

Prisons in London are delivering the best performance in the country for staff race equality, according to new figures published by the Prison Service.

The latest regional performance results from the city's prisons, measured against Key Performance Indicators and published in the Prison Service annual report, show that every prison in London achieved its target for staff race equality, with the majority coming in well above target.

London prisons also performed well in terms of delivering educational qualifications.

However reflecting the national picture, population pressures, particularly at the city's busy local prisons, affected performance across London against targets for Mandatory Drug Tests (MDT), purposeful activity and the level of serious assaults.

HMP/YOI Holloway achieved the best results for staff race equality nationally, with 35.6pc of staff coming from a minority ethnic background. It also met all targets for education qualifications and for resettlement - the number of prisoners leaving custody with employment, a training place or an education place - and for staff sickness, although it did not meet targets for serious assaults, MDT rates or purposeful activity.

HMP Brixton also achieved targets for race equality with 24.1pc against a target of 20pc. It also came well inside its target for serious assaults, staff sickness, and for doubling - the percentage of prisoners held two to a cell designed for one. However population pressures meant that it fell short of targets for purposeful activity and for resettlement outcomes.

HMYOI Feltham reported high levels of serious assaults, in common with other establishments holding young offenders and juveniles. However, it comfortably achieved its targets for MDT rates, race equality, purposeful activity, Entry Level Basic Skills qualifications and Key Work Skills qualifications, where it achieved 63pc more qualifications than its target.

HMP Latchmere House, London's semi-open prison, delivered the best results nationwide for purposeful activity, with an average 57.6 hours per prisoner per week. It also came in well above target for

staff race equality and for some educational qualifications, although it missed targets for MDT rates and for resettlement.

HMP Pentonville achieved targets for MDT rates, doubling, delivery of offending behaviour programmes, race equality and all educational qualifications, but missed targets for serious assaults and resettlement.

HMP Wandsworth delivered staff race equality of 23.4pc, 10pc above target. Wandsworth also exceeded every education target, although it missed targets for MDT rates, doubling, purposeful activity and resettlement.

HMP Wormwood Scrubs also came in more than 10pc above target for staff race equality, and also delivered well against resettlement and education targets, with 702 Key Work Skills qualifications awarded - 251pc above target. However the establishment again suffered from population pressures that affected performance against targets for serious assaults, MDT rates and the delivery of Offending Behaviour Programmes.

Keith Munns, HM Prison Service area manager for London said:

"It is no mean achievement for London prisons to make up the top five in the country in terms of race equality among staff, and it reflects well upon the changes that have been in evidence in the Prison Service in recent years and that make us a much more diverse organisation.

"I am also pleased with our efforts in giving prisoners the opportunity to gain practical educational qualifications that will make them more valuable members of society in future. But we acknowledge concerns about the effects that population pressures have on the ability of prisons to deliver effective regimes in other respects, particularly in the city's local prisons that have a high throughput of prisoners.

"We are constantly looking at the issue of drug supply into our local prisons and have a local area drug strategy in place to address this, which builds on community partnerships. We are examining the levels of purposeful activity in each prison, and hope to do more to provide prisoners with appropriate skills to help them to obtain

employment when they return to society."

Notes to editors:

Full details are available on the HM Prison Service website - www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk.

Overall during the past year, the Prison Service met nine of its fourteen KPIs (Key Performance Indicators):

- There were 15 escapes from prisons and prison escorts compared with 17 in the previous financial year and no Category A escapes since 1995;
- There was only one escape from escort per 39,377 prisoners, compared with the target of one escape from escort per 20,000 prisoners;
- The average staff sickness rate was 13.3 days against a target of 13.5 days;
- The rate for timely delivery of prisoners to court (a new KPI) was 82% against a target of 81%;
- In the resettlement sphere, 32,592 prisoners had a job, education or training outcome within a month of release, 12% more than the target of 29,044;
- 5.5% of staff were from a minority ethnic group, exactly meeting the target of 5.5%;
- Education targets were significantly exceeded in most areas:
 - Prisoners achieved 103,583 Work Skills awards compared to the target of 52,672;
 - Prisoners achieved 43,731 Basic Skills awards compared to the target of 34,482;
 - Within this, the KPI for delivery of Basic Skills Level 2 qualifications was narrowly missed, with 13,338 completions against a target of 13,648.
- 9,169 offending behaviour programmes were completed. Within this, the target of 1,168 sex offender treatment programme completions was not achieved, but the actual figure of 1,046 is the highest ever figure for completions.

The Prison Service failed to meet five key performance targets - although it improved performance against four of those missed compared to 2002/3:

- The rate of positive mandatory drug tests was 12.3% against

the target of 10%;

- The rate of self-inflicted deaths was 135.9 per 100,000 prisoners against a target of 112.8. This represents a small improvement on the rate for 2002/3;
- The provision of purposeful activity was an average 23.2 hours per week against a target of 24 hours, although this also represents an improvement on the previous year's performance;
- The average rate of doubling, or the number of prisoners held two to a cell designed for one, was 21.7% against a target of 18%;
- The rate of serious assaults was 1.54% against a target of 1.20%.