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**HMP WOODHILL – SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS BUT TOO FEW ACTIVITIES**

HMP Woodhill had made significant progress since the last inspection, though there were some serious deficits in activities and healthcare, said Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of a full announced inspection.

Woodhill is a local prison in Milton Keynes, which holds a small number of high risk prisoners.

Inspectors found improvements in all four key areas of safety, respect, purposeful activity and resettlement. A new management team had focused on the prison's principal role as a local prison without losing the security and control needed to safely contain its high-risk prisoners.

- Safety had improved considerably, particularly the reception and first night procedures. However, too many prisoners, including some who were extremely vulnerable, were spending their first nights in police cells. Violence reduction and suicide prevention work had also become also much more effective.
- Staff had responded positively to changes, especially on the small specialist units, though elsewhere they needed to engage with prisoners more
- Resettlement work had also greatly improved, with a strategy that covered the whole population, and some good links with partners outside the prison. As in the rest of the prison system, however, the needs of indeterminate-sentenced prisoners were not well met.

There remained some serious deficits, where the prison would require outside assistance

- There was insufficient activity. The prison had been built in the 1990s without any workshops. New workshops had been promised, but funding had instead been diverted to build new units elsewhere in the prison system to house the expanding prison population. Work and education were available for only 30% of the population. Nevertheless, prisoners were out of their cells for considerable periods, and there were some planned improvements.

- Healthcare had deteriorated since the last inspection, except for the inpatient unit. Mental healthcare was limited and ineffective, and staff were not deployed effectively. Waiting lists were unacceptably long.

Anne Owers said:

“Woodhill remains a complex prison; but this inspection found that its complexity was now being well and appropriately managed. This had resulted in improvements against all our healthy prison tests; and in some areas – safety and resettlement – these were significant.

“Healthcare and activities were the two principal remaining areas of concern. Both will require outside assistance, from the primary care trust and the National Offender Management Service, which urgently needs to make good its promise to provide workshops. But both also need close management from within the establishment, to ensure that provision is appropriately used.

“Nevertheless, overall, managers and staff are to be congratulated on the change of approach and outcome that has been achieved in a relatively short time, and on their plans to embed and carry forward these improvements.

Phil Wheatley, Prison Service Director General said:

“I am pleased to join the Chief Inspector in congratulating the staff and senior management at Woodhill on their management of a diverse group of prisoners who present unique challenges.

“I am confident that the management will continue to build on their recent success, and new provision for purposeful activity and improvements to healthcare facilities will help to continue this progress.”

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

1. A full copy of the HMCIP report into HMP Woodhill is available from <http://inspectorates.justice.gov.uk/hmiprisons/>
2. The full announced inspection took place between 3-7 September 2007.
3. Anne Owers has limited time available for media interviews. Please call 0207 210 8803 to arrange an interview.

**ENDS**