

**Open Report on behalf of HMP Lincoln**

Report to:	<b>Community and Public Safety Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>13 January 2016</b>
Subject:	<b>Lincoln Prison Update</b>

**Summary:**

This report provides an update for members on progress in HMP Lincoln.

**Actions Required:**

The Committee is invited to consider and comment on this report.

**1. Background:**

HMP Lincoln is a 19<sup>th</sup> century local prison holding adult males. This means it takes prisoners direct from court and also holds sentenced prisoners awaiting transfer to training prisons or who are serving short sentences. The prison receives from Lincolnshire courts and also receives overcrowding drafts from HMP Nottingham and HMP Leicester as well as court diversions from those establishments' catchment areas and elsewhere.

Its uncrowded capacity is 408 but it is significantly overcrowded. Its operational capacity is now 729.

Inspections

In August 2012, HM Inspectorate of Prisons conducted an unannounced inspection and published a critical report.

There was a follow up full inspection in November 2013. This found:

- Lincoln was now a safer place.
- The first night wing, however, remained in a poor condition.
- Overall levels of violence were now comparable with similar prisons and levels of self-harm were lower.
- The prison's approach to resettlement, reasonable at the last inspection, continued to improve, but progress had been slow.

- The prison's continuing partnership with the Lincoln Action Trust ensured an impressive case management approach to resettlement.
- The prison was much cleaner but there were still decency problems (eg access to clean clothing).
- Relationships between staff and prisoners, something we had previously identified as a strength, appeared supportive, but prisoners expressed more negative perceptions.
- Good work was being done to promote equality and diversity.
- Overall Lincoln was a much improved prison.

### Progress

Since then we have continued to make progress on a range of issues:

- We are building on the very positive relationship that staff have with prisoners by focussing on reward and recognising progress. There is a very strong evidence base for this approach as being more likely to facilitate change.
- An audit of Safer Custody processes resulted in a Green rating.
- Cleanliness and hygiene remain a constant preoccupation but comments from people who visit the establishment encourage us to think that we are making progress.
- We have done a lot to improve the First Night Centre, in particular in terms of ensuring that people have the basics. This has involved a new clothing system for the whole prison.
- There are significant areas of excellence (including the Care and Separation Unit, and the Reception department) and of innovation (Lincolnshire Action Trust's SPARC project in the magistrates' court and its FIRST Family Centre and its unique Departure Lounge.) We are also the first prison to have a Prison Voicemail service for prisoners.

There remain challenges but we believe that we are managing these appropriately. In particular:

- Managing effectively with benchmarked staffing levels was a particular problem in 2014-15 because of the additional pressure caused by vacancies. The prison is now fully staffed and staff have been working hard to deliver a good service. New staff, in particular, have risen to the task well.
- As with many other prisons, reducing violence is a preoccupation. We have benefitted from excellent support from Lincolnshire Police and the CPS to ensure that prisoners who perpetrate acts of violence are

prosecuted in all cases. But we also focus on investigating violent incidents to remove the causes. We also benefit from support from other partners, in particular the mental health services provided by Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

- Order and control issues are influenced but the use of illegal substances continue to present challenges. Our positive mandatory drug testing rate went above the target of 9.5% for the first time for over three years. We have also been troubled by new psychoactive substances. These have resulted in violent episodes and traumatic experiences for those who have taken them.
- A part security audit received a Green-Amber marking. This was in line with comparable prisons but was a slight reduction in previous performance. The actions required by the audit have all been delivered.
- The contraction out of our maintenance department took place in June this year. The transition to the new working relationship has had some challenges but overall the contract is running well.
- Our levels of staff sickness are over target but are comparable with similar prisons. Attendance management receives daily attention.
- Self-harm and the risk of suicide are also major pre-occupations. The levels of self-harm incidents in HMP Lincoln are higher than in comparable prisons. This is difficult to understand, although there is a worrying parallel with the relatively high rate of suicide in Lincolnshire. Our own analysis indicates, however, that a disproportionate number of people who self-harm come from outside Lincolnshire. Displacement and family support may therefore be factors and I am writing personally to all staff who act as case managers in respect of those at risk of self-harm and suicide. The background to this letter was a recent inquest into the suicide in HMP Lincoln of Davy Larcombe in February 2015.
- Resettlement services are now provided by Purple Futures, subcontracted to Shelter in respect of the service inside the prison, following the introduction of the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms. The new provider is delivering the contracted service, but this represents a reduction in the level of provision in respect of what happens in the prison.
- We have recently introduced a split regime – essentially providing part time working for more prisoners rather than full time. There are still adjustments to be made, in particular to make sure that more medical and other appointments take place when prisoners are not expected to be in the workshops. But the disruption caused by such a radical change has not been as extensive as feared and we hope that the issues we are dealing with will be resolved quickly.

## The Prison Development Group

Local prisons like Lincoln have been the responsibility of central government since 1876. But Lincolnshire County Council has a unique partnership relationship with HMP Lincoln under the auspices of the Prison Development Group, chaired by the Leader of the Council. This collaboration has resulted in:

- The introduction of adult safeguarding to the prison. The Governor is a member of the LSAB.
- Facilitation of assessment in adult social care needs under the Care Act 2014.
- The introduction of children safeguarding to the prison and work to make the prison compliant with section 11 of the Children Act 2004. The Governor is a member of the LSCB.

## Current performance

HMP Lincoln was in the top quartile of the national Provider Rating System in the first half of the year. It has now fallen to the bottom quartile because of an error in completing a quality assurance of a risk assessment, the positive MDT rate mentioned above and reduction in the security audit rating from Green to Green-Amber.

## Vision

The prison now has many areas of good (even excellent) practice and much innovation. And its staff should feel proud of the way they deal with challenging men with such humanity. We have also made significant progress with decency concerns.

I believe that it is likely that another – this time unannounced – inspection by HMIP will take place before the end of the financial year. We are focussing on all the issues of concern to the Inspectorate. We are also pioneering a reward regime that focusses on creating a culture in which it is more likely that prisoners' wellbeing will be enhanced and in which they can be helped to change the direction of their lives.

## **2. Conclusion**

The Committee is invited to note and comment on this report.

## **3. Consultation**

### **a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

n/a

#### 4. Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Report on a full unannounced inspection of HMP Lincoln 20–24 August 2012 by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons	<a href="http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/">http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/</a>
Report on an announced inspection of HMP Lincoln by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 11–22 November 2013	<a href="http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/">http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/</a>

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