

Hull reflects many of the pressures that face the prison system as a whole and it is a credit to staff that they had nevertheless managed to retain a largely safe and decent environment in the prison, said HM Chief Inspector of Prisons Anne Owers, publishing the prison inspection report today.

Hull had doubled in size in the previous year. Nevertheless, it was a well-run prison, with some good suicide and self-harm, anti-bullying and diversity work. It was providing good quality education, training and PE, and strengthening its resettlement work. A new regime ensured that prisoners were out of their cells for a considerable period each day.

However, the report found that the strains were showing. There were weaknesses in the important early stages of custody - reception, first night and induction. There was a lack of consistency, across the wings, in standards of cleanliness, association facilities and bedding. Although the quality of education and training was good, there was simply not enough of it for the prison's increased population: six out of ten prisoners were unoccupied at any time on each day. The new regime meant that they were not locked up all day; but it also meant that they were out on the wings with little to do. Staff needed to become more proactive and to support the work of the specialised resettlement unit.

Anne Owers said

"The task for prison managers is considerable. They need to map and provide for the needs of their different populations; to provide education and training for all prisoners, and activities for those out of cell; and to support staff, many of them relatively young and inexperienced, to engage with prisoners and with the growing resettlement work.

"Hull reflects many of the pressures that face the prison system as a whole, as it seeks to provide a positive and reintegrative environment for a transient and increased

population."

Prison Service Director General Phil Wheatley said:

"I am pleased the Chief Inspector recognises that Hull, a complex local prison, has managed to maintain a safe and decent environment for prisoners, despite doubling in size in the last year.

"Constructive and enriching activities are a high priority at Hull, however we accept that there are currently not enough activity spaces for prisoners. A new Industrial Complex in the prison is soon to become fully operational, which will create further work opportunities. Other initiatives such as the revision of the education provision will improve the balance of provision of constructive activities between the various prisoner groups at Hull."

Notes to editors:

1. The announced inspection of HMP Hull took place on 15 - 19 March 2004.
2. Hull is a local prison, receiving prisoners directly from court. Its population includes a large number of sex offenders, as well as remanded and newly sentenced young adults.
3. Prison Inspectorate reports and press releases are available from <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/justice/prisons/inspprisons>.
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