



10 October 2011

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE 00.01, WEDNESDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2011

**HASLAR IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRE –
SOME PROGRESS BUT BETTER CASEWORK NEEDED**

The environment at Haslar Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) was much improved, but progress on immigration casework was minimal, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced inspection of the secure facility near Portsmouth.

At its last inspection in 2009, staff were commended for their efforts in caring appropriately for detainees but lack of investment in the centre had left it with some of the worst accommodation in the immigration estate. This follow-up visit found a more decent and secure living environment as a result of investment in a refurbishment programme by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- detainees generally reported feeling safe, and incidents of bullying, violence and self-harm were low;
- the environment had been transformed and this had contributed to an improved atmosphere and reinforcement of already positive staff-detainee relationships;
- the education department continued to provide an excellent resource and had made further improvements;

- a dedicated welfare officer provided much-valued assistance to detainees; and
- internet and email access, to help detainees maintain affordable contact with their families and keep up to date with legal developments on their cases, was on the verge of implementation.

However, inspectors were concerned to see that:

- none of our previous recommendations on immigration casework – central to a detainee’s predicament – had been achieved by the UK Border Agency (UKBA); and in particular
- procedures to safeguard the most vulnerable detainees, those who might be children and those who might not be fit to be detained, were not robust.

Nick Hardwick said:

“This report describes some significant progress since the last inspection. In particular, there was now a much improved and more decent physical environment. However, we were concerned that there had been minimal progress on our recommendations regarding immigration casework and we expect the UKBA to address these continued failings, which impact significantly on what was otherwise an impressive centre.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 12 October 2011 at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmi-prisons/immigration-removal-centre-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 unannounced short follow-up inspection was carried out from 31 May-3 June 2011.
4. Haslar Immigration Removal Centre operates as a secure immigration removal centre housing adult men. It is run by HM Prison Service.
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.