

HM PRISON RANBY – NEED FOR MORE TRAINING AND RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

A report of a full announced inspection of HM Prison Ranby was published today.

The Inspectorate found the prison to be well ordered, but falling short as a training prison and lacking a coherent resettlement strategy.

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

“The prison's recent focus had been on regaining and maintaining order and control. This had had some success. Ranby was an ordered environment when we inspected it, and had developed the foundations of good safer custody: first night, suicide and self-harm and anti-bullying policies and practices.

“However, there were some areas that were of concern which will need to be addressed if Ranby is to move on to provide a safe, decent and purposeful training environment for all its prisoners. The new Governor, five months in post at the time of the inspection, had identified and was already moving on some of these areas.”

The report identified some areas of good practice, including the effective anti-bullying system and low levels of bullying, apparently helped by the limited availability of drugs. Those at risk of self-harm were given high levels of care from staff who had genuine concerns for their welfare, though there was need for more staff training.

However, inspectors also found deficiencies in staff-prisoner relationships, opportunities for work and preparation for release.

- Prisoners on A and C wings could move around within locked spurs during the night, but night staff did not have keys, so were unable to gain access or observe them. These arrangements were dangerous and unsafe and needed urgent attention.
- Ranby was falling short as a training prison: around a quarter of prisoners were unemployed each week, and work allocation procedures were flawed. Some aspects of education and work training were good, but there were missed opportunities for training qualifications.
- The prison lacked a coherent resettlement strategy, especially for short term prisoners (74% of the prison's population); although the Governor had given priority to rectifying this. Life sentence prisoners needed more active engagement and management. There were no structured release programmes, providing community links and advice on such things as housing, employment and money matters.

- On most wings, staff did not engage fully with prisoners, and there was no formal personal officer scheme. Positive staff-prisoner relationships are important in a prison like Ranby, where prisoners are being actively prepared for release.

Concluding, Anne Owers said:

“Overall, Ranby was a prison that needed to move beyond formal systems of order and control to an environment that prioritises staff-prisoner relationships, purposeful activity and resettlement. We were pleased that the Governor had also identified these as her priorities and was determined to move Ranby closer to the healthy prison that it has the potential to be.”

The Director General of the Prison Service, Martin Narey, said:

"I welcome this particularly perceptive report, with which I agree. I am confident that, under Viv Hart's leadership, Ranby will continue to improve."

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The full announced inspection of HMP Ranby was carried out between 11 and 15 February 2002.
2. HM Prison Ranby is a Category C training prison, with prisoners of all sentence lengths, from short-term to life.
3. HM Prison Inspectorate reports and releases are available at www.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk/hmipris/hmipris
4. For an electronic copy of the report, please email eve.shuttleworth@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk