



**HYDEBANK WOOD
WOMEN'S PRISON**

KEY FACTS

HYDEBANK WOOD WOMEN'S PRISON 2024

NOVEMBER 2024



Education and
Training Inspectorate
Empowering Improvement



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority



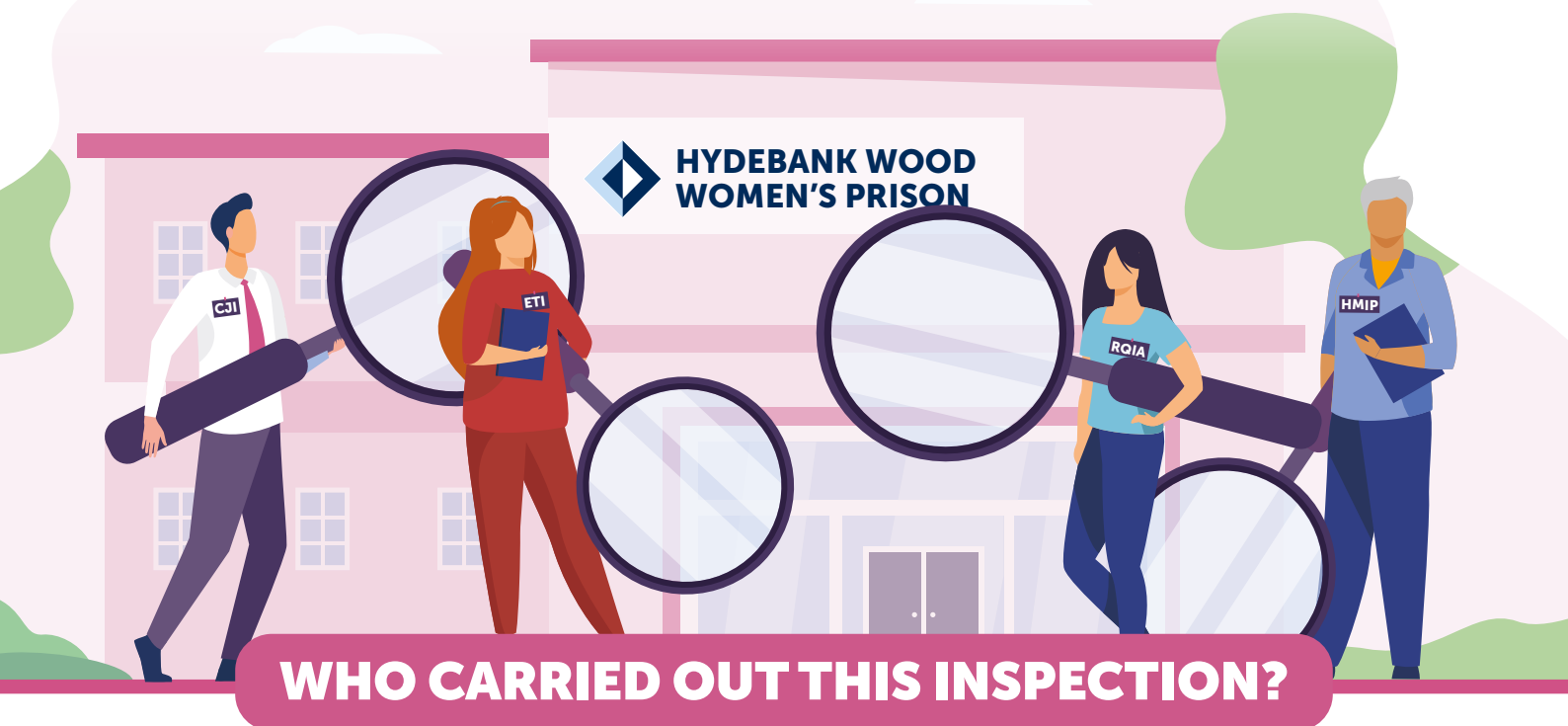
WHAT TYPE OF PRISON IS HYDEBANK WOOD?

- All women in Northern Ireland aged 18 years and over who are sent to prison are held at Hydebank Wood Women's Prison (Hydebank Wood).
- At the time of the inspection 95 women were in custody; half of them were on remand.
- A total of 65% of sentenced women were serving sentences of one year or less.
- The number of women prisoners had increased by 36% since the last inspection.





KEY FACTS



WHO CARRIED OUT THIS INSPECTION?

- This inspection involved Inspectors from Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJI), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons in England and Wales (HMI Prisons), the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI).
- CJI, HMI Prisons and the RQIA are all members of the United Kingdom National Preventive Mechanism, (UK NPM) a body of over 20 organisations that monitor the treatment of and conditions for detainees, including prisoners, to safeguard them against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

WHAT WAS THIS INSPECTION ABOUT AND WHAT DID IT LOOK AT?

- We looked at the condition of Hydebank Wood and how women in custody were treated.
- We assessed the outcomes for women there against the four healthy prison tests of Safety, Respect, Purposeful activity, and Preparation for release. There are specific expectations for women against which each test was assessed.
- We surveyed prisoners and staff in May 2024.
- Inspectors spent four days at Hydebank Wood in June 2024 speaking with Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) Governors, Prison Officers and staff as well as prisoners. We spoke to health care service providers from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) and education and skills providers from Belfast Metropolitan College (Belfast Met). We also spoke to the Independent Monitoring Board, Chaplaincy, Probation Officers, representatives of voluntary organisations service providers and a staff association.
- We assessed data and documentation provided by the NIPS, SEHSCT and Belfast Met.



SIX AREAS OF KEY CONCERN



The investigation of adult safeguarding concerns and serious complaints was not good enough.



The number of patients who could not attend outside hospital appointments was too high.



The prison didn't use information well enough to improve how it worked.



When force was used on women, it was not always clear that it was necessary and reasonable.



The links between education skills and work and other support programmes could be better.



There was no arrangement for social care for those women that needed it.

WHAT DID INSPECTORS FIND?

- Hydebanks Wood had maintained or improved its performance against the healthy prison tests since the last inspection.
- Outcomes in each of the four health prisons tests were assessed as Good.
- This is the first time this level of performance has been achieved in a Northern Ireland prison. It is to the credit of the NIPS, the SEHSCT and Belfast Met leaders and staff and their partner organisations as well as the women who live there.
- It was particularly impressive so many women were engaged in purposeful activity and that 80% of women surveyed said that there were opportunities for them to progress at the prison.
- Nine areas of notable positive practice were identified by Inspectors. These are things that Hydebanks Wood is doing well that other prisons could learn from.
- These included: the work done by the Prisoner Safety and Support Team and by the Women's Support Officer; the amount of time women could spend out of their cells was much better than in many prisons in England and Wales; and the choir and the project with the Lyric Theatre were great opportunities for women to come together and be creative.
- We identified six areas of key concern that leaders needed to address. This included work to fully address adult safeguarding concerns and the prison's response to serious complaints; access to external hospital appointments and social care; better scrutiny around the use of force; delivering improvements in how available data was used and better co-ordination of education, skills and work with other interventions.



WHAT NEXT?

We hope the NIPS, the SEHSCT and Belfast Met will seek to build on their success and continue to maintain quality services and improve the things we said needed to change.

If you would like to know anything more about us or this inspection please get in touch with:

Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland

Block 1, Knockview Buildings
Belfast BT4 3SJ



www.cjini.org



info@cjini.org



028 90 765764



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