



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP-2020-0060, 16 March 2020

# Health and safety for prison staff

## Summary

A Westminster Hall debate on health and safety for prison staff is scheduled for Wednesday 18 March 2020 at 9.30am. The Member leading the debate is Grahame Morris MP.

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.

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# 1. Background

## 1.1 Safety in prisons

Chief Inspectors of Prisons, the Prison and Probation Ombudsman, Independent Monitoring Boards and the Justice Committee have all repeatedly expressed concern about a decline in prison safety since 2012.

Various factors have been identified as contributing to the decline in safety, including:

- a link between violence and the number of staff
- drugs misuse and psychoactive substances
- limitations to prison regimes and
- poor day-to-day living conditions, including crowding

For more information see the Library briefing [Prison Safety in England and Wales](#).

### Assaults on staff

A recent National Audit Office report, [Improving the prison estate](#), noted that between 2015 and 2018, among adult prisoners, key indicators of poor safety in prisons reached all-time highs. There was a 110% increase in prisoner assaults on staff.

The number of assaults on staff has been rising consistently since the start of 2015, reaching a peak of 10,424 assaults on staff in the year ending June 2019.<sup>1</sup> Before 2015, there were around 3,000 recorded assaults on staff per year.

The rise in assaults has begun to slow down, with the number being fairly level since mid-2018 (albeit rising slightly in 2019). The most recent figures at the time of writing show a slight fall, to 10,059 assaults on staff in the year ending September 2019.

The prison population does vary from year to year, so these figures need to be put in context. In the year ending September 2019, there were 121 assaults on staff per 1,000 prisoners, compared with 54 per 1,000 prisoners in 2015 and 35 per 1,000 prisoners in 2010.

The statistics also indicate the 966 of the assaults in the year ending September 2019 were classified as 'serious assaults'.<sup>2</sup> The number of serious assaults per year has risen in line with the rising number of all assault, so they made up around 10% of assaults on staff in each year.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Justice, [Safety in Custody quarterly: update to September 2019](#), 30 January 2020.

## Overall level of violence in prisons

The level of violence in prisons in general has been rising. The annual number of assaults by prisoners, which includes assaults on staff, more than doubled between 2010 and 2019, and was around 33,000 in the year ending September 2019.<sup>3</sup>

Self-harm incidents reached a record high of 61,461 incidents in the 12 months to September 2019, up 16% from the previous 12 months. Self-harm incidents have followed the same trend as assaults, having been level at around 25,000 per year up until 2015, when they started to rapidly rise.

HMPPS releases annual statistics showing the number of recorded incidents of protesting behaviour. There were nearly 2,200 incidents involving barricades, hostage-taking, or concerted indiscipline or around 27 per 1,000 inmates. This was nearly four times the equivalent number ten years previously (just over 560).<sup>4</sup>

## Exposure of staff to psychoactive substances

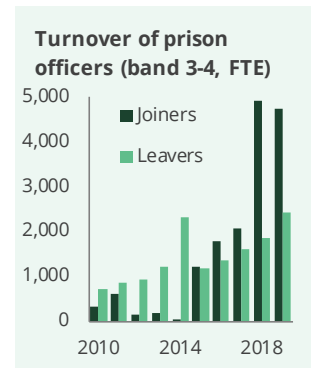
The Health and Social Care Committee, in a 2018 report, [Prison health](#), noted that the increasingly widespread use of novel psychoactive substances was a serious risk to the health and safety of users, fellow prisoners and staff alike.

## Hiring and staff retention

The number of prison officers fell by a quarter between 2010 and 2014, going from around 25,000 to 18,000. Between 2014 and 2017, the number stayed at around 18,000 before increasing again to nearly 23,000 in 2019 as the result of a recruitment drive.<sup>5</sup>

The result of the changes of the last decade is that, although the number of prison officers is almost back at its 2010 level, the collective level of experience within the workforce has decreased substantially. In 2010, 7% of prison officers had been in post for less than 2 years compared with 35% in 2019. The proportion with 10 years' experience or more went from 56% of officers to 46% in the same period.

The workforce statistics also suggest a problem of new recruit retention. As the number of joiners has risen since 2017, the number of leavers has also risen. The result is that a larger-than-ever proportion of leavers



<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Justice, [Safety in Custody quarterly: update to September 2019](#), 30 January 2020

<sup>4</sup> HMPPS, [HMPPS Annual Digest 2018 to 2019](#), chapter 8

<sup>5</sup> These figures refer to prison officers in bands 3-5 which includes prison officers (including specialists), supervising officers, and custodial managers.

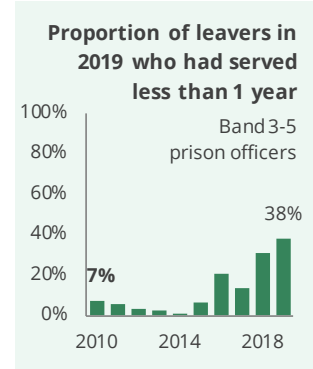
have served less than one year. The proportion over time can be seen in the chart in the margin.

Looked at differently, the proportion of new recruits who leave after less than one year has also risen in recent years. The latest rough estimate is that one in five new prison officers (bands 3-5) leaves after less than one year.<sup>6</sup> It is worth noting that this proportion was similar between 2010 and 2014 but was lower in the years since, until 2019.

### Sickness absence

In 2018/19, an average of 9.3 days were lost to sickness absence per full-time equivalent staff member. This was around the same as in the previous year and lower than the average of around 11 days in 2013/14 and 2014/15. The number of days lost to absence is consistently highest in the Youth Custody Service, with 12.5 days lost per full-time equivalent staff member in 2018/19.<sup>7</sup>

There is no routinely published data on the reasons for sickness absence, although some has been published in response to PQs. In 2018/19, 1,939 prison officers in public sector prisons took sick leave due to 'mental and behavioural disorders'.<sup>8</sup> This was the highest number recorded in any year (the series begins in 2010) and a 43% increase on the previous year. Note that these figures might not be a complete count of prison officers who took leave for these reasons because in some cases a reason might not have been recorded.



## 1.2 The Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance – Safe Inside

The [Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance](#) (JUPA) has [raised concerns](#) about health and safety conditions for prison staff. JUPA includes a number of trade and professional organisations with members working to provide services inside prisons. JUPA's May 2019 position statement listed their key concerns:

- Unsafe staffing
- Work-related violence
- Impact of exposure to psychoactive substances
- Working conditions and overcrowding.

JUPA's [June 2019 report, Safe Inside](#) states that health and safety is now the preeminent concern of members. The report provides the results of a survey of staff working in prisons and concludes that the results "present a picture of a prison system that is failing to meet the basic health and safety needs of the prison workforce". JUPA calls for:

1. Tougher responses to violent incidents
2. Better health and safety reporting, including a single reporting system

<sup>6</sup> HMPPS, [HM Prison and Probation Service workforce quarterly: June 2019](#), tables 8 and 13.

<sup>7</sup> HMPPS, [HMPPS Annual Digest 2018 to 2019](#), chapter 15

<sup>8</sup> [HC 281606](#), 24 July 2019

3. Action to prevent exposure to psychoactive substances
4. Joint work to examine the causes and effects of violence against staff
5. More prison officers to ensure safe staffing levels

JUPA has developed a [Safe Inside Prisons Charter](#). An [EDM](#) tabled on 25 February 2020 notes the high levels of violence against prison staff and welcomes the Safe Inside Prisons Charter, calling on the Government to adopt it.

### 1.3 Government policy

The Justice Secretary was asked in a [PQ in July 2019](#) what recent steps he had taken to improve the health and safety of prison staff. Robert Buckland replied:

The health and safety of our staff and those in our care remains our top priority. Risks to staff are continually assessed, and suitable controls are implemented accordingly. The effectiveness of those controls is monitored at local and national level, and through joint audit work with prison unions.

HMPPS recognises that the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of employees is paramount. All HMPPS staff have access to an occupational health service and employee assistance programme. This includes 24 hour, 365 days a year access to signposting and counselling, and trauma support services.

It is a priority to ensure that prisons are places of safety and reform and the government has invested an additional £70 million investment in safety, security and decency. This has included £16 million to improve conditions for prisoners and staff and £7 million on new security measures, such as security scanners, improved searching techniques, phone-blocking technology and a financial crime unit to target the criminal kingpins operating in prisons.<sup>9</sup>

In August 2019 the Government [announced](#) £100 million to fund airport-style security to “reduce illicit items which fuel violence and hinder rehabilitation”.<sup>10</sup> The first sixteen prisons to receive scanners were [identified](#) in January 2020.<sup>11</sup>

In [July 2019](#) Robert Buckland said the prison service had started research on the effects on prison staff of second-hand exposure to psychoactive substances, in particular across 10 prisons. He said:

That testing programme will be extended. We have also established a drugs taskforce, because the best way to deal with the risk is to minimise the use of drugs in prisons.<sup>12</sup>

The Government [has said](#) prison officers are being given tools to help them do their job more safely.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety: Written question – 277823, 22 July 2019

<sup>10</sup> Gov.uk, £100 million crackdown on crime in prison, 13 August 2019

<sup>11</sup> Gov.uk, press release, 16 jails to receive X-ray scanners, 24 January 2020

<sup>12</sup> HC Deb 9 July 2019 c136

<sup>13</sup> Prison Officers: Resignations: Written question – 24344, 11 March 2020

The Ministry of Justice announced in October 2018 that prison officers would be issued with incapacitant spray, PAVA. A [press release](#) stated that the national roll out, to prisons for adult males, followed a successful pilot at four prisons.<sup>14</sup> Rigid Bar handcuffs [are being provided](#) to prison officers in the adult male estate.<sup>15</sup>

## 1.4 Coronavirus

On 12 March 2020 Prisons Minister, Lucy Frazer, made a [statement](#) on preparedness to deal with coronavirus (COVID-19) in prisons.

The Government is doing everything it can to combat the COVID-19 outbreak, based on the very latest scientific and medical advice. This includes in our prisons, where we are working closely with Public Health England, the NHS and the Department of Health and Social Care to manage the challenges we face.

The safety and wellbeing of staff, prisoners and visitors is paramount and at the heart of our approach.

Prisons have existing, well-developed policies and procedures in place to manage outbreaks of infectious diseases. This means prisons are well prepared to take immediate action whenever cases or suspected cases are identified, including isolating individuals where necessary.

Basic hygiene is a key part of tackling the virus and good practice is being promoted on posters throughout the estate. Handwashing facilities are available to all prisoners – not just in cells but other shared areas such as education blocks and kitchens. Staff and visitors also have access to handwashing facilities and we have worked closely with suppliers to ensure adequate supply of soap and cleaning materials.

We understand that prisoners and their loved ones might be concerned about the situation. But we can assure them that we will continue to operate normal regimes, with the minimum disruption, for as long as we can. This will include visits to prisoners but, in line with Public Health advice for the general public, we urge any friend or family member not to come to a prison for visit if they have any symptoms associated with COVID-19 - a fever or new, persistent cough. We are also looking into ways to keep prisoners in close contact with their families in all eventualities, and will share further information as and when necessary.

We have procedures agreed with our public health colleagues for protecting staff in the workplace but, like any member of the community, some prison staff may need to self-isolate in line with public health advice, or may become infected. We are taking steps to boost staff availability and so enable us to look after prisoners properly and minimise the impacts on prison regimes of staff absences.

There is a huge amount of work taking place, and I want to thank all those who have been striving tirelessly to make sure we are ready to do all we can to respond over the coming weeks.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Gov.uk, Prison officer safety equipment rolled out, press release, 9 October 2018

<sup>15</sup> Prison Officers: Restraint Equipment: Written question – 14687, 13 February 2020

<sup>16</sup> Gov.uk, Coronavirus (COVID-19) prison preparedness: Lucy Frazer statement, 12 March 2020

## 2. Media

### 2.1 Press releases

[Unions state concern for health and safety of prison staff](#)

Unison

16 January 2020

[Staff safety: POA Circular 001-20](#)

Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers

13 January 2020

[Press release: First prisons get tough new security measures](#)

Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

04 November 2019

[POA members need protection](#)

Professional Trades Union for Prison, Correctional and Secure Psychiatric Workers

10 April 2019

[Press release: Prison officer safety equipment rolled out](#)

Ministry of Justice

09 October 2018

### 2.2 Articles and blogs

[Low-risk inmates could be released temporarily to ease pressure during coronavirus outbreak, head of prison officers union suggests](#)

Telegraph

15 March 2020

[Coronavirus: Emergency plan for prisons in England and Wales](#)

BBC News

14 March 2020

[British prisoners 'will die' from coronavirus, top governor warns](#)

Evening Standard

13 March 2020

[Committee calls for urgent prison repairs](#)

Justice Committee

13 March 2020

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) prison preparedness: Lucy Frazer statement](#)

Ministry of Justice, et al.

12 March 2020

[Coronavirus 'would spread like wildfire' if outbreak hit UK prisons, experts warn](#)

Independent

10 March 2020

[Coronavirus: UK's backup plans to release prisoners](#)

Times

08 March 2020

[2 inmates at a UK jail were tested for the Wuhan coronavirus after a prisoner collapsed in his cell. Here's why prisons are among the worst places to handle outbreaks.](#)

Business Insider

12 February 2020

[Two in five prisons in poor condition, watchdog finds](#)

Guardian

07 February 2020

[Howard League responds to National Audit Office report on improving the prison estate](#)

Howard League for Penal Reform

07 February 2020



[Attack on prison officer by two inmates treated as terrorist incident, police say](#)

Guardian

10 January 2020

[Poor sleep in prison officers threatens their health and prison safety](#)

British Psychological Society

10 January 2020

[Investigation launched after four prisoners develop life-threatening tuberculosis](#)

Telegraph

01 January 2020

[POA call on urgent government intervention](#)

POA

31 October 2019

[Decline in prison safety standards and lack of staffing 'seriously hampering' inmate rehabilitation, report finds](#)

Independent

05 June 2019

[Prisons in 'fragile recovery' says national IMB report](#)

IMB

05 June 2019

[Prison staff protest over 'unprecedented' inmate violence](#)

BBC News

14 September 2018

[Loss of experienced staff leaving prisons unsafe](#)

Guardian

29 April 2018

[Prison staff struggling to cope as spice epidemic grows in UK's jails](#)

Guardian

25 December 2017

## 3. Parliamentary material

### 3.1 Debates

[Violence in Prisons](#)

HC Deb 25 February 2020 cc170-1

[Prison Staff: Health and Safety](#)

HC Deb 9 July 2019 cc135-7

[Prison and Youth Custody Centre Safety](#)

HC Deb 19 July 2017 cc843-53

[Prisons](#)

HC Deb 25 January 2017 cc303 -56

[Safety of Prison Staff](#)

HC Deb 11 July 2016 cc36-43

[Prisons: Staff Safety](#)

HL Deb 11 July 2016 cc36-41

### 3.2 Parliamentary questions

[Prisons: Coronavirus](#)

**Asked by:** Gill, Preet Kaur

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, with reference to covid-19, what steps he is taking to provide spaces for self-isolation throughout the prison estate.

**Answering member:** Lucy Frazer | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

HMPPS is working to prevent the spread of COVID-19, based on the very latest scientific and medical advice. We are working closely with Public Health England, the NHS and the Department of Health and Social Care to manage the challenges we face.

The safety and wellbeing of staff, prisoners and visitors is paramount and at the heart of our approach.

Basic hygiene is a key part of tackling the virus and good practice is being promoted on posters throughout the estate. Handwashing facilities are available to all prisoners – not just in cells but other shared areas such as education blocks and kitchens. Staff and visitors also have access to handwashing facilities and we have worked closely with suppliers to ensure adequate supply of soap and cleaning materials.

Prisons have existing, well-developed policies and procedures in place to manage outbreaks of infectious diseases. This means prisons are well prepared to take immediate action whenever cases or suspected cases are identified.

We are ensuring that where necessary, personal protective equipment is available to staff. In line with broader clinical advice, HMPPS has introduced a procedure for the protective isolation of individuals in prison custody when it is considered that they may be potentially infected with the virus.

Our capacity to isolate prisoners varies across the estate depending on the type of establishment, its configuration and the category of prisoner held. Each establishment has in place local contingency plans setting out how it will manage should isolation of prisoners be necessary.

People in prison custody who become unwell have the benefit of on-site NHS healthcare services which provide the first line assessment and treatment response. HMPPS has worked closely with our partners in the NHS to make arrangements for transfer to hospital should an individual be sufficiently unwell to require hospital admission, building on our business as usual procedures for access to healthcare.

We have procedures agreed with our public health colleagues for protecting staff in the workplace but, like any member of the community, some prison staff may need to self-isolate in line with public health advice, or may become infected. We are taking steps to boost staff availability and so enable us to look after prisoners properly and minimise the impacts on prison regimes of staff absences.

13 Mar 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 27031

**Date tabled:** 09 Mar 2020 | **Date for answer:** 11 Mar 2020 | **Date answered:** 13 Mar 2020

### [Prison Officers](#)

**Asked by:** Kearns, Alicia

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what support is his Department provides to prison officers who have been a victim of crime at work.

**Answering member:** Lucy Frazer | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

Prison Officers are some of our finest public servants, and we do not underestimate the challenges faced by everyone working in prisons. We are committed to making prisons a safe place to work and providing

prison officers with the right support, training and tools to empower them to do their jobs.

We provide post-incident care teams, occupational health support and counselling for members of staff who are assaulted while doing their job and we are currently rolling out TRiM (Trauma Risk Management), a trauma-focused peer support system designed to help people who have experienced a traumatic event.

We are rolling out body worn cameras, police-style restraints and PAVA incapacitant spray to prison officers to help them do their job more safely.

We have recruited more than 4,200 new prison officers over the past four years and we're investing £2.75 billion to transform the estate, to make prisons safer and cut crime behind bars.

Prisoners who assault staff should feel the full force of the law. We are working closely with the Crown Prosecution Service to ensure prosecutions of prisoners who assault staff along with the strongest possible punishment being imposed. The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act increases sentences for those who assault prison officers.

28 Feb 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 19993

**Date tabled:** 24 February 2020 | **Date for answer:** 26 February 2020 | **Date answered:** 28 February 2020

### [Prisons: Crimes of Violence](#)

**Asked by:** Davies, Philip |

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, how many adjudications related to instances of violence against prison staff there were in each year since 2010; and how many of those adjudications resulted in no additional days being added to the prisoner's sentence.

**Answered by:** Lucy Frazer | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

The prisoner discipline system upholds justice in prisons and ensures incidents of prison rule-breaking have consequences. Only Independent Adjudicators, who are District Judges or Deputy District Judges can make an award of additional days to a prisoner's custodial time left to serve.

Where an act of violence amounts to a criminal offence, prisoners should be investigated by the police and face serious sanctions. The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018 has increased sentencing powers for offences of common assault and battery committed against an emergency worker. This provides Courts with the powers to punish those who commit violent crime against prison staff.

The information requested can be found in the table below:

**Number of punishments for proven adjudications involving violence, 2011 - 2018, England and Wales<sup>1</sup>**

Offence	Violence against prison staff <sup>2</sup>							
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Number of proven adjudications</b>	1,361	2,102	1,788	1,763	2,436	2,829	3,006	3,645
<b>Number of "non-additional days" punishments<sup>1</sup></b>	2,797	4,086	3,269	2,956	3,885	4,206	4,372	5,247
<b>Number of "additional days" punishments<sup>1</sup></b>	208	321	304	328	463	655	697	876
<b>Total number of punishments<sup>1</sup></b>	3,005	4,407	3,573	3,284	4,348	4,861	5,069	6,123

**Data sources and quality**

The figures in this table have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Due to data quality issues, 2010 figures have not been provided and therefore no conclusion can be drawn for the annual 2010 data and no comparison can be made with 2010 figures.

**Notes:**

1 - Punishments can only be given where an adjudication has been proven and therefore exclude all other adjudications that have been dismissed or not proceeded with. One or more punishments may be imposed onto prisoners. If the charge against the accused prisoner is found to be proved beyond reasonable doubt, the adjudicator will then decide the appropriate punishment(s). The Prison or Young Offender Institution Rules provide guidelines when considering appropriate punishments, taking into account the circumstances and seriousness of the offence, and its effect on the victim (if any), the likely impact on the prisoner (including any health or welfare impact), the prisoner's age, behaviour in custody, remaining time to release, the type of establishment and the effect of the offence on local discipline and good

order. Also the number of awards may be given at one establishment and applied at another.

2 - Offences refer to assaults and attempts of assaults.

13 February 2020 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 13458

**Date tabled:** 06 February 2020 | **Date for answer:** 10 February 2020 | **Date answered:** 13 February 2020

### [Topical Questions](#)

**Asked by:** Grahame Morris (Easington) (Lab)

There is growing concern about the explosion in violence in prisons directed against prison officers. Does the Minister understand or even agree with the assessment of the Prison Officers Association that the Government are breaching their responsibilities under health and safety legislation by wilfully exposing hard-pressed prison staff to assaults? The number is running at 10,000 a year, which is over 28 a day on average.

**Answered by:** Lucy Frazer | **Department:** Justice

We are very concerned about the level of violence in prisons and very pleased that the 10 prisons project showed that we can reduce violence in prisons by reducing drugs in prison. I am very pleased that the Government recently announced the £100 million investment in prison security to make our prisons safer for those who work in them.

08 October 2019 | Topical questions - 1st Supplementary | Answered | House of Commons | 664 c1629

**Date answered:** 08 October 2019

### [Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety](#)

**Asked by:** Cooper, Rosie

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, pursuant to the Answer of 9 July 2019 to Question 270730 on Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety, whether all prison staff who are not directly employed by HMPPS have access to (a) occupational health services, (b) employee assistance programmes, (c) trauma support services and (d) personal well-being zones.

**Answering member:** Robert Buckland | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

HMPPS value the contribution made by external partners to HMPPS and work collaboratively with suppliers to ensure the health and safety of non-directly employed staff in prison and probation sites

Prison staff not directly employed by HMPPS can have access to the Employee Assistance Programme, trauma support services and personal well-being zones. These arrangements are agreed by officials in consultation with our external partners. However, it is normal practice for most of our external partners to have their own support arrangements in place for their staff.

Prison staff not directly employed by HMPPS do not have access to all occupational health services because occupational health is the responsibility of their employer.

However, contractors and third party supplier staff do have access to a 24 hour body fluid exposure and sharps injury help line, which gives non-directly employed prison staff access to immediate and specialist advice and guidance from a nurse following a suspected and actual body fluid exposure incident. This is part of our commitment to helping to protect staff from the risk of contracting blood borne viruses.

22 July 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 278444

**Date tabled:** 17 July 2019 | **Date for answer:** 22 July 2019 | **Date answered:** 22 Jul 2019

[Prisons: Industrial Health and Safety](#)

**Asked by:** Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what recent steps he has taken to improve the health and safety of prison staff.

**Answering member:** Robert Buckland | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

The health and safety of our staff and those in our care remains our top priority. Risks to staff are continually assessed, and suitable controls are implemented accordingly. The effectiveness of those controls is monitored at local and national level, and through joint audit work with prison unions.

HMPPS recognises that the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of employees is paramount. All HMPPS staff have access to an occupational health service and employee assistance programme. This includes 24 hour, 365 days a year access to signposting and counselling, and trauma support services.

It is a priority to ensure that prisons are places of safety and reform and the government has invested an additional £70 million investment in safety, security and decency. This has included £16 million to improve conditions for prisoners and staff and £7 million on new security measures, such as security scanners, improved searching techniques, phone-blocking technology and a financial crime unit to target the criminal kingpins operating in prisons.



22 July 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 277823

**Date tabled:** 16 July 2019 | **Date for answer:** 22 July 2019 | **Date answered:** 22 July 2019

[Prison Officers: Vaccination](#)

**Asked by:** Cooper, Rosie

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, whether he has plans in place to ensure the urgent availability of immunisation against Hepatitis for all prison personnel; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member:** Robert Buckland | **Department:** Ministry of Justice

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA), all employers must provide (so far as is reasonably practicable) a safe place of work and safe systems of work. This includes HM Prison and Probation Service for public sector prisons, and G4S/Sodexo/Serco for privately managed prisons. HM Prison and Probation Service offers and provides Hepatitis B vaccinations, followed by all required vaccination courses and/or blood tests, to ensure staff are protected at work. These are administered by our Occupational Health supplier, Optima Health, for Prison Officers, First Aid Officers and Operational Support grade staff across public sector prisons in England and Wales. The majority of public sector prisons have received Hepatitis B immunisation clinics in 2019. The remaining establishments will receive their clinics in the next few months. Human resources arrangements in privately managed prisons, including offering and providing Hepatitis B vaccinations, are the responsibility of providers. There is no preventative vaccine to protect against Hepatitis C. Therefore, post exposure management such as immediate first aid followed by appropriate risk assessment, is essential. Staff in public sector prisons receive education and training on safe systems of work, universal precautions, hand hygiene and use of personal protective equipment in relation to dealing with body fluids at work. Use of blood spillage kits are used by trained individuals only.

Occupational health (OH) intervention in HMPPS includes provision of immediate and clinical advice by specialist nurses following suspected and actual blood to blood exposure incidents for staff at all levels via a HMPPS 24/7 telephone advice line.

03 July 2019 | Written questions | Answered | House of Commons | 270729

**Date tabled:** 28 June 2019 | **Date for answer:** 03 July 2019 | **Date answered:** 03 July 2019

### 3.3 EDMs

#### [Safe inside prisons charter](#)

That this House notes with alarm the record-high levels of violence against prison staff, with over 10,000 reported annual assaults compared with less than 3,000 a decade ago; welcomes the new Safe Inside Prisons Charter launched by the Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance, a coalition of nine national trades unions representing the majority of staff working in prisons; believes that the Charter's proposed single reporting system for violence, accessible both internally and externally so staff can report incidents away from the workplace, represents the kind of common-sense solution so badly needed to tackle the health and safety emergency in our prisons; and calls on the Government to adopt the Charter immediately and work with the Alliance to help protect the diligent, brave and committed staff that keep our prisons running under the most challenging circumstances.

25 February 2020 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 215 (session 2019-21)

**Primary sponsor:** Saville Roberts, Liz | **Party:** Plaid Cymru

**Other sponsors:** MacAskill, Kenny · Glindon, Mary · Henderson, Gordon · Stevens, Jo · Yasin, Mohammad

**Number of signatures:** 18

#### [Safe Inside report on prison staff safety](#)

That this House welcomes the Safe Inside report from the Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance, a coalition of nine national trades unions representing the majority of prison staff; is concerned by the health and safety emergency revealed by this report, with a quarter of prison officers, educators, nurses, administrative workers, cleaners and other staff surveyed personally experiencing physical violence in the last year, while half had been exposed to new psychoactive substances such as Spice; agrees with the report's conclusions that solutions to this crisis must include a tougher response to violent incidents, better health and safety reporting, specific action against psychoactive substances, a significant increase in the number of prison officers, and a meaningful investigation into the causes and effects of violence against prison staff; and calls on the Government to ensure as a matter of urgency that all reasonable steps are taken to improve health and safety conditions for all staff working in prisons, including a reversal of the dangerous cuts to prison budgets made since 2010 and the launch of a national violence reduction strategy in collaboration with all staff unions.

17 June 2019 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 2492 (session 2017-19)

**Primary sponsor:** Stevens, Jo | **Party:** Labour Party

**Other sponsors:** Glindon, Mary · Henderson, Gordon · Saville Roberts,  
Liz · Stephens, Chris · Yasin, Mohammad

**Number of signatures:** 31

## 4. Organisations and further reading

### 4.1 House of Commons briefing papers

[Safety in prisons in England and Wales](#)

Commons Briefing papers CBP-7467

16 December 2019

[The prison estate](#)

Commons Briefing Paper Number 05646

28 November 2019

### 4.2 Committee inquiries

[The work of the prison service - oral evidence](#)

Justice Committee

HC 42

22 October 2019

### 4.3 Committee reports

[Prison Governance: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2019](#)

Justice Committee

HC 150

13 March 2020

[Prison Safety](#)

Justice Committee

HC625 2015-16

16 May 2016

## 4.4 Government departments, public bodies and other organisations

[Guidance: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and prisons](#)

Ministry of Justice, et al.

13.03.2020

[Guidance: Diseases that healthcare teams in prisons and other secure settings should report to PHE](#)

Public Health England

Last updated 10 March 2020

[Safety in custody quarterly: update to September 2019](#)

Ministry of Justice and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

30 January 2020

[Improving the prison estate](#)

National Audit Office

07 February 2020

[Public health in prisons and secure settings](#)

Public Health England

Last updated 13 November 2019

[IMB National Annual Report 2017/18](#)

IMB

05 June 2019

[Safe Inside](#)

Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance

May 2019

[Prison Safety and Reform](#), Cm 9350,

Ministry of Justice

November 2016

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