



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2017/0026, 24 January 2017

# Prisons

## Opposition Day Debate 25 January 2017

An Opposition Day debate (19<sup>th</sup> allotted day) on the subject of prisons has been scheduled for Wednesday 25 January 2017.

The motion for the debate was not published at the time of writing.

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

Pat Strickland and  
Sarah Pepin  
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# 1. Background

In recent months there have been reports of serious disturbances in a number of prisons across England and Wales. In October 2016, a national response unit was brought into control prisoners in a wing at HMP Lewes, East Sussex.<sup>1</sup> In November 2016, there were reports of a riot involving 230 prisoners at HMP Bedford<sup>2</sup> and disturbances involving 40 prisoners at HMP Moorland in Yorkshire.<sup>3</sup> In December 2016, 240 prisoners had to be moved after a twelve hour riot at HMP Birmingham<sup>4</sup> and inmates reportedly took over part of Swaleside Prison on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent.<sup>5</sup>

Background on some of the underlying issues is provided in Library Briefing Paper 7467, [Safety in Prisons in England and Wales](#), 30 November 2016.

## 1.1 What is the Government doing about the problems?

On 3 November 2016, the Government published its long awaited white paper on prison reform.<sup>6</sup> In her statement announcing publication, the Justice Secretary Liz Truss was clear about rising levels of violence and self-harm in prisons:<sup>7</sup>

The prison system in England and Wales is under serious and sustained pressure. Rates of violence and self-harm have increased significantly over the past five years. In the 12 months to June 2016, there were nearly 6,000 assaults on staff and 105 self-inflicted deaths. Prison staff are responding to constantly evolving security threats, such as psychoactive drugs, mobile devices and drones. Too many prisoners are missing out on the chance to reform and too many are going on to reoffend when they leave prison. We owe it to our hard-working prison staff to reverse these trends. We owe it to prisoners and their families, and we owe it to our communities and victims of crime.

The white paper itself acknowledges recent declines in prison safety:<sup>8</sup>

170. Prison safety has declined since 2012. Levels of total assaults across the prison estate and assaults on staff are the highest on record, and are continuing to rise. Comparing the 12 months to June 2016 with the calendar year 2012:

- total assaults in prisons increased by 64%;
- assaults on staff rose by 99%; and

<sup>1</sup> ["Specialist officers called to Lewes prison to control six-hour riot at notorious jail once described as 'worse than Syria'"](#), *Independent*, 29 October 2016

<sup>2</sup> ["HMP Bedford riot: Officers brought in to control 230 inmates"](#), *BBC News*, 7 November 2016

<sup>3</sup> ["HMP Moorland: Cells damaged during prison disorder"](#), *BBC News*, 21 November 2016

<sup>4</sup> ["HMP Birmingham riot: 240 prisoners being moved after riot"](#), *BBC News*, 17 December 2016

<sup>5</sup> ["Swaleside Prison: Inmates take over part of jail"](#), *BBC News*, 23 December 2016

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Justice, [Prison Safety and Reform](#), Cm 9350, November 2016

<sup>7</sup> [HC Deb 3 November 2016 c1067](#)

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Justice, [Prison Safety and Reform](#), Cm 9350, November 2016, p40

- the number of self-harm incidents increased by 57%. 171. In the 12 months to September 2016, there were 107 self-inflicted deaths in custody, a 75% increase on the 61 self-inflicted deaths during 2012

The paper identifies a number of “personal and situational factors” behind this, including long term shifts in the nature of the prison population and the use of psychoactive substances. It proposes a raft of reforms, including greater autonomy and accountability for prison governors, enshrining in law what prisons should be delivering, and a clearer framework for the Secretary of State to intervene when prisons are judged to be failing.

The paper devotes a chapter to the issue of prison safety, with proposals to:

- Improve the way prisoners are managed, with dedicated prison officers to oversee their progress
- Legislate to simplify the framework for testing for psychoactive substances, in order to be more responsive as new substances emerge;
- Tackle security threats such as drugs, phones and drones
- Develop a more robust response to criminality in prison, through joint working with the police, the CPS and other partners.

In a statement on the disturbances in Birmingham, Liz Truss outlined steps the Government is taking to deal with the situation:<sup>9</sup>

As we manage the difficult current situation, we are implementing our reform programme, which will reduce violence and cut the £15 billion cost of reoffending, as laid out in the White Paper. In September, we rolled out tests for dangerous psychoactive drugs in prison; we are the first country to do so. We are rolling out new technology, starting with three prisons, to prevent mobile phone use. We are recruiting for a new £3 million national intelligence unit to crack down on gang crime. We are increasing staffing levels by 2,500 officers, and we are taking steps to train and retain our valued staff, including a new apprenticeship programme, a graduate entry scheme, fast-track promotions and retention payments. We are putting an extra £100 million into that. We are modernising our estate, with a £1.3 billion investment programme, and we are empowering governors to manage their regimes locally to get people off drugs, get them the skills they need and get them into work. Importantly, for the first time ever, we will make it clear in the prison and courts Bill next year that the purpose of prisons is not just to house prisoners, but to reform them. Together, these reforms are the right way to address issues in prisons so that they become purposeful places, where offenders get off drugs and get the education and skills they need to find work and turn their backs on crime for good.

The issues in our prisons are long-standing ones, and they are not going to be completely solved in weeks or even months. We are working to ensure that our prisons are stable while we deliver our reforms. Of course, this is a major task, but I am committed to it and so is the Prison Service, as I know are governors and prison officers as well. The next few months will be difficult, but I am

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<sup>9</sup> [HC Deb 15 November 2016 cc123-4](#)

confident that we can turn this situation around. We can turn our prisons into places of safety and reform, and this is my absolute priority as Secretary of State.

A *Prisons and Court Reform Bill* is expected early in 2017.<sup>10</sup> The Justice Committee is conducting a [Prison Reform Inquiry](#).

## 1.2 Prison statistics (Grahame Allen x2457)

### Prison staffing

#### England and Wales

The quarterly National Offender Management Service (NOMS) workforce statistics bulletin monitors changes to staffing figures and the structure of NOMS staff population over time and covers all civil service employees (public sector prisons etc.) of prison and probation services across NOMS in England and Wales and are available on the Gov.uk website: [National Offender Management Service workforce statistics](#)

The latest figures (to September 2016) can be found on the MoJ statistics section of Gov.uk [National Offender Management Service workforce statistics: September 2016](#). Prison officers mostly work at band 3 and band 4 dependant on whether they have a particular specialism. The latest release shows that the number of NOMS staff at band 3-4, including specialists, at 30 September 2016 was 14,607 FTE.

#### Scotland

The average number of staff directly employed by the Scottish Prison Service in 2015/16 was 4,464 (Source: Scottish Prison Service, [2015/16 Annual Report](#)).

### Prison Safety

#### England and Wales

The MoJ publishes a quarterly report of [Safety in custody statistics](#) which cover deaths, self-harm and assaults in prison custody by establishment. The most recent update - [Safety in custody quarterly update to June 2016](#) - was published on 27 October 2016.

#### Scotland

Statistics on prisoner on staff and prisoner assaults can be found in the Scottish Prison Service's [2015/16 Annual Report](#). The Scottish Prison Service record all deaths in custody in calendar years and publish information for the preceding ten years: [Prisoner Deaths](#). Evidence of prisoner safety can also be found in the Scottish Prison Service's (SPS) biennial survey of prisoners: [SPS Prisoner Survey 2015](#).

### Prison costs

#### England and Wales

The costs per place and costs per prisoner by individual prison (including by establishment) are published as a Management Information Addendum to the National Offender Management Service Annual

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Justice, [Written Evidence to the Justice Committee](#), 18 January 2017

Report and Accounts on the Gov.uk website: [Prison and probation trusts performance statistics](#)

The latest figures (for 2015/16 and restated data for 2014/15) can be found on the MoJ statistics section of Gov.uk: [Costs per prison place and cost per prisoner 2015 to 2016 summary](#)

## **Prison population**

Historic prison population statistics in the UK can be found in the HC Library Briefing Paper: [Prison Population Statistics](#) (Published 05 July 2016). The paper explores prison population data in the UK from the Ministry of Justice, Scottish Government, and the Northern Ireland Department of Justice. Each country receives individual analysis utilising the available data. International comparisons are also made.

### **England and Wales**

The latest weekly population update is available on the MoJ website: [Population bulletin: weekly 20 January 2017](#) (reproduced below):

### Population and Capacity Briefing for Friday 20th January 2017

	Total
<b>Population</b>	<b>85,048</b>
<i>Male population</i>	<i>81,102</i>
<i>Female population</i>	<i>3,946</i>
<b>Useable Operational Capacity</b>	<b>86,516</b>

Prisons	NOMS Operated IRCs
<b>84,170</b>	<b>878</b>
<i>80,224</i>	<i>878</i>
<i>3,946</i>	<i>0</i>
<b>85,544</b>	<b>972</b>

<b>Home Detention Curfew caseload</b>	<b>2,126</b>
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#### Definitions:

1 - The Operational Capacity of a Prison / Immigration Removal Centre (IRC) is the total number of prisoners that an establishment can hold taking into account control, security and the proper operation of the planned regime. It is determined by Deputy Directors of Custody on the basis of operational judgement and experience.

2 - Useable Operational Capacity of the estate is the sum of all establishments' operational capacity less 2,000 places. This is known as the operating margin and reflects the constraints imposed by the need to provide separate accommodation for different classes of prisoner i.e. by sex, age, security category, conviction status, single cell risk assessment and also due to geographical distribution.

### Population and Capacity on previous Fridays

	Last week
<b>Population</b>	<b>84,874</b>
<i>Male population</i>	<i>80,979</i>
<i>Female population</i>	<i>3,895</i>
<b>Useable Operational Capacity</b>	<b>86,474</b>

12 months ago
<b>85,260</b>
<i>81,443</i>
<i>3,817</i>
<b>87,888</b>

<b>Home Detention Curfew caseload</b>	<b>2,117</b>
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<b>Data not available</b>
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Monthly and annual population figures are also available on the MoJ website: [Prison population statistics](#)

[Offender management statistics quarterly](#) provides statistics relating to offenders who are in prison or under Probation Service supervision. It covers flows into these services (receptions into prison or probation starts) and flows out (discharges from prison or probation terminations) as well as the caseload of both services at specific points in time. The latest figures (to end of June 2016) can be found on the MoJ statistics section of Gov.uk: [Offender management statistics quarterly: April to June 2016](#).

#### Scotland

The latest prison population statistics for Scotland are published weekly on the [Scottish Prison Service website](#) (reproduced below):

## SPS Prison Population

Scottish prisoner population as at Friday 20th January 2017

Category	Figures
Untried Male Adults	845
Untried Female Adults	46
Untried Male Young Offenders	97
Untried Female Young Offenders	5
Sentenced Male Adults	5431
Sentenced Female Adults	250
Sentenced Male Young Offenders	242
Sentence Female Young Offenders	6
Recalled Life Prisoners	93
Convicted Prisoners Awaiting Sentencing	296
Prisoners Awaiting Deportation	2
Under 16's	0
Civil Prisoners	0
<b>All Scotland Total in Custody</b>	<b>7313</b>
Home Detention Curfew (HDC)	275
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>7588</b>

### Northern Ireland

The latest prison population figures for Northern Ireland was [published by the Department of Justice \(DOJ\) \(Statistical Bulletin 24/2016\)](#) on 30 September 2016 and shows that the average daily prison population during 2015 was 1,661.



## 2. Media

### 2.1 Articles and blogs

Hull Daily Mail

[Hull Prison is severely overcrowded, new figures reveal](#)

20 January 2017

Daily Gazette

[Prison officers and prisoners at risk as Chelmsford Prison struggles to cope](#)

19 January 2017

BBC online

[HMP Birmingham riot: inmates built bonfires and 'baited' injured prisoner](#)

12 January 2017

Guardian

[Prison riot ends after 60 inmates take over wing of HMP Swaleside](#)

Matthew Weaver 23 December 2016

Belfast Telegraph

['Unworkable' balance between prison population and staff numbers](#)

18 December 2016

Telegraph

['Tornado' riot police sent in to Doncaster facility as inmate injured in latest disturbance to hit prisons](#)

21 November 2016

[www.russellwebster.com](http://www.russellwebster.com)

[What does prison governor autonomy mean?](#)

Russell Webster 8 November 2016

Guardian

[Bedford jail prisoners riot over lockdowns 'caused by staff shortages'](#)

7 November 2016

[www.russellwebster.com](http://www.russellwebster.com)

[How the MoJ plans to improve prison safety](#)

Russell Webster 5 November 2016

Guardian

[Prisons in England and Wales to get 2,500 extra staff to tackle violence](#)

Alan Travis 3 November 2016

Telegraph

[Cuts to prison officers to be reversed amid mounting concern over rising levels of re-offending](#)

Laura Hughes 3 November 2016

Leap Confronting Conflict

[Prison violence has its roots in more than just low staff numbers](#)

Thomas Lawson 3 November 2016

Independent

[Specialist officers called to Lewes prison to control six-hour riot at notorious jail once described as 'worse than Syria'](#)

Katie Forster 29 October 2016

Restorative Justice Council

[How can we create safer prisons?](#)

Jon Collins 5 October 2016

Scottish Government: Justice and Safety blog

[New structure for prison monitoring in Scotland](#)

David Strang 1 September 2015

## 2.2 Press releases

HM Inspectorate of Prisons

[The National Preventive Mechanism reveals for the first time how many people are detained in the UK](#)

13 January 2017

POA

[POA members reject Prison Reform Agreement 2016](#)

22 December 2016

Prison Governors Association

[Resolution of riot at HMP Birmingham](#)

17 December 2016

POA

[Update Birmingham](#)

17 December 2016

Prison Governors Association

[Disturbance at HMP Birmingham](#)

16 December 2016

POA

[Serious disturbance HMP Birmingham](#)

16 December 2016

Ministry of Justice

[Proposed agreement for prison safety and reform programme](#)

1 December 2016

POA

[Prison officer numbers fall](#)

11 November 2016

Prison Governors Association

[Response to the weekend's riot at HMP Bedford](#)

7 November 2016

Prison Governors Association

[Response to the Justice Secretary's white paper](#)

3 November 2016

Prison Reform Trust

[Government must tackle rising prison numbers to make reform plans work](#)

3 November 2016

Ministry of Justice

[Prison reform: Justice Secretary speech](#)

3 November 2016

Ministry of Justice

[Justice Secretary calls time on failing prisons in white paper to help cut crime and protect society](#)

3 November 2016

Howard League for Penal Reform

[Prison officer numbers fall again as major recruitment drive fails](#)

31 August 2016

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland

[One year of independent monitoring in Scotland's prisons](#)

30 August 2016

HM Inspectorate of Prisons for Scotland

[HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland launches Annual Report 2015 – 16](#)

25 October 2016

Scottish Government

[Prison monitoring reforms approved](#)

13 January 2015

## 3. Parliamentary Business

### 3.1 Ministerial Statements

#### [HMP Birmingham](#)

HC Deb 19 December 2016 c1202-214 [Extract]

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Elizabeth Truss):

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the serious disturbance at HMP Birmingham on Friday. I begin by paying tribute to the bravery and dedication of the prison officers who resolved this difficult situation. I also want to give thanks to West Midlands police, who supported the Prison Service throughout the day, and to the ambulance crews and the fire service, which also provided assistance. This was a serious disturbance. I have ordered a full investigation, and I have appointed Sarah Payne, adviser to the independent chief inspector of probation and former director of the Welsh Prison Service, to lead this work. I do not want to prejudge the outcome of the investigation.

As we currently understand it, at 9.15 am on Friday at HMP Birmingham, six prisoners in N wing climbed on to netting. When staff intervened, one of them had their keys snatched. At that point, staff withdrew for their own safety. Prisoners gained control of the wing and subsequently of P wing. G4S immediately deployed two tornado teams. At 11.20 am, gold command was opened, and a further seven tornado teams were dispatched to the prison.

At 1.30 pm, prisoners gained access to two more wings. Gold command made the decision that further reinforcements were needed and dispatched an additional four tornado teams to the prison. At 2.35 pm, the police and Prison Service secured the perimeter of all four wings, which remained secure throughout the day. Shortly after 3 pm, there were reports of an injured prisoner. Paramedics and staff tried to intervene but were prevented from doing so by prisoners.

During the afternoon, a robust plan was prepared to take back control of the wings, minimising the risk to staff and prisoners. It is important in this type of situation to make sure that the right resources are in place before acting. At 8.35 pm, 10 tornado teams of highly trained officers swept through the wings. Shortly after 10 pm, the teams had secured all four wings. The prisoner who had been reported injured was treated by paramedics and taken to hospital, along with two other prisoners. Throughout the day, the prisons Minister—the Under-Secretary of State for Justice, my hon. Friend the Member for East Surrey (Mr Gyimah)—and I chaired regular cross-Government calls to make the necessary preparations and ensure that the Prison Service had all the support it needed. I want to thank the tornado teams, prison officers and emergency services for their exemplary work.

As I have said previously, levels of violence are too high in our prisons. We also have very worrying levels of self-harm and deaths in custody. That is why we are reforming our prisons to be safe and purposeful places, and taking swift action to deal with drugs, drones and phones. It is important to remember that these problems have developed over a number of years, and it will take time and concerted effort to turn this situation around.

While the reforms take hold, we are continually working to reduce risk and ensure stability across the prison estate. The Prison Service is leading gold command to collect intelligence, to deploy resources and, in particular, to manage the movement of prisoners. That includes managing two incidents at Hull yesterday morning, which were quickly dealt with by staff. To date, we have moved 380 prisoners out of Birmingham, and we continue to assess the level of damage on the wings. The prisons Minister chairs daily meetings with the chief executive and senior members of the Prison Service to monitor prisons for risk factors that might indicate the potential for violence and unrest. Where necessary, we are providing governors with immediate and targeted support, ranging from extra staff and resources through to the transfer of difficult prisoners and speeding up repairs to or replacements of facilities.

As we manage the difficult current situation, we are implementing our reform programme, which will reduce violence and cut the £15 billion cost of reoffending, as laid out in the White Paper. In September, we rolled out tests for dangerous psychoactive drugs in prison; we are the first country to do so. We are rolling out new technology, starting with three prisons, to prevent mobile phone use. We are recruiting for a new £3 million national intelligence unit to crack down on gang crime. We are increasing staffing levels by 2,500 officers, and we are taking steps to train and retain our valued staff, including a new apprenticeship programme, a graduate entry scheme, fast-track promotions and retention payments. We are putting an extra £100 million into that. We are modernising our estate, with a £1.3 billion investment programme, and we are empowering governors to manage their regimes locally to get people off drugs, get them the skills they need and get them into work. Importantly, for the first time ever, we will make it clear in the prison and courts Bill next year that the purpose of prisons is not just to house prisoners, but to reform them. Together, these reforms are the right way to address issues in prisons so that they become purposeful places, where offenders get off drugs and get the education and skills they need to find work and turn their backs on crime for good.

The issues in our prisons are long-standing ones, and they are not going to be completely solved in weeks or even months. We are working to ensure that our prisons are stable while we deliver our reforms. Of course, this is a major task, but I am committed to it and so is the Prison Service, as I know are governors and prison officers as well. The next few months will be difficult, but I am confident that we can turn this situation around. We can turn our prisons into places of safety and

reform, and this is my absolute priority as Secretary of State. I commend this statement to the House.

### [Prison Safety and Reform](#)

HC Deb 3 November 2016 c1068-76 [Extract]

The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Elizabeth Truss):

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the Government's proposals for prison reform.

The prison system in England and Wales is under serious and sustained pressure. Rates of violence and self-harm have increased significantly over the past five years. In the 12 months to June 2016, there were nearly 6,000 assaults on staff and 105 self-inflicted deaths. Prison staff are responding to constantly evolving security threats, such as psychoactive drugs, mobile devices and drones. Too many prisoners are missing out on the chance to reform and too many are going on to reoffend when they leave prison. We owe it to our hard-working prison staff to reverse these trends. We owe it to prisoners and their families, and we owe it to our communities and victims of crime. The cost of reoffending by former prisoners to society is estimated to be £15 billion a year: £1.7 million every single hour of every single day, blighting thousands of lives.

In May, Her Majesty set out in the Gracious Speech that her Government would legislate to reform prisons, including increasing freedoms for governors, improving education opportunities for offenders and closing old and inefficient buildings. Today, I am publishing the Government's plans for doing so. They represent a major overhaul of the system—the biggest for a generation.

Prisons punish by depriving people of their liberty. They must also reduce reoffending. My starting point is to refocus the system so that everyone is clear that safety and rehabilitation is the purpose of the prison system, setting this out for the first time ever in statute. Governors and staff cannot lead and manage change in an environment where they fear violence. Likewise, offenders cannot be expected to turn their lives around while they are dependent on drugs or in fear of being assaulted.

I will invest in 2,500 more prison officers across the prison estate. This includes the recruitment of 400 additional prison officers, which is already under way, in 10 of our most challenging prisons. Increasing the number of front-line staff will give prison officers more time to turn around the lives of offenders. Starting with 10 of the most challenging prisons, each and every offender will have a dedicated prison officer offering regular, one-to-one support. This one-to-one support model will be rolled out to every prison in England and Wales.

We will combine this new support for prisoners with a zero-tolerance approach to criminality in prison. I will send the clearest possible message that if anyone attacks our prison staff, we will treat it as a

serious crime. We are rolling out body-worn cameras across the prison estate to give staff extra confidence, and we will work closely with other organisations, including the National Crime Agency and the police, to improve our intelligence-gathering function to tackle organised crime within the prison estate.

We will also take robust action to address emerging threats to prison security. We have rolled out new tests for psychoactive substances across the estate, and have trained 300 dogs to detect these new substances. We will work with industry to rid our prisons of the mobile phones that are driving up crime within the prison walls, as well as of the drones used to smuggle goods in.

Alongside investing in our staff, we will give governors the tools they need to drive forward improvements. We will push decision-making authority and budgets for the things that make a difference to offenders down to governors—whether it be education, family services or how prisons run their regime.

We are already seeing what greater authority can achieve in our six reform prisons. Launched in the summer, these trailblazers have allowed governors to reap the rewards of greater authority and empowerment in their prisons. Now we want the whole of the prison estate to benefit from greater devolution of powers to local level. In return for greater authority, we will hold governors to account for improvements. For the first time, we will publish national league tables every year, so the public can quickly see an illustration of how each prison is performing. This will include assessing the progress that offenders have made to improve their maths and English skills as well as getting into work.

The various inspection and scrutiny regimes—Her Majesty's inspectorate of prisons, the prisons and probation ombudsman, and the independent monitoring boards—need to be strengthened. Their recommendations need to be taken seriously and responded to quickly. When failures happen, people want to see action taken. We will strengthen the role of Her Majesty's inspectorate, adding to its remit so that in addition to its broad focus on the treatment of prisoners, it takes account of the extent to which prisons are achieving the statutory purpose. There will be a formal process for the inspectorate's findings to act as a trigger for the Secretary of State to intervene in the worst cases.

Finally, reform simply cannot happen in decrepit jails. Some prisons are overcrowded and no longer fit for purpose. That is why I am investing £1.3 billion in a modern, fit-for-purpose estate. In addition to HMP Berwyn in Wales, which will open from February 2017, we will build new prisons for men and women and close those prisons that do not have a long-term future on the estate. This year, we will begin the process of submitting planning applications for new sites, starting with Wellingborough and Glen Parva. As the new accommodation is opened, we will start to close old accommodation. As part of this programme, we will not reopen Dover and Haslar as prisons. Over the next five years there will be a programme of closures, and I shall make a more detailed announcement about that shortly.



Over the course of this Parliament and beyond we will see tangible improvements in the condition of our prisons, and we will begin to see better results in what prisons are asked to achieve. I believe that over the coming years we can create a better system with pronounced and sustained improvements in results for offenders—improvements in their education, employment and health—so that those stubborn reoffending rates can come down, and fewer people will have to go through the terrifying ordeal of being a victim of crime. That will be the marker for whether these reforms have been a success.

This Government's mission is to reform the way our public services work for the benefit of everyone in society. As Justice Secretary, I have made urgent reform of our prisons my No.1 priority in order to bring crime down in our communities and reduce harm for both prison staff and prisoners. That priority will, I am sure, be shared by all Members, and I commend my statement to the House.

## 3.2 Urgent Questions

### [Prison Officers Association: Protest Action](#)

HC Deb 15 November 2016 c123-31 [Extract]

#### **Richard Burgon:**

(Urgent Question): To ask the Secretary of State for Justice if she will make a statement on today's protest action by the Prison Officers Association.

#### **The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Elizabeth Truss):**

I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for the chance to update the House on this important issue.

Prison officers do a tough and difficult job, and I have been clear that we need to make our prisons safer and more secure. I have announced that an extra 2,500 officers will be recruited to strengthen the frontline. We are already putting in place new measures to tackle the use of dangerous psychoactive drugs and improve security across the estate.

I met the Prison Officers Association on 2 November. Over the past two weeks, my team has been holding talks with the POA on a range of measures to improve safety. Those talks were due to continue this morning. Instead, the POA failed to respond to our proposals and called this unlawful action, without giving any notice. The chief executive of the National Offender Management Service, Michael Spurr, spoke to POA chairman Mike Rolfe this morning reiterating our desire to continue talks today. That offer was refused. The union's position is unnecessary and unlawful, and it will make the situation in our prisons more dangerous. We are taking the necessary legal steps to end this unlawful industrial action.

The Government are absolutely committed to giving prison officers and governors the support that they need to do their job and to keep them safe from harm. In addition to recruiting an extra 2,500 prison officers, we are rolling out body-worn cameras across the prison estate and we have launched a £3 million major crimes taskforce to crack down on gangs and organised crime. In September we rolled out new tests for dangerous psychoactive substances and we have trained 300 dogs to detect these new drugs. We have set up a daily rapid response unit, led by the prisons Minister, my hon. Friend the Member for East Surrey (Mr Gyimah), to ensure that governors and staff have all the support that they need.

Taken together, these measures will have a real and swift impact on the security and stability of prisons while we recruit additional front-line staff. I urge those on the Opposition Front Bench to join me in condemning this unlawful action, and in calling on the POA to withdraw this action and get back to the negotiating table.

#### [Safety of Prison Staff](#)

HC Deb 11 July 2016 c36-43

#### **Andy Slaughter:**

To ask the Secretary of State if he will make a statement on the safety of staff in prisons.

#### **The Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice (Michael Gove):**

A central duty of the Ministry of Justice is security on our prison estate. It is imperative that the dedicated professionals who work in our prisons are kept safe. It is also critical that we safeguard the welfare of those who are in custody. It is therefore of profound concern to me that serious assaults against staff in prisons have been on the rise recently. In the 12 months to December 2015, there were 625 incidents, an increase of 31%.

Those who work in our prisons are idealistic public servants, who run the risk of assault and abuse every day but continue in their jobs because they are driven by a noble cause: they want to reform and rehabilitate offenders. That is why we must stand behind them. I know that members of the Prison Officers Association, and other trade unions, want rapid action to be taken to make their work safer; I understand their frustrations, and I am determined to help.

Violence in prisons has increased over recent years for a number of reasons. The nature of the offenders currently in custody is one factor: younger offenders who have been involved in gang-related activities pose a particular concern. Another factor is the widespread availability of new psychoactive substances or NPS—synthetically manufactured

drugs which are more difficult to detect than traditional cannabis and opiates. The former chief inspector of prisons has said that NPS are

“now the most serious threat to the safety and security of jails.”

NPS consumption, and indeed violence in prison, is also often a consequence of prisoners’ boredom and frustration, and a lack of faith in the future.

There is no single solution to the problem we face, but we are taking steps to reform our prisons. To take account of our changing prison population, more than 2,800 new prison officers have been recruited since January 2015, a net increase of 530. To keep them safer, we are deploying body-worn cameras as additional protection for staff. In May, we outlawed new psychoactive substances and thus dramatically reduced the opportunities for easy profits to be made from their trade. In June, I allocated an extra £10 million in new funding for prison safety, and the money has gone direct to governors.

All these steps will, I believe, help improve safety, but there are two more critical points to make. First, I want to stress that my Department’s door will be open to staff and their representatives to ensure we work collaboratively to improve conditions for all in our prisons. Secondly, it is because I have seen for myself how important it is to change our prisons for the better that this Government have initiated a major reform programme. We will be replacing ageing and ineffective prisons with new establishments designed to foster rehabilitation. We will give governors greater scope to design regimes that encourage purposeful activity. We will ensure that prisoners are more effectively incentivised to turn their lives around. As we press ahead with this reform programme, I am confident we can ensure that our prisons can become what they should always be: safe and secure places of redemption and rehabilitation.

### 3.3 Debates

#### [Prison Safety and Security](#)

HC Deb 1 December 2016 c637-58WH

#### [Prison Officer Safety](#)

HC Deb 16 November 2016 c356-62

#### [Prison Safety](#)

HC Deb 15 September 2016 c435-80WH

## 3.4 Parliamentary Questions

### [Prisons: Safety and Security](#)

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of Rochester

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following the disturbance at HM Prison Birmingham, what measures they will take to address immediate and short-term issues of safety and security in prisons.

Answered by: The Advocate-General for Scotland (Lord Keen of Elie):

My Lords, while we implement our White Paper reforms, which will reduce violence and reoffending, we are continually working to ensure stability across the prison estate. The Prisons Minister chairs daily meetings with senior members of the Prison Service to monitor potential unrest. Where necessary, we are providing governors with immediate targeted support, such as rapid facilities repairs, and we are in the process of recruiting 2,500 additional officers across the estate.

HL Deb 21 December 2016 c1663

### [Prisons: Safety and Security](#)

Asked by: The Lord Bishop of Rochester

I am grateful to the Minister for his response. I am also grateful for the debate and discussion in your Lordships' House on Monday following the Ministerial Statement. In that debate, a number of noble Lords drew attention to the importance of purposeful activity for prisoners, including education, training, work and a range of other rehabilitative programmes. Such activities aid reform, encourage positive behaviour and thus enhance safety and security—but they can also be seriously compromised, not least by staffing issues. Can the Minister assure the House that such programmes will be sustained and ideally increased in the short term as well as the long term?

Answered by: The Advocate-General for Scotland (Lord Keen of Elie):

My Lords, 16 million hours of works were delivered in prisons during the year 2015-16. We want to see more work in prisons, leading to jobs outside prison. More private sector companies now employ ex-offenders than ever before and we are keen to increase the number of employers who can provide valuable vocational work for offenders while in prison. We intend to pursue that objective.

HL Deb 21 December 2016 c1663-4

### [Prisons: Safety and Security](#)

Asked by: Lord Harris of Haringey

My Lords, serious concerns were raised by the independent monitoring board in respect of conditions at Her Majesty's Prison Birmingham. Were the concerns in that report flagged up to Ministers? What

consideration was given to reports from other independent monitoring boards highlighting similar conditions in other prisons? Finally, are Ministers considering giving greater independence and authority to independent monitoring boards, perhaps by making them accountable through Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons?

Answered by: The Advocate-General for Scotland (Lord Keen of Elie):

Both Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and the independent monitoring board reports reflect the challenges that have built up in our prisons and prison estate over many years. In respect of that, we have now announced a comprehensive programme of reform.

HL Deb 21 December 2016 c1664

### [Prisons: Safety and Security](#)

Asked by: Lord Beith

Will Ministers address the urgent need to deal with the release of IPP prisoners who are beyond their tariff? What use is being made of the reserve list, which Mr Grayling set up in 2014 when he was Secretary of State, of former prison officers and others who could be called in during situations such as this?

Answered by: The Advocate-General for Scotland (Lord Keen of Elie):

I am obliged to the noble Lord. Public protection remains a key priority in the context of how we deal with IPP prisoners. These people have been sentenced for offences involving serious violence and serious sexual crime. We set up a new unit within the Ministry of Justice to tackle the backlog with respect to IPP prisoners and we are working with the Parole Board to improve the efficiency of that process. We have an enhanced case-management system. We are diverting recall cases away from the Parole Board so that it can focus on reviewing IPP prisoners. In the past year, 38% of IPP prisoners who attended oral hearings completed by the Parole Board went on to be released. So matters are improving. Indeed, in the last year we released 512 IPP prisoners from custody—the largest number so far—bringing the total figure below 4,000.

HL Deb 21 December 2016 c1665

### [Prisons: Safety and Security](#)

Asked by: Lord Ramsbotham

My Lords, when a previous Government formed a judicial inquiry in 1978 to look at the state of prisons, it was largely because of concern over in-house inspection, which was causing public unease. The problems in our prisons will not be solved easily and will not be solved unless the problems facing the probation service, which my noble friend Lord Laming drew attention to, are solved. One of the results of the riots in Strangeways was the masterly report by my noble and learned friend Lord Woolf, which led to much examination of many issues. Can

the Minister say whether or not the Government will consider appointing an independent outside observer, rather than the in-house person who has been appointed to examine the Birmingham troubles?

Answered by: The Advocate-General for Scotland (Lord Keen of Elie):

My Lords, we have already made an appropriate appointment for the carrying out of a full investigation of the incident at Birmingham prison, and that investigation is now proceeding. I pause to allude back to the question from the noble Lord, Lord Beith, a few moments ago. He also asked about the reserve list of prison officers. That is maintained and relied upon. I apologise for omitting that from my previous answer.

HL Deb 21 December 2016 c1665

### [Bedford Prison](#)

Asked by: Richard Burgon

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps her Department plans to take to ensure that recommendations by HM Inspectorate of Prisons in its February 2014 and May 2016 inspections into HMP Bedford are put into effect.

Answered by: Sam Gyimah | Department: Ministry of Justice

The work of HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) is vital to our prison system. We have taken immediate action to address the recommendations made by HMIP.

Additional resources are being provided to help HMP Bedford to improve safety, including the introduction of body worn cameras, upgraded CCTV, and HMP Bedford will also receive additional staff as part of plans to increase staffing levels across the estate.

20 Dec 2016 | Written questions | 52184

### [Bedford Prison](#)

Asked by: Richard Burgon

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many (a) prisoners have been removed from and (b) cells require repair in HMP Bedford after the disturbance on 6 November 2016.

Answered by: Sam Gyimah | Department: Ministry of Justice

Improving safety and decreasing violence in prisons is a key priority. Last month we launched the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper and we are already implementing measures to tackle drugs, drones and phones. This major overhaul of the prison system will include the recruitment of an extra 2,500 frontline officers. Our reforms will empower governors to make the changes they need, ensuring that prisons are places of safety and reform.

225 prisoners were removed from HMP Bedford following the disturbance on 6 November 2016. 140 cells required repair. A

programme of works was immediately put in place to bring cells back into operation as soon as possible.

19 Dec 2016 | Written questions | 52183

## [Prisons](#)

Asked by: Paul Flynn

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the timetable is for (a) recruitment and posting of the extra prison officers and (b) the special measures for vulnerable and mentally ill inmates announced in November 2016.

Answered by: Sam Gyimah | Department: Ministry of Justice

The Justice Secretary announced major reforms to the prison system in the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper published on 3 November, to cut reoffending and help reduce crime.

To achieve this, we are investing more than £100 million to boost the frontline with 2,500 extra staff by the end of 2018. This will help drive forward our reforms to reduce violence, improve standards and increase the staff to prisoner ratio. One of our first steps will be to invest an extra £14 million at 10 priority sites, including HMP Berwyn in Wales, which will pay for an extra 400 prison officers.

Governors are critical to the successful delivery of safe prisons. That is why from April 2017, we are giving governors the power and budget to determine how their prisons are run. This includes governors having the authority to do their own workforce planning, decide what staffing structures best meets their local needs and deciding how to deploy extra staff in prisons.

With regards to special measures for vulnerable and mentally ill inmates, it is vitally important that we provide the appropriate mental health care to prisoners to support their rehabilitation. That is why we are giving prison governors more say in delivering healthcare services in their prisons.

As part of these reforms, we will move to a joint approach to commissioning health services in England. Governors, working closely with local health commissioners and clinical experts, will be involved in the decision making process at each stage of the commissioning cycle. In Wales, where health is a devolved matter, we will liaise with the responsible Local Health Boards and the Welsh Government.

All prisons have procedures in place to identify, manage and support people who are at risk of harm to themselves.

All new intake prison officers receive mental health awareness training as part of their entry level training.

28 November 2016 | Written questions | 55241

## [Prisons: Drugs](#)

Asked by: Andrew Stephenson

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what assessment she has made of the success of drug recovery wings in prisons; and whether she plans to increase the number of drug recovery wings in prisons.

Answered by: Sam Gyimah | Department: Ministry of Justice

Our Prison Safety and Reform White Paper, published this month, affirms the government's commitment to fundamentally reassess our wider approach to tackling the supply and demand for drugs in prisons. We want prisoners who arrive dependent on drugs to get the treatment they need so when they leave they don't need to commit crimes to feed their addiction.

Drug Recovery Wings are one approach to tackling substance misuse in prison. Drug recovery wings were formally piloted in 11 prisons, a Department of Health funded independent evaluation is currently under peer review and will feed into our work on prison reform. Some establishments, in partnership with Drug Treatment Providers, have also established their own local recovery wing models outside of the original pilot areas. It is for health commissioners, alongside prison governors, to decide if they wish to commission drug recovery wings when considering how best to meet the needs of their population.

14 November 2016 | Written questions | 51939

#### [Prisons: Private Sector](#)

Asked by: Caroline Flint

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to her Oral Statement on prison safety and reform of 3 November 2016, Official Report, column 1067, how many prison officers were employed in privately-run prisons in (a) May 2010 and (b) November 2016.

Answered by: Sam Gyimah | Department: Ministry of Justice

Well-run prisons are fundamental to the proper functioning of our justice system, and a vital part of our reform plans. Private providers are required to maintain a sufficient number of staff, with the requisite level of skill and experience engaged in the provision of the Custodial Service, to ensure that the Prison is a safe, secure and decent environment. Privately Managed Prisons continue to play an important role in the prison estate and performance of all providers is closely monitored.

In May 2010, there were 2,329 full time equivalent prison custody officers employed by privately managed prisons in England and Wales. There are currently 3,170 full time equivalent prison custody officers employed by privately managed prisons in England and Wales.

14 November 2016 | Written questions | 51932



## 4. Organisations and further reading

[Institute for Criminal Policy Research](#)

Ministry of Justice, [Written evidence to the Sub-inquiry on Governor empowerment and prison performance](#) , 18 January 2017

House of Commons Justice Committee, [Sub-inquiry: Governor empowerment and prison performance](#) , 1 December 2016

Ministry of Justice, [Prison safety and reform](#) , Cm 9350, November 2016

Elizabeth Truss, [Prisons: places of safety and reform](#) , Conservative Party Conference, 4 October 2016

House of Commons Justice Committee, [Prison safety: Government response to the Committee's sixth report of session 2015-16](#) , HC 647 2016-17, 12 September 2016

Full Fact, [Is the number of frontline prison officers going up or down?](#)  
31 August 2016

House of Commons Justice Committee, [Prison reform inquiry](#) , 27 July 2016

House of Commons Justice Committee, [Prison safety](#) , HC 625 2015-16, 16 May 2016

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