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### **HMP WAKEFIELD – SUSTAINED PROGRESS, BUT MORE TO BE DONE**

Progress at HMP Wakefield had been sustained, but more work needed to be done, said Dame Anne Owers, publishing the report of a full announced inspection into the high security prison in West Yorkshire.

The last full announced inspection in 2003 recorded an over-controlled and negative culture, but a follow-up inspection in 2005 found that the prison had begun to improve noticeably.

Inspectors found:

- Wakefield was, in general, a safe prison, but suicide and self-harm and violence reduction procedures needed to be better targeted.
- The management of the segregation unit had deteriorated - it was simply containing prisoners, sometimes for long periods, rather than actively working with them.
- Prisoners during the inspection were in general negative about their relationships with staff, though they also confirmed that some individual staff were positive and helpful. The personal officer scheme was not working well.
- A great deal of commendable and positive work was taking place in race relations and diversity, though black and minority ethnic prisoners remained more negative in relation to safety and relationships with staff.
- The quality and quantity of activity available to prisoners had improved considerably over recent years, but there were still insufficient spaces for all the population and too many spaces were unfilled.
- The most pressing problem at Wakefield was the disengagement from rehabilitative work of many prisoners, and the consequent failure to progress through sentence.
- Wakefield needed a more balanced mix of prisoners, with a proportion ready and willing to engage in programmes. It should also provide more one-to-one and counselling work, and reinforce the inadequate mental health service, in order to tackle the underlying reasons for refusal to engage.

Anne Owers said:

“Wakefield has improved considerably over the last five years and it is pleasing that in general the improvement has been sustained. There is still work to be done on aspects of safety, staff-prisoner relationships and activities, but the principal issue to be tackled is how to motivate and engage

serious sexual offenders, so that their risk is reduced and they can progress through the prison system.”

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

“I welcome this good report and am pleased that the sustained improvement at Wakefield is recognised by the Chief Inspector. The progress at Wakefield is in large part thanks to the work of Governors and staff and I thank them for their commitment and hard work.

“Reducing re-offending and protecting the public is the key aim of the Prison Service. Wakefield staff work hard with often extremely challenging prisoners to engage them in addressing their offending behaviour, and prisoners will not be considered for a move to a lower security prison before they have participated in necessary interventions to reduce their risk.”

### **Notes for Editors**

1. The full report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 29 May 2009 at <http://inspectors.justice.gov.uk/hmiprison>
2. The announced inspection of the HMP Wakefield was carried out 1–5 December 2008.
3. The operational capacity at HMP Wakefield at the time of the inspection was 752.
4. The last inspection of HMP Wakefield took place on 25-29 April 2005.
5. HMP Wakefield is a high security prison for men typically in security categories A and B. It is one of five ‘dispersal’ establishments across England and is a main lifer centre with the focus on serious sex offenders.
6. Anne Owers, Chief Inspector, is available for interview. If you would like to speak to her please contact Andrew Winstone in the Press Office on 0203 334 3530.