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USK AND PRESKOED: GOOD PRISONS BUT SOME DIPS IN PERFORMANCE

HMP Usk and HMP/YOI Prescoed remained good prisons but performance had dipped, said Anne Owers, Chief Inspector of Prisons, publishing a follow-up inspection of the two jointly managed Welsh prisons.

The two prisons have different remits. Usk is a closed prison for sex offenders, providing programmes to reduce their risk of reoffending. Prescoed is an open prison, helping suitably assessed prisoners to resettle in the community. Both prisons have been assessed as high-performing by both the Inspectorate and the Prison Service, but this inspection identified dips in performance in safety and resettlement work, particularly at Usk.

Inspectors found:

- Though both prisons were fundamentally safe, processes to ensure safety were under-managed and staff were not sufficiently trained.
- Resettlement work at Prescoed was carried out reasonably well, but at Usk there was little clarity about the resettlement needs of the population, and its impressive offending behaviour work had been interrupted by a lack of psychologists.
- Both prisons continued to perform well on activity, with impressive education and vocational training opportunities.
- Though there was some poor accommodation at Usk, the prisons were clean, staff-prisoner relationships were relaxed and race equality work was good.

Anne Owers said:

“Overall, Usk and Prescoed remained good prisons, focusing on their different and important roles. However, this inspection revealed a degree of complacency and some drift, which needs swiftly to be remedied if the prisons are to regain and retain their high-performing status.”

Phil Wheatley, Director General of the National Offender Management Service, said:

“I agree that Usk and Prescoed remain good prisons, both focussed on different but very important tasks. The underpinning quality of staff/prisoner relationships is also very good and the Chief Inspector confirms this. The report will act as a spur to the Governor and staff to continue to build on a high quality performance. Already the clustering of forensic psychological resources across two Welsh prisons and an additional lead role for resettlement at Usk are bringing improvements to performance.”

Note to Editors:

1. A full copy of the HMCIP report into HMP Usk and HMP/YOI Prescoed is available from <http://inspectorates.justice.gov.uk/hmiprisons/>
2. The unannounced short follow-up inspection took place between 3–5 March 2008.
3. Anne Owers is available for media interviews. Please call 0203 334 3525 to arrange an interview.