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020 7035 2123

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**HMP/YOI NEW HALL, RIVENDELL UNIT –
HIGHLY EFFECTIVE WORK WITH YOUNG WOMEN**

The Rivendell Unit provided a positive environment for the young women it held, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an announced inspection of the specialised juvenile unit attached to the women's jail in West Yorkshire.

The Rivendell Unit is a small unit attached to New Hall women's prison, holding a very small number of young women convicted or charged with the most serious offences. All face, or have the prospect of, very long sentences. The capacity had reduced from 26 places to nine and at the time of the inspection, just five women were held. There is obviously a question of whether a unit of this size can be sustained financially.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- work by officers and other staff was exceptionally positive, education provision was outstanding and the way the young women responded had created a much more hopeful environment than might have been expected;
- there were good procedures for caring for young women at risk of self-harm and bullying or other misbehaviour was effectively challenged;
- diversity work was excellent and properly integrated into the day-to-day life of the unit; and

- work in the classrooms was very good and young women were motivated to learn and obtain qualifications.

However, inspectors had some concerns:

- good individual work, such as risk assessments, work by the special needs co-ordinator and education assessments were not pulled together into one coherent picture;
- a disclosure of historic sexual abuse had been dealt with insensitively; and
- in a small number of cases, young women had been placed in the adult segregation unit and on one occasion forcible strip search had been inappropriately applied.

Nick Hardwick said:

“The general picture of the Rivendell Unit was of effective and sensitive work with some very needy and challenging young women. There is room for improvement but I hope the obvious strengths of the unit can be put to good use in the necessary rationalisation of facilities for this small part of the young offender population.”

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

"The Rivendell unit at New Hall holds a small number of challenging young women. I am pleased that the Chief Inspector has recognised the good work of staff in areas such as education, management of self-harm and diversity.

“The Governor and staff are working to address areas of concern around appropriate treatment of prisoners and the co-ordination of risk assessments. These actions will result in a unit which is even more effective, and ensure that the public is protected.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 25 October 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 13-17 June 2011.
4. HMP/YOI New Hall is a women's prison holding a mix of adult, young offender and juvenile prisoners. The Rivendell Unit is a small specialist unit attached to New Hall women's prison for 17-year-old young women.
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.