

HMIPS 017/2004 21 May 2004 020 7273 3343

Hindley provided a generally safe environment for the young people in its care, but too many of them said that they had felt victimised by other prisoners, said Anne Owers, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons publishing her report into the North West Young Offender's Institution today.

The report also highlights the contrast between the provision for young adults (18-21) and juveniles (15-18), which is reflected across the prison estate.

The inspection team found much positive work:

- Good reception and first night procedures;
- Suicide and self-harm procedures that are described as a model of good practice
- An impressive amount of purposeful activity, with full employment and extensive and good education; though more accredited training was needed, and provision was less good for young adults; and
- Some impressive resettlement work, including sentence and training planning and offending behaviour programmes; though it needed greater co-ordination and there were some gaps in provision.

However, the inspection also found that measures to detect and prevent bullying, both among juveniles and young adults, were deficient. As a consequence, significantly more young people than at the time of the last inspection said they had been victimised by other young prisoners and more felt unsafe. In addition, the Governor was rightly keeping under scrutiny the high rates of use of force; and specifically the appropriateness of Prison Service control and restraint techniques, designed for use on adults rather than young people.

The report also points out that:

- There was not enough opportunity for time in the fresh air;
- The personal officer scheme and the applications system required development;
- Race relations work needed to be strengthened;
- The quality and quantity of food and the quality of prison issue clothing were inadequate;
- There was a stark contrast between the grubby and impoverished accommodation of the young adults and that of the juveniles.

Anne Owers concluded:

"Overall, this is a largely positive inspection report, of an establishment that was seeking to maximise purposeful activity and had made a good start on resettlement. While Hindley was generally safe, managers needed to give the same attention and focus to anti-bullying work as they had to the prevention of suicide and self-harm: as both are essential parts of a safer prison environment. They were, however, aware of this deficit, as they were of many of the others that

inspectors brought to their attention; and were actively working to overcome them. However, they were still faced with the disparity in investment in young adults as compared to juveniles. Such relative deprivation on a split site is difficult to justify, not least to the young people themselves; but it is now, sadly, an all too familiar feature of the prison system."

Commenting on the report, Michael Spurr, Director of Operations for the Prison Service said:

"It is pleasing that Anne Owers has acknowledged the effective policies being implemented at Hindley, in particular in the areas of suicide and self-harm, purposeful activity and resettlement.

"The young offenders institution is currently subject to the performance testing process and will build on this good work to further improve regimes for both young adults and juveniles.

"The bullying issues she identifies are of concern, but the prison is tackling the problem robustly. A root and branch survey was conducted and a revised anti-bullying policy is now being initiated. In addition, Hindley is consulting other prisons and agencies to look closely at what works elsewhere in terms of effective interventions."

Notes to editors:

1. The announced inspection of HMP and YOI Hindley was carried out between 17 and 21 November 2003
2. HMP and YOI Hindley is a long-and-medium-term young offender institution for young adults aged between 18 and 21years and juveniles aged between 15 and 18 years on remand or on detention and training orders. There is no fixed catchment area but the majority of prisoners come from either Greater Manchester or the West Midlands, with the majority of transfers from HMP and YOI Forest Bank and HMYOI Lancaster Farms.
3. Prison Inspectorate reports and press releases are available from <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/prisons/inspprisons>.