

## **RESPONSE TO HMCIP INSPECTION REPORT ON YARL'S WOOD**

Responding to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons (HMCIP) inspection report on the announced inspection of Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre, Home Office Minister Tony McNulty, said:

"I am pleased that Anne Owers has acknowledged the work done by staff to build on lessons learned at Yarl's Wood, and what they have achieved since the centre reopened six months ago. I also welcome the view of the independent voluntary Befriending Group that there has been significant improvement at Yarl's Wood.

"Since the inspection at the beginning of March, a number of further steps have been taken which do go some way to addressing a number of HMCIP's specific concerns, including improvements to educational provision at the centre, and plans for a dedicated social worker who will be responsible for welfare assessments as well as providing a vital link between the centre and the local authority.

"I am also pleased that the Chief Inspector has acknowledged the work that has been done to make the centre a child friendly place. We recognise that detention of families with children is an emotive issue and it is not something we do lightly. Detention is used sparingly and for the shortest period necessary. However, the power to detain is an essential part of protecting the integrity of and public confidence in our immigration controls.

"I look forward to responding to the Chief Inspector's recommendations in detail once I have had the opportunity to consider her report in full."

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The announced inspection of Yarl's Wood IRC took place between 28 February - 4 March 2005 .