

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 HOURS ON FRIDAY 18 JANUARY 2002

CAMP HILL - SAFE AND WELL ORDERED

The report of an announced inspection of Her Majesty's Prison Camp Hill is published today by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.

The report finds that much has been done over the past year to improve the regime. Staff Associations had co-operated over significant re-profiling of shift systems; a recent headquarters audit had yielded satisfactory results and the new Governor with his managers were providing some stability after three Governors who had been in post for relatively short periods. All this had engendered a renewed sense of confidence in staff which was reflected in good staff-prisoner relationships.

Staff in reception provided a supportive and considered approach to receiving prisoners and the induction programme was well thought out. An excellent initiative was the questionnaire issued to prisoners to see how effective the programmes had been. Purposeful activity, education and health care services were also praised, and services to deal with self-harm behaviour and vulnerable prisoners were good.

Anne Owers, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons said:

"This is a good report, on a prison that now provides a safe, well-ordered regime, based on positive staff-prisoner relationships. This has allowed some commendable and innovative practices to develop, such as the regime in the unit for vulnerable prisoners and those with special needs.

"It is particularly encouraging to note that staff in this unit are continuing to develop the regime, learning from the experience of other prison establishments. Their work should be monitored and, if successful, learnt from in its turn."

However, the report also found that, in common with many prisons, resettlement work needed attention. While managers at HMP Camp Hill acknowledged this, there was little systematic checking of those who were about to be discharged to see whether issues regarding accommodation, debt, benefits and links to outside agencies had been achieved.

Ms Owers continued:

“The great majority of those in Camp Hill will be released shortly, with 47% of those we surveyed due for release within six months, and nearly half of them had no home to return to. Yet, at the time of inspection, the prison’s weakest area was its resettlement strategy.

“This is the main focus of our recommendations for change. I suggest that its component parts should be an extended personal officer scheme, better monitoring and implementation of sentence plans, and a more active and supportive throughcare strategy to deal with the housing, financial and other needs of those about to be released.

“Camp Hill is by no means alone in having underdeveloped these areas of work, which are themes that run through our recent joint thematic report with HM Chief Inspectorate of Probation ‘Through the Prison Gate.’ Without such integrated strategies, prisons will continue to have ‘revolving doors’. It is to be welcomed that Camp Hill is aware of, and trying to address, these gaps. I hope that it receives the support to do so.”

Commenting on the report, Martin Narey Director General of the Prison Service said:

“I am very pleased with this report which reflects the caring and supportive regime for prisoners that has been developed over the last few years at Camp Hill under Steve Metcalf’s leadership. It is a great credit to the Governor and his staff that key areas such as education, health care and initiatives to reduce self harm have improved and have been praised in this report.”

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The announced inspection of HMP Camp Hill was carried out from 13 to 20 July 2001. It was last inspected in full in May 1995, with a short unannounced inspection in June 1991.
2. Camp Hill is a Category C training prison holding sentenced male adult prisoners from across England and Wales. Adjacent to both HMP Parkhurst and HMP Albany on the Isle of Wight, Camp Hill was built in 1912, and extended in the 1960s. The prison is coming towards the final phase of a major building refurbishment programme.
3. HMP Camp Hill holds eight residential units; two deal with reception and induction; one is a voluntary testing unit and the centre of much of the drug strategy work; one accommodates a range of prisoners who have difficulties coping with everyday prison life but are not vulnerable prisoners. A separate segregation unit also incorporates a small Rule 45 unit with its own

independent regime. Prisoner accommodation is made up of cells and dormitories, holding between one and four prisoners.

4. 'Through the Prison Gate,' a joint HM Chief Inspectorate of Prisons and Probation report on resettlement needs across the Prison and Probation Services was published on 31 October 2001, HMIPS press release 044/2001 refers. Prison Inspectorate reports and press releases are available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmipris/hmipris.htm>