

Responding to the follow up inspection report of 2 - 4 February 2004 by Anne Owers, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, into Lindholme Removal Centre, Home Office Minister Des Browne said:

"This is the first unannounced follow-up inspection to a removal centre and as such we welcome it and recognise the importance of independent oversight of these centres and will respond in detail in due course.

"We are already looking very carefully at the management and operation of each of the three immigration removal centres which are run by the Prison Service, including HMP Lindholme and we are looking to identify ways in which the centres might best be operated for the future, including clear lines of accountability.

"Detention is a vital part of an effective immigration system and we are working to expand the immigration detention estate with a new centre opening near Heathrow later this year.

"We take very seriously the criticism of Lindholme and IND and the Prison Service are in discussions at a senior level on how best to address them. This includes the report's finding that Lindholme IRC is locked into a Prison Service culture and will discuss with the Prison Service the need to introduce specific training for prison officers who work in the centre.

"But we have already addressed some of the issues raised in the report, such as the state of the buildings. We now have a new cleaning contract and the centre is due to be refurbished later this year.

"We are also introducing new procedures to make sure immigration officials have oversight of the use of temporary confinement and we are converting a room at Lindholme IRC to use as accommodation for "removal from association" which will be completed in October."

Notes to Editors:

1. The HMIP follow up inspection report on Lindholme Removal Centre is available at

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/irclindholme04.pdf>

2. Removal from association is when a detainee is taken out of

contact with other detainees, either because they are not behaving as required or for their own protection.