced inspection carried out between 6-8 December 1999.
2. Inspectorate reports and releases are available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/prisons/inspprison>.
3. For an electronic copy of the report, please email kate.williams@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk or call 020 7 273 4513