

Press release: Prison officer safety equipment rolled out

- the decision follows a successful trial by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) at 4 prisons
- PAVA can help to de-escalate potentially violent situations, keeping staff and prisoners safe from serious harm
- part of wider drive to protect officers and improve safety and security in prisons

Prison officers across the country will be equipped with incapacitant spray to help keep them safe and maintain order, Prisons Minister Rory Stewart announced today (9 October 2018).

Following a successful pilot conducted by HMPPS, who have made the decision to roll out nationally, a £2 million investment will ensure every prison officer in the adult male estate is equipped with PAVA – a synthetic pepper spray which temporarily incapacitates those it is sprayed upon.

PAVA can help to prevent serious harm to staff and prisoners alike, as well as being a tool to persuade prisoners in the act of violence to stop. It will be a crucial step to help reduce serious harm in prisons.

It will only be deployed in limited circumstances when there is serious violence or an imminent risk of it taking place, and where its deployment will reduce the risk of serious injury. All prison officers will receive specialist training before being allowed to carry the spray. It will be delivered in prisons where 'keyworker' training has already been rolled out. This will allow officers to build more positive relationships with prisoners, support their rehabilitation and manage difficult behaviour – before the need for any force is required.

This is the latest of a number of measures taken by government to protect prison officers, which include doubling the maximum sentence for those who assault them as well as rolling out body worn cameras, 'police-style' handcuffs and restraints. Meanwhile more than 3,500 additional officers have been recruited since October 2016.

It comes amid a wider drive to bring stability to prisons, with a £40 million investment announced over the summer to improve the prison estate and tackle the problems that drive much of the violence, including drugs and mobile phones.

This funding will allow the introduction of more airport-style body scanners, phone-blocking technology and drug-detecting dogs, and there will be a particular focus on the country's 10 most challenging prisons.

The PAVA roll-out will start early next year, giving time for essential training to take place first.

Prisons Minister Rory Stewart said:

Prison officers' ability to keep control of prisons, and the chaotic individuals within them, is vital to ensuring everyone's safety.

Violent individuals are as much of a danger to other prisoners as they are to prison officers. Most prisoners want to keep out of trouble and see the prison authorities given the means to keep control, so that they can focus on rehabilitation.

Safer prisons means dealing effectively with a dangerous minority, while allowing more offenders into education and work and reducing the likelihood of them reoffending.

The PAVA pilot took place at HMP Hull, Preston, Risley and Wealstun over a 6 month period, and it will now be rolled out across the adult male estate.

Notes to editors

- This was decision taken by HMPPS as part of their safety programme.
- Prison officer numbers are at their highest level since 2013. The majority of the new recruits are already on the landings, joining our dedicated officers who play a vital role in making sure prisons are safe, secure and decent.
- The Assaults on Emergency Workers Bill received Royal Assent which will increase the maximum sentence for assaults against prison officers to double from 6 to 12 months in prison.
- In July we announced a £30 million investment including £16 million to improve conditions for prisoners and staff and £7 million on new security measures, including airport-security style scanners, improved searching techniques and phone-blocking technology. This also includes £1 million on a digital tool which assesses information from various law enforcement databases to create a central 'risk rating' for each prisoner.
- In August we announced another £10 million would be invested in 10 difficult prisons to curb the flow of drugs and phones, while also improving conditions as those jails and improving leadership. This will tackle drug supply by enhancing physical security at the jails; with investment in drug-detection dogs, body scanners, and improved perimeter defences.

[Press release: HS2 reveals design](#)

vision for new stations in Birmingham and Solihull

The images will be released at Birmingham Library at the first of a series of public engagement events during October, which give people the opportunity to see the new designs and give feedback.

Curzon Street station in central Birmingham will be the first brand new intercity station built in Britain since the 19th century, and create a new landmark for the city and boost opportunities for regeneration in the city. Opening with 7 high speed platforms in 2026, the new station will not only be for high speed rail passengers, it will be a brand new public space in Birmingham city centre. It will be fully integrated into an extended tram network, as well as offering pedestrian, cycle, taxi, bus and conventional rail connections to the rest of the city and the wider West Midlands.

Interchange station will be a new major gateway station for the region, part of a new public transport interchange serving Solihull, the West Midlands, Birmingham Airport and the NEC. The station will help deliver longer term development and growth proposals for the area around the station, including new homes, business space and jobs.

Designs for the new HS2 Interchange station will also be released today.

HS2 is also considering a number of extra elements to the scheme put forward by the Urban Growth Company (UGC) which aim to maximise the opportunities the new HS2 Interchange Station presents as a key catalyst for growth.

WSP UK Ltd, working with Grimshaw Architects LLP is designing Curzon Street and Arup is designing Interchange station.

Chris Grayling MP, Secretary of State for Transport, and Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, marked the start of works on the site of the future Curzon Street station last week. Works are well underway on 60 sites across the route from London to Birmingham, with over 7,000 jobs supported by the programme across the country on our way to 30,000 jobs at peak construction.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said:

These brand new stations will be catalysts for regeneration, creating jobs and opportunities for local people and economic benefits for Birmingham and the Midlands. Curzon Street station will put Birmingham at the heart of Britain's new high speed network and enhance the rail connectivity for the city, whilst Interchange provides a once in a life time opportunity to help drive the growth of the region.

HS2 Ltd CEO, Mark Thurston, said:

Both of these new stations will be transformational for the Midlands and will create opportunities for regeneration, growth and economic benefits for the city and region. Preparatory work for the stations is well under way, with a variety of enabling works including the construction of access roads and archaeological investigations.

As part of our plans to deliver a 'green corridor' across the whole route, we're also creating new ecological habitats, community and amenity spaces to help integrate the new line and our stations into the surrounding landscape and environment. All of this activity is already creating job opportunities not just in the region, but across the whole country.

Sir John Peace, Midlands Engine Chairman, said:

HS2 is already a huge part of the Midlands' success story, bringing jobs and investment with it. These pioneering new station buildings will showcase a rail revolution which has our transformed region at its core.

HS2 will be one of the most celebrated infrastructure projects in the world when trains start rolling in to Interchange and Curzon Street in 2026, with a regenerative ripple effect that will be felt across the Midlands. I can't wait to see the stations take shape.

Both stations have been designed with features to make it easy and simple for passengers to navigate the stations, access the platforms and connect seamlessly to other forms of transport.

HS2 Minister, Nusrat Ghani, said:

Birmingham will be at the heart of HS2, and the transformation that is already taking place shows exactly how our new high-speed railway will drive forward regeneration and economic growth across the country.

Unveiling the station designs for Curzon Street and the Solihull Interchange is a milestone moment. These stations will be catalysts for local jobs and new homes, as well as giving passengers access to thousands more seats, more services and better journeys.

We also want HS2 to set a new benchmark for truly inclusive travel, creating a railway that works for everyone. The task for our designers and engineers is now to take these ideas from the drawing board to reality, building iconic stations that are accessible, safe and open to all, no matter their needs.

Carol Stitchman, WSP Design Manager on Curzon Street, said:

As well as being a catalyst for regeneration, the new HS2 Curzon Street station will become a landmark destination, welcoming people to the heart of Birmingham. Our design recognises the station's function as a place of arrival and connection. It is the only HS2 station that welcomes you with a view of the city, where you can see the city from the train, and the train from the city.

WSP has welcomed 16 new apprentices to the Curzon Street station project, as part of our 140-strong project team. We are committed to boosting the skills of Britain's next generation while delivering this transformative project.

Neven Sidor, Lead Architect, Grimshaws, for Curzon Street station, said:

HS2's new Curzon Street station is inspired by the best station design of the past, inspired by Britain's pioneering railway and industrial heritage reimaged for the 21st century. The elegant sleek low arch which will make the station instantly recognisable in the surrounding area and its warm coffered soffit will join the growing list of modern Birmingham icons. The West concourse will have the ambiance of a modern airport terminal with both platform and waiting areas included in the grand arched space. The East concourse has been designed to include the historic Curzon Station building as part of a revitalised New Canal Street scene.

Kim Quazi, Lead Architect, Arup, for Interchange station said:

Interchange station sits within a unique setting, on the edge of the urban landscape in a currently rural location. The station building has been designed to reflect its surroundings and in context with the natural landscape and topography.

The station roof has been designed to fit in with the surrounding landscape, and to optimise natural daylight using an integrated, efficient structural form and rainwater management system. We have also focused on a number of objectives including creating a positive experience for future users and rail passengers by including open space, parkland and views to green spaces, and constructing a green building with low energy consumption and low maintenance.

The series of engagement events for both stations will run through October. These will give people the opportunity to understand HS2's design vision for the stations, share thoughts on the accessibility and use of the stations, and get more information on the next stages in the design process and

planning submissions. More information on the events and locations can be found on HS2' Commonplace websites: [HS2 in Solihull](#) and [HS2 in Birmingham](#).

News story: Submit an innovation challenge for the GovTech Catalyst round 3

The GovTech Catalyst matches complex public sector problems with private sector innovators via competitions for research and development funding.

GovTech Catalyst competitions help the public sector identify and work with cutting edge technology firms. The competitions use the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) process, supported by Innovate UK.

Any UK public sector body can submit a challenge, including those in devolved administrations and at the local level.

Round 3 competitions and phase 1 implementation are planned to run from 4 March.

Examples of previous challenges

The challenges selected in round 2 were:

- How might we improve firefighter safety and operational response?
- How might we make better use of data to guide public sector audits?
- How might we automatically detect and identify illicit goods during the journey across the border without impacting fluidity of trade?
- How might we understand the overlaps between business regulations?
- How might we guarantee prescription continuity while people move between care providers?

[See the full list of challenges submitted in round 2.](#)

The challenges selected in round 1 were:

- How might we identify, analyse and catalogue still images that are posted online?
- How might we combat loneliness by helping our communities to help each other, connecting physical and digital worlds, in a digitally and transport deprived area?
- How might we use emerging technologies to improve the tracking of waste?
- How might we tackle traffic congestion using data and emerging technologies?
- How might we use intelligent data to transform local council service

delivery?

[See the full list of challenges submitted in round 1.](#)

Find out more

You can [read more about the GovTech challenge process.](#)

Watch [‘What is the GovTech Catalyst.](#)

Questions

Contact the GovTech Catalyst team at enquiries-gtc@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk.

You can also [join the GovTech community mailing list.](#)

[News story: Matt Hancock calls for world to unite in responding to the challenge of mental health](#)

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock will launch the government’s ambition to put mental health on an equal footing to physical health across the world, at the first ever annual ministerial mental health summit in London on Tuesday 9 October.

Key political figures, innovators, experts, policy-makers and people with lived experience of mental health from around the world will come together at the 2-day summit to agree global action to tackle mental ill-health.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, who spearheaded the [Heads Together](#) initiative, will join ministers and delegates from more than 50 countries at the summit. Together they will take part in a variety of discussions and expert panels, encouraging them to rethink their current attitudes towards mental health.

The global ministerial mental health summit is hosted by the UK government in partnership with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with support from the World Health Organization (WHO).

The event will also see the launch of a short film from Time to Change called ‘It’s time to talk (about mental health)’. The film features A-list American actress Glenn Close and contributors from Nigeria, India, Kenya and the UK.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

This summit is a landmark moment in changing the way mental illness is perceived and treated globally. The world must unite and take this opportunity to deliver parity for mental health so it is treated the same as physical health.

Countries from across the world are in London today to agree action to tackle one of the defining challenges of the 21st century. Whether it's challenging discrimination, promoting wellbeing at work, adopting new technologies, or empowering young people to take steps to a healthier future, long-lasting commitments will be made at this summit which will be a step towards achieving better mental health care for all.

Sue Baker, Director of Time to Change, said:

After generations of mental health being the poor relation to physical health, many of us hope that this first ever global mental health summit will be a tipping point that prioritises more action on mental health. We've made major progress on mental health stigma in England, and hope the Summit acts as a springboard for change across all countries and cultures, so that there is no shame attached to mental health anywhere in the world.

[News story: Home Office hosts first serious violence event in London](#)

The Crime Minister, Victoria Atkins, has today (Monday 8 October) hosted the first in a series of monthly events taking place across the country, aimed at tackling serious violence.

The events, led by Home Office ministers, will bring together local partners to take action against serious violence in communities. They will be used to raise awareness of the government's [Serious Violence Strategy](#) which places local action at its core. The events will also highlight the national and regional support available, discuss local action already underway and spot new opportunities to work together to tackle serious violence.

Over 100 partners from police, health, education, social services, youth offending services, housing, local authorities, and the voluntary sector attended today's London event at Coin Street Community Centre.

Today's event takes place a week after the Home Secretary Sajid Javid announced a new package of measures to tackle violent crime including a

consultation on a new legal duty to underpin a 'public health' approach, a £200 million youth endowment fund, and a review into middle-class drug use.

Speaking at the event, the Minister for Crime, Victoria Atkins said:

Local communities are at the heart of our response to the troubling rise in serious violence and I'm delighted so many people could attend today's event.

The energy and commitment in the room to work together and do everything possible to tackle this issue was inspiring and I'm excited to see the results.

The government is determined to crack down on violent crime and I look forward to visiting many more communities in the coming months and learning about their vital work.

Head of Youth and Community Programmes at Coin Street Community, Natalie Bell said:

These events are really important in order to share the complexity of the issues surrounding youth violence. It has to be dealt with collaboratively and with shared resources, common goals, and a long-term commitment.

I am very hopeful that the conferences hosted by the Home Office will meaningfully join up thinking and alter attitudes that label young people as negative members of society rather than the results of their increasingly difficult environments.

It is vital that young people are always part of the conversation and given the chance to be leaders and designers of solutions. I would like to see young people present at future events.

Other speakers at the event included London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime Sophie Linden, Chief Executive of Islington Borough Council Lesley Seary and Commander Mark McEwan from the Metropolitan Police Service.

These events form part of the delivery of the 61 commitments in the Serious Violence Strategy and the government's commitment to working with communities to strengthen responses to the issue ensuring everything is being done to protect young people from harm.