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020 3334 3547

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**HMYOI STOKE HEATH JUVENILE UNIT – GOOD WORK IN SPITE OF UPHEAVALS**

In spite of recent upheavals, the juvenile site at HMYOI Stoke Heath remained safe, respectful and purposeful, with a proper focus on work to reduce re-offending, said Dame Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of a full announced inspection of the Shropshire establishment.

HMYOI Stoke Heath holds a challenging mix of sentenced young adults and sentenced and remanded juveniles. This inspection looked only at the juvenile side, where there had been a serious disturbance a year ago, and a programme of refurbishment was under way.

Inspectors found:

- Reception was unwelcoming, and improvements were needed to first night and induction arrangements.
- Child protection was well managed, young people at risk of self-harm were well cared for and improvements had been made to anti-bullying procedures.
- Efforts had been made to manage vulnerable young people better, though some remained in the austere care and support unit. Use of force was decreasing.
- The environment was improving, but the large size of the residential units made them difficult to supervise and placed considerable demands on staff.
- Relationships between staff and young people had improved, supported by well functioning personal officer and rewards and sanctions schemes.
- Opportunities for exercise in the open air were limited. There were enough activity places. Education was generally satisfactory, but punctuality was poor and behaviour in class variable, although disruptive pupils were well managed.
- Resettlement was improving, but would benefit from a comprehensive needs analysis. Training planning and remand management were good,

as were public protection arrangements. Resettlement services were generally sound, but more use could be made of release on temporary licence.

Anne Owers said:

“The serious disturbance at Stoke Heath’s juvenile facility a year ago had inevitably affected the confidence of staff. The establishment was also undergoing a large-scale and disruptive programme of refurbishment to address fire safety issues. It was, therefore, to the considerable credit of managers and staff that, given this backcloth and the many everyday challenges thrown up by a volatile population of young people, this inspection found an essentially safe and respectful facility, with some good quality purposeful activity and a proper focus on work to reduce re-offending.”

Phil Wheatley, Director General of the National Offender Management Service, said:

“This is a positive report, which rightly recognises the good work taking place at Stoke Heath. I congratulate the Governor and staff for maintaining a safe and positive environment during a programme of repairs and refurbishment.

“The work that Stoke Heath does with the young people it holds means that the public are better protected. Constructive relations with prisoners, good purposeful activity and training all reduce the chances of re-offending.”

#### **Notes for Editors**

1. The full report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 12 May 2009 at <http://inspectors.justice.gov.uk/hmiprisons>
2. The announced inspection of the HMYOI Stoke Heath was carried out 13–17 October 2008.
3. The operational capacity at HMYOI Stoke Heath at the time of the inspection was 750.
4. The last inspection of HMYOI Stoke Heath took place from 19-23 March 2007.
5. HMYOI Stoke Heath is a young offender institution holding young adult males aged 18–21 and young people under 18 (male).
6. Anne Owers, Chief Inspector, is available for interview. If you would like to speak to her please contact Nicole Valentinuzzi in the Press Office on 0203 334 3547.