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HMP GRENDON – DOING VALUABLE WORK

HMP Grendon was doing remarkable work with some very challenging prisoners, but some improvements are needed, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced inspection of the Buckinghamshire jail.

HMP Grendon, a prison run entirely on therapeutic principles, takes long-term prisoners with personality disorders, some of whom have previously been disruptive. Staff and elected prisoners run group therapy sessions that challenge prisoners' offending and institutional behaviour. Strong relationships, combined with therapy, are at the core of Grendon's work. At its last inspection in 2009, inspectors expressed concern about the failure to recognise Grendon's unique role, and recommended that it should form part of a national approach to managing prisoners with personality disorders. This situation has not been fully resolved, but clear progress has been made.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- despite two deaths in custody since its last inspection, most prisoners said they felt safe and there was little bullying evident;
- force was rarely used and most problems were resolved within community therapy groups;
- both the therapy, and strong staff-prisoner relationships which formed the core of Grendon's work, remained very good;

- positive efforts had been made to address diversity issues;
- time out of cell was very good; and
- resettlement work had improved, and links between offender management, security and therapy were strong.

However, inspectors were concerned to find that:

- the night sanitation system was still in operation and prisoners did not have 24-hour access to a toilet;
- the prison's approach to vocational and educational opportunities was underdeveloped and much more needed to be done; and
- the health care environment remained poor and the department was understaffed, although some health care provision had improved.

Nick Hardwick said:

"In a difficult financial climate, the resources necessary to carry out Grendon's work with prisoners with personality disorders, a hugely challenging group, are under pressure. It was positive that the local prison managers had recognised the value of Grendon's work when making decisions about baseline funding for the prison in the current year and it is important that this approach is sustained in future."

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

"This is a positive report and I am pleased the Chief Inspector has identified that Grendon is fundamentally safe, with appropriate security measures, strong staff-prisoner relationships and effective work undertaken in its therapeutic community role dealing with some challenging prisoners.

"The Governor and staff will now work to ensure that support for prisoners with disabilities, older prisoners and foreign nationals is

developed further, that healthcare is further improved, and vocational training and accreditation is brought up to a good standard.

"These measures, along with the prison's improved resettlement provision highlighted in this report, should help reduce re-offending and thereby protect the public."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 1 December 2011 at www.justice.gov.uk/inspectors/hmi-prisons
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 15-17 August 2011.
4. HMP Grendon is a category B training prison for adult males run on therapeutic community principles.
5. Please contact Jane Parsons in HMI Prisons Press Office on 0207 035 2123 or 07880 787452 if you would like more information or to request an interview with Nick Hardwick.