

Prisons in the South West are delivering encouraging results in the face of population pressure, according to new figures published by the Prison Service.

The latest regional performance results from the region's public sector prisons, measured against Key Performance Indicators and published in the Prison Service annual report, show that they consistently achieved targets in several areas including education and staff race equality.

There was also much improved performance against staff sickness targets, particularly at HMPs Dorchester, Erlestoke and Leyhill, whilst HMP Exeter did not achieve its target but had impressive success in driving the rate down.

However, population pressures affected performance in some areas, including the rate of positive mandatory drug tests (MDT). Additionally there were four escapes from prisons in the South West in 2003/4.

HMP The Verne achieved a range of its performance targets including purposeful activity, the delivery of Offending Behaviour Programmes (OBPs), staff race equality, resettlement, and all educational qualifications. The Verne was acknowledged by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for its positive ethos and deservedly moved upwards from level 3 to 4 (the highest level) in the last Prison Service performance ratings.

HMP Dartmoor successfully completed a Performance Test which resulted in the establishment being awarded a Service Level Agreement to operate the prison in the public sector. There were significant and consistent improvements at Dartmoor in relation to performance, regime provision and decency. Progress at Dartmoor has been acknowledged by the Resettlement Team being awarded the 'Public Servants, Team of the Year' award, whilst Officer Steve Allum was recognised as 'Prison Officer of the Year'.

HMP Guys Marsh was nominated for the Performance Improvement Planning (PIP) process. Consequently it has made significant improvements in MDT rates, purposeful activity and staff sickness, and also achieved targets for race equality,

educational qualifications and resettlement outcomes - the number of prisoners leaving custody with either employment, a training place or an education place.

HMP Bristol has undergone several changes recently, including a re-role from a Core Local holding category A prisoners to a Local prison, and three changes of Governor. Consequently performance has not been consistent, but Bristol nevertheless achieved targets for serious assaults, doubling of cells, purposeful activity, race equality and some Basic Skills qualifications, whilst the Butler Trust awarded the 'Lord Woolf Award' to Senior Officer Steve Robertson for his work in developing a Prolific Offender Unit.

HMP Shepton Mallet underwent the PIP process and consequently made considerable and consistent improvements in relation to the resettlement and provision for life sentenced prisoners. It achieved all its educational targets, in addition to targets for serious assaults, MDT rates, doubling of cells and staff race equality.

Jerry Petherick, HM Prison Service area manager for the South West, said:

"The last year presented many challenges for the South West area primarily brought about by the Benchmarking Process. Our performance on Security was unsatisfactory, but we have worked hard to redress this and recent successes with Security Audits will not make us complacent.

"I am generally encouraged by performance across the Area. We have one prison at Level 4 - the highest performance level, 12 at level 3 and one at level 2. I am delighted with the increase in provision of Drug Treatment Programmes and the overall improvements and focus in relation to decency and resettlement."

Notes to editors

Full details are available on the [HM Prison Service website](#)

Overall during the past year, the Prison Service met nine of its

fourteen KPIs (Key Performance Indicators):

- There were 15 escapes from prisons and prison escorts compared with 17 in the previous financial year and no Category A escapes since 1995
- There was only one escape from escort per 39,377 prisoners, compared with the target of one escape from escort per 20,000 prisoners
- The average staff sickness rate was 13.3 days against a target of 13.5 days
- The rate for timely delivery of prisoners to court (a new KPI) was 82% against a target of 81%
- In the resettlement sphere, 32,592 prisoners had a job, education or training outcome within a month of release, 12% more than the target of 29,044
- 5.5% of staff were from a minority ethnic group, exactly meeting the target of 5.5%
 - Education targets were significantly exceeded in most areas:
 - Prisoners achieved 103,583 Work Skills awards compared to the target of 52,672
 - Prisoners achieved 43,731 Basic Skills awards compared to the target of 34,482
- Within this, the KPI for delivery of Basic Skills Level 2 qualifications was narrowly missed, with 13,338 completions against a target of 13,648
- 9,169 offending behaviour programmes were completed. Within this, the target of 1,168 sex offender treatment programme completions was not achieved, but the actual figure of 1,046 is the highest ever figure for completions.

The Prison Service failed to meet five key performance targets - although it improved performance against four of those missed compared to 2002/3:

- The rate of positive mandatory drug tests was 12.3% against the target of 10%
- The rate of self-inflicted deaths was 135.9 per 100,000 prisoners against a target of 112.8. This represents a small improvement on the rate for 2002/3
- The provision of purposeful activity was an average 23.2

hours per week against a target of 24 hours, although this also represents an improvement on the previous year's performance

- The average rate of doubling, or the number of prisoners held two to a cell designed for one, was 21.7% against a target of 18%.
- The rate of serious assaults was 1.54% against a target of 1.20%

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