National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Presentation 21 April 2016

I attended a NOMS presentation held in the Ramada hotel on the 21st Apr. The presentation was given by Russ Trent who is presently heading the N Wales Prison Project but is also the Director and Governor designate of the new prison (Berwyn Prison). Russ Trent was born in Dorset and joined the prison service in 1998. He spoke about the importance of prisons in the community and explained that he is a reformer using kindness and respect to help achieve his aims. He was previously an officer in the Royal Marines and saw service in Bosnia and Serra Leone.

The new prison will house 2106 prisoners when full in 3 houses of 700. It is scheduled to be fully open on 17th Feb 2017. It is a Cat C prison which is the least secure closed classification where the inmates are unlikely to try to escape. Prisoners will be employed; 706 to industrial places, 754 other work, 544 in education and 102 in behavioural programmes. Each room will be equipped with a landline telephone and wifi, he explained that the telephones are to allow for prisoners to maintain contact with their families and to retain some sense of normality. Mobile phones are not only banned from the site but will not work within the prison area.

His vision for the prison is one of a rehabilitative prison giving prisoners a fresh start in a safe and decent environment. He wants the prison to be a key place in the community and has stressed the importance of the welsh language within the prison. Whilst all the prisoners will be treated as individuals and the importance of rehabilitation is high he will not lose sight of the risk either. Normalisation is everything and they will not be using the words prisoner or offender.

The values within Berwyn Prison will be to; value each other, act with integrity and truth, look to the future with ambition, uphold fairness and justice, embrace the welsh language and culture and finally, stick at it.

Q&A:

All medical and dental needs apart from dire emergency will be met internally. Try to get all welsh prisoners into it. Concerns about transport infrastructure for visitors - being looked at.

Further reading at: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-offender-management-service/about