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**HMYOI LANCASTER FARMS – NOT PERFORMING SUFFICIENTLY WELL**

HMYOI Lancaster Farms was not performing sufficiently well against any of the Inspectorate's four tests and was unlikely to improve the life chances of the young men it held, said Dame Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing the report of an announced inspection of the young adults' prison in Lancashire.

At the time of the inspection, Lancaster Farms held both young adults (18-21) and children and young people (15-18) but was about to lose the latter population and to become a dedicated young adults' site. The inspection, therefore, looked only at the young adult population. Many of them stayed for very short periods after sentence, which made the prison's task more difficult

Inspectors found:

- Relationships between residential staff and young prisoners were distant and distrustful. Most staff appeared wary of any active engagement with young people and were too often observed to be dismissive when approached by them. The personal officer scheme had improved, but required further work. Young men were locked up for most of the time they were on the residential wings, even though the wings were modern, open and easy to supervise.
- The number of violent incidents was high, but personal officers were not actively engaged in the anti-bullying strategy, or in the support of young prisoners in crisis. By contrast, use of force was high, and its governance poor.
- There were elements of institutional disrespect: young men could change their clothes only once a week, and had very poor access to showers. During visits, they had to wear grubby red boiler suits. The condition of some cells was poor.
- Time out of cell was unacceptably low for a young offender institution, with association happening only twice on weekdays. Inspectors found nearly half the young men locked in their cells during the core day. Though the education curriculum had broadened, achievements were only satisfactory and there was insufficient vocational training.

- There were good structures for offender management, but no custody planning for the large number of remanded prisoners, and insufficient support for those serving indeterminate sentences. There was some effective offending behaviour and drugs work, but nothing to assist the 40% of young prisoners who admitted to having an alcohol problem when they came into the prison. Good work was done by the family links worker, but visiting arrangements were poor.

**Anne Owers said:**

“At the time of the inspection, Lancaster Farms was not providing a sufficiently purposeful, safe and decent environment for the young adults within it.

“The imminent removal of the under-18 population should allow Lancaster Farms to acquire a longer-staying young adult population, provide more vocational training and focus on this task. This will, however, require some fundamental changes in the way the establishment is run, and the active engagement of all staff and managers.”

**Michael Spurr, Chief Operating Officer for the National Offender Management Service, said:**

“The Governor and staff at Lancaster Farms are working to address the concerns raised and recommendations made in the report.

“The change of function at Lancaster Farms will introduce a new regime from April 2009 which will see a longer working day for prisoners and increased association. The population turnover is expected to reduce significantly, allowing for more constructive relationships between staff and prisoners. These changes will encourage involvement in work and training reducing the likelihood that prisoners will re-offend on release.”

**Notes for Editors**

1. A copy of the full report can be found on the HM Inspectorate of Prisons website from 27 February 2009 at <http://inspectors.justice.gov.uk/hmiprison>
2. The announced inspection of HMYOI Lancaster Farms was carried out from 8-12 September 2008. The last full inspection of HMYOI Lancaster Farms took place from 2-6 October 2006.
3. The operational capacity at HMYOI Lancaster Farms is 517.
4. Lancaster Farms opened in March 1993 as a remand centre and young offender institution, accommodating only young adults between 18 and 21. Originally consisting of three residential units, a fourth was added in April 2000 specifically to hold juvenile prisoners. Two years later, one of the original units was re-roled to also accommodate juveniles.
5. Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, is available for interview. If you would like to speak to her please contact the Press Office on 0203 334 3530.