



7 November 2011

020 7035 2123

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 00.01, TUESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2011

HMYOI DEERBOLT – SOME CONCERNS

Deerbolt continued to provide reasonably good outcomes for prisoners, but some areas require significant further development, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an announced inspection of the young offender institution in County Durham.

In 2006, inspectors noted that Deerbolt provided a safe and constructive environment with improvements evident in the provision of purposeful activity. The prison suffered a serious disturbance in 2007 and since then staff have worked hard to get the prison back on track.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- Deerbolt remained fundamentally safe, with good quality care for those at risk of self-harm and an active approach to addressing bullying and violence;
- the quality and cleanliness of the residential units was impressive;
- staff-prisoner relationships were constructive;
- work to address disability issues was good and there was reasonable support for the few foreign national prisoners;
- learning and skills provision was well managed and the curriculum had been sensibly amended on the basis of local labour market need; and

- work in support of the resettlement pathways was generally adequate.

However, inspectors had some concerns:

- there was a significant level of recorded violence and a high use of force, often for minor incidents;
- the use of special accommodation, batons, removal to segregation and formal disciplinary procedures was also significant and governance arrangements needed improving in some cases;
- access to basic amenities was often too restricted, with weak arrangements for the provision of prison kit and poor access to showers;
- take-up of education places was inadequate and activity allocation arrangements required further improvements: inspectors found a quarter of the population locked in their cell during the working part of the day; and
- much sentence management work would have benefited from a clearer focus and provision to address offending behaviour was limited.

Nick Hardwick said:

“Overall, this is a reasonably good report on an establishment that has sustained good outcomes for prisoners over a number of years. The overarching assessment, however, does not diminish some quite cogent criticisms. The prison is safe but many related indicators are concerning. Prisoners are generally treated decently but access to showers and clothing arrangements need improvement. The quality of the regime was generally good, but take-up of activity places and time out of cell were inadequate. Resettlement work was adequate, but required better coordination and strategic focus.”

Michael Spurr, Chief Executive Officer of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), said:

"Deerbolt has a challenging population and I am pleased that the Chief Inspector acknowledges that the prison is fundamentally safe, with good self-harm management, constructive staff-prisoner relationships and effective vocational training, education and resettlement provision.

"The Governor and her staff will develop an action plan to address the areas of concern identified which will ensure that Deerbolt continues to provide an effective regime which protects the public and reduces the risk of reoffending."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 8 November 2011 at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/prison-and-yoi-inspections/index.htm>
2. HM Inspectorate of Prisons is an independent inspectorate, inspecting places of detention to report on conditions and treatment, and promote positive outcomes for those detained and the public.
3. This announced inspection was carried out from 20-24 June 2011.
4. HMYOI Deerbolt is a young offender institution holding convicted young male prisoners aged 18-21 drawn mainly from the north and north east.
5. Please contact Jane Parsons in HMI Prisons Press Office on 0207 035 2123 or 07880 787452 from 0915 to 1415 Monday to Friday if you would like more information or to request an interview with Nick Hardwick.