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HMP & YOI PARC – MANY STRENGTHS, BUT MANY CHALLENGES

HMP & YOI Parc had commendable strengths but needed to better prepared to meet some of the challenges of its new role, said Nick Hardwick, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an unannounced inspection of the Welsh prison.

At the time of the inspection, the prison housed adult male convicted prisoners, remanded adult sex offenders, convicted and remanded young offenders and a juvenile unit, on which we report separately. Parc is by far the largest prison in Wales and will soon have a population of 1,600. The prison was in transition, with new accommodation coming on stream and plans to move away from a remand function towards a fuller focus on training.

Inspectors were pleased to find that:

- most prisoners reported feeling safe, there were reasonable violence reduction arrangements and there was good support for those at risk of suicide;
- substance misuse was relatively low, with sound clinical support to problematic users;
- staff-prisoner relationships were reasonable, race relations were well managed and the chaplaincy provided a good service;

- the quality of learning and skills was good and needed to be built upon; and
- offender management arrangements were good and well integrated with the rest of the prison, with a reasonable range of resettlement provision and exceptional support for family issues.

However, inspectors had some concerns:

- healthcare provision was poor and some aspects were in chaos, but G4S were about to bring the service in-house, having cancelled the contract with the existing provider;
- there was not enough purposeful activity and too many prisoners spent too long locked up, which was of concern given the planned increase in numbers and the prison's aspiration to move towards a greater training function;
- the monitoring of use of force and adjudications needed improvement;
- further work was needed to address the needs of disabled and foreign national prisoners; and
- the strategic management of resettlement had yet to address the changes to the population and ensure that provision was sufficient to meet the range of risks and needs.

Nick Hardwick said:

“The challenges of scale and complexity that face Parc are immense, but it is commendable that this unannounced inspection found that the prison had many strengths on which to build. However, we also identify a number of weaknesses and a lack of preparedness for aspects of its new role which will need to be addressed if Parc is to meet the huge expectations being placed upon it.”

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

"This is a good report on a prison that has successfully managed a significant building programme to increase capacity by 330 places.

"I am pleased that Parc's good staff-prisoner relationships, low substance misuse, resettlement provision, and the quality of education and work received praise. Positive relationships with staff and effective resettlement reduce the likelihood of re-offending and help to protect the public."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. A copy of the report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 9 March 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 full unannounced inspection was carried out from 15-24 September 2010.
4. HMP & YOI Parc is a category B local prison for convicted male adult prisoners, convicted and remand sex offenders, convicted and remand young offenders and young people. It is privately run by G4S Care & Justice Services Ltd.
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.