

## HOME OFFICE RESPONSE TO HMCIP REPORTS ON IMMIGRATION REMOVAL CENTRES

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Responding to the publication of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) reports into five Immigration Removal Centres in the IND estate, (Campsfield House, Haslar, Lindholme, Oakington Reception Centre and Tinsley House), Home Office Minister Beverley Hughes > commented:

"Immigration removal centres are a key part of our radical asylum reforms to put in place an effective end to end process. They are essential to ensure effective immigration control and speedy removal of those who have no right to be here.

"We are committed to ensuring that detainees are treated with respect and decency, and have put in place the process for an independent inspection of immigration removal centres to ensure a transparent inspection regime to ensure this. These reports are the first of their kind and we welcome them.

"The Inspectorate have made a number of detailed recommendations to which we will give careful consideration. However, a large proportion of the findings reflect only the comments of the detainees themselves. As people are generally unhappy about being detained and removed from the country, it is unsurprising that they express dissatisfaction with their situation.

"The reports also recommend that children should not be detained for more than seven days. I am deeply sympathetic to the concerns about the detention of children, which whilst regrettable, is at times essential. However, no one, including families, is detained for longer than necessary.

"It is completely impractical to suggest a time limit - which would enable people to evade removal by lodging last minute and time-wasting appeals.

"The inspections were conducted shortly after Haslar and Lindholme were redesignated and since then there has been a gradual process of improvement. However, we will look carefully at the recommendations to ensure they are fully complying with the standards set elsewhere."

### Note for Editors

1. Power for Her Majesty's Chief Inspectorate of Prisons to inspect immigration removal centres is in section 152(5) of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
2. HMCIP were invited to inspect Tinsley House Immigration Removal Centre in August 1997. This is the only previous inspection by HMCIP of immigration establishments.
3. These five inspections were carried out during February and March 2002.