

Press release: Government hits target of 2,500 new prison officers 7 months ahead of schedule

The government has passed its target to recruit an additional 2,500 prison officers by the end of 2018 7 months ahead of schedule, the Justice Secretary revealed today (22 April 2018).

As figures showed a net increase of 3,111 prison officers between October 2016 and March 2018, David Gauke said there would be no let up in the relentless recruitment drive despite the milestone being reached. Nearly 90 per cent of the 3,000 new recruits will be on the landings by the summer.

Continuing to boost staffing numbers is crucial as it will allow prisons to introduce a new model where prison officers spend more time both one-to-one and with small groups of prisoners. This approach is key to creating more constructive relationships between offenders and prison officers, reducing violence, improving stability and intensifying the focus on rehabilitation.

Justice Secretary David Gauke said:

Going beyond this important milestone so early is a real achievement. It means the vast majority of these prison officers will be working on the landings by the summer, and all of them will be in place by the end of the year. This will make a real difference to the safety and security of our prisons, ensuring they can fulfil their purpose – protecting the public, reducing reoffending and crucially, rehabilitating offenders.

But let me be clear – the recruitment drive continues and will continue until we reach required levels across the prison estate, with the same urgency that has secured this remarkable influx of new staff.

[Figures released today](#) show an additional 2,699 prison officers on landings or in Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT) since October 2016, while a further 255 are performing operational support roles pending the start of their training.

Dean Gardiner, acting Governor at HMP Pentonville, said:

Hitting this target is an important milestone for the prison service. The new staff here at HMP Pentonville have made a real difference to how the prison runs by building positive relationships with prisoners.

The boost in officer numbers has allowed us to deliver more and improve the rehabilitation offered to the offenders, which prepares them to turn away from crime upon release and prevents future victims of reoffending.

HMP Cardiff's Governor Danny Khan said:

Working in prisons is obviously challenging, but our prison officers are clear their job is about rehabilitating offenders, helping them secure employment upon release and making society safer.

It's essential we recruit positive prison officers who aren't afraid to push this agenda.

Officer Shrubsole, a neuroscience graduate, has just completed his training and started work at HMP Pentonville. The 25-year-old said:

I joined because I wanted a job where I could work with people and try to help rehabilitate them. I was also attracted to the idea that I could progress in this role in the future. I am really proud to work in the prison service – you're working with such an important part of society.

Officer Zefi, aged 27, has completed 6 months as a prison officer at HMP Featherstone. He said:

I joined the service so that I could help rehabilitate people.

In the past 6 months, I feel that I have already made a difference which is really rewarding.

The work is varied – one day I could be escorting people to courts and the next supporting someone who is distressed or needs support.

We are clear about the purposes prison serves: protection, punishment and rehabilitation. Our staffing drive is vital to ensuring prisons will not only be safer, more secure and more decent, but will support prisoners in turning their backs on crime for good.

Increasing staffing levels is part of the wider prison reform programme, with its relentless focus on getting the basics right – ensuring prisons are safe and decent, with a secure perimeter that prevents drugs and other contraband getting in.

And we are also cracking down on the serious and organised criminals operating their networks from behind bars, investing £14 million in tackling

this threat including in new intelligence and serious and organised crime teams.

Press release: Crackdown on touts using robots to rip off real fans

A new law to ban ticket touts from using ‘bots’ to dodge security measures and snap up more tickets than allowed by event organisers will this week be laid in Parliament, paving the way for the measures to come into force.

The new offence will mean touts using automated software to bulk buy tickets for resale on secondary ticketing sites at hugely inflated prices will face an unlimited fine.

London musical Hamilton saw tickets being advertised on the secondary ticketing market for up to £6,000. While artists including Adele and Ed Sheeran have also been targeted by professional touts. The Government’s work places the UK at the forefront of the fight against touts exploiting real fans.

Margot James, minister for digital and the creative industries, said:

I’m determined to make sure everyone has the chance to see their favourite stars at a fair price.

This week we will reach the final stage in our fight to beat rip-off ticket touts using bots to buy huge numbers of tickets only to sell them on at massively over-inflated prices.

Our work, together with improvements by industry, will give consumers greater protection, make the market more transparent and help Britain’s live events scene continue to thrive.

Consumer Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

Fans have a right to know exactly what they’re signing up to on ticket resale websites, but all too often people are left feeling ripped off when the ticket doesn’t match expectations.

We’re taking steps to crack down on touts using “bots” to bulk buy tickets for resale and last week’s new rules will also improve

transparency in this market.

Adam Webb, campaign manager FanFair Alliance, said:

This new legislation is important, and we need it to be activated and enforced. By reducing the means of dedicated touts to bulk harvest tickets, Government can help recalibrate the live music market and give fans a better opportunity to buy tickets at a price the artist sets.

Michael Dugher, UK Music chief executive, said:

I'm delighted the Government has listened to calls from UK Music and industry campaigners like the FanFair Alliance to ban bots.

This new law is an important step to ensure transparency in the resale ticket market. We need the law to be fully enforced to protect music fans from being ripped off. We also need much stronger action from Google which is still directing fans to sites like Viagogo at the top of an online search, rather than to official ticketing.

Music fans have been fleeced for far too long and we will continue to work with Government to ensure our fantastic live music industry continues to bring enjoyment to millions of people and to make over a £1 billion annual contribution to the UK economy.

The new legislation, being brought forward thanks to a provision in the [Digital Economy Act](#), is part of a wider government drive to make sure genuine fans are not losing out through the secondary ticketing market.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy introduced new rules requiring ticket resellers to provide more information around resold event tickets. Resellers now have to supply any unique ticket numbers (UTN) to the buyer to identify a ticket's seat, standing area or location.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is taking enforcement action against secondary ticketing websites suspected of breaking consumer law, Trading Standards has been conducting raids across the UK to pursue those suspected of potential breaches of the Unfair Trading Regulations, and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is clamping down on misleading prices and charges on secondary ticketing websites.

New [guidance](#) was also published last month to help prepare business for these changes and provide clarity to make sure they comply while also securing a better deal for consumers.

[Citizens Advice](#) provide information for consumers about buying event tickets

and how to make sure a ticketing site is genuine.

Government work is being bolstered by new approaches in the private sector:

- UK startup [Aventus](#) and Dutch startup [Guaranteed Unique Ticketing System](#) use blockchain technology to make it impossible to resell tickets at a higher price.
- British firm [DICE](#) is using innovative mobile technology to lock tickets to user accounts and beat the touts.
- Big UK music stars such as Adele and Ed Sheeran have partnered with sites such as [Twickets.co.uk](#), which prohibits the resale of tickets at a profit.

Notes to editors

Citizens Advice consumer helpline: 0345 404 0506

For more information please contact the DCMS press office on 020 7 211 2210

[Press release: PM meeting with Prime Minister Turnbull: 21 April 2018](#)

The Prime Minister met Australian PM Malcolm Turnbull today for bilateral talks at Chequers following the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London and Windsor this week.

They reflected on the week's events and how they could both offer real support to see the commitments made at CHOGM delivered over the period of the UK's chair-in-office – particularly in the area of cyber security. They agreed to close collaboration between their two countries on this matter.

Acknowledging that the two countries already enjoy a close defence relationship, the Prime Minister welcomed increased cooperation on defence and security, including on equipment programmes and noted the merits of the Type 26 frigate and its anti-submarine warfare capability.

Both Prime Ministers said that their countries' should seek to share research and science, agreeing that their universities had much to offer each other.

The leaders noted the importance of free and fair trade, before discussing their trading relationship post EU-exit.

They confirmed their shared ambition to form a new bilateral UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement after leaving the EU. They welcomed the approach agreed at the March European Council to provide continuity during the implementation period for international agreements, which could be swiftly transitioned into

new bilateral agreements once the implementation period ends.

The Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Turnbull for Australia's support over the action against the Assad regime. They agreed it was important to continue stressing the Commonwealth communique's commitment to implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention.

[News story: UK Government raises a dram to Scotch whisky industry](#)

Scotch whisky is a global success story. An iconic product which is enjoyed from Perth to [Paraguay](#) and everywhere in between, and has been for centuries.

Not only is it a valuable addition to a Burns supper, it is also one of the UK's most successful export products, worth more than £4 billion in 2017, with 39 bottles shipped overseas per second.

With more than 120 distilleries in Scotland, the industry supports more than 10,000 jobs in Scotland and indirectly supports up to 40,000 jobs across the UK.

The UK Government recognises the industry's importance, not just to the economies of Scotland and the rest of UK, but also as a globally recognised cultural symbol.

That's why in the 2017 Autumn Budget the Chancellor announced a freeze on spirits duty. The freeze will give our world-leading distillers the confidence needed to invest and grow their businesses, and encourage new firms to enter the market. A bottle of Scotch is now £1.15 cheaper than it would otherwise have been since the end of the duty rise in 2014.

The UK Government is also determined to help Scotch reach new markets, through targeted support from the Department for International Trade, and the UK Government's Great British Food Unit. Launched in 2016, it is helping turbo-charge exports, boost inward investment and support emerging British companies export worldwide.

The Scottish Secretary recently met with the people behind Aberlour Distillery to [reaffirm the UK Government's commitment to the sector](#), as well as listen to their priorities as the UK leaves the European Union.

Scotland Office minister Lord Duncan also visited Strathearn Distillery, Scotland's smallest distillery, which has branched out into new products, and developed a range of rums and gins. While there, he discussed issues around Brexit, exporting and the huge opportunities around whisky tourism – which is becoming increasingly popular, with visitor numbers across Scotland

increasing.

[News story: 'Best of British' enterprise celebrated on Her Majesty the Queen's birthday](#)

- established in 1965, [the Queen's Awards for Enterprise](#) is the most prestigious business award in the UK
- record 152 businesses receive awards for international trade including Harrison Spinks, an innovative bed manufacturer in Leeds
- entries for 2019 awards open on 8 May

A fifth generation family bed manufacturing business and a small software developer whose technology helps pilots fly safely around Europe are among a record 152 winners of a Queen's Award for international trade it was confirmed today (21 April) as Her Majesty celebrates her 92nd birthday.

Now in its 52nd year, the Queen's Awards for Enterprise is the most prestigious business award in the country, with winners recognised as being among the best in the country and able to use the esteemed Queen's Awards emblem for the next 5 years.

This year, a total of 230 businesses from across the UK were recognised for their contribution in 4 categories:

- international trade
- innovation
- sustainable development
- promoting opportunity

Winners include businesses leading the way in a broad range of industries – from agricultural technology and sustainable goods production, to innovative software and healthcare.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The UK has some of the most entrepreneurial and innovative minds in the world delivering jobs, growth and greater choice for consumers and I am proud to see a wealth of these businesses being recognised today.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy – 99% of UK firms are small and over 1,000 new businesses start every day. Through our Industrial Strategy we are building a Britain in which they

will continue to thrive.

One such winner is Harrison Spinks, a bed manufacturer, which has received 2 awards for international trade and innovation. The British brand sells to 50 countries and exports now make up 25% of the company's sales. The family business has developed a number of industry firsts including the creation of its own patented spring making machines and development of a unique grade of wire rod with British Steel, allowing fine wire to be drawn at high speeds.

Simon Spinks, Managing Director of Harrison Spinks, said:

To be granted 2 more Queen's Awards is a huge honour. Since the company was established in 1840, we have always strived to innovate and go about our business in a different way, from creating new ways to manufacture springs to cultivating our farm to grow our own natural fillings.

We're delighted to be recognised for our successes here and overseas by the most prestigious enterprise awards in the UK.

SkyDemon, a software developer, was awarded 2 Queen's Awards – 1 for international trade and 1 for innovation. The small business in Somerset develops software used by pilots to plan and navigate their flights throughout Europe. It has seen overseas sales soar since its launch in 2009.

Tim Dawson, SkyDemon founder and Managing Director, said:

Using my software skills to make flying easier and safer was a challenge I set myself when I earned my pilot's license 12 years ago. We are now the market leaders in this industry in Europe. Today's announcement of our double Queen's Award, for innovation and for international trade, is a huge boost for us as a company and goes to show that even the smallest businesses can have the biggest impact.

The breakdown of today's 230 awards include:

- 152 winners of the international trade award – a record number
- 72 winners of the innovation award
- 8 winners of the sustainable development award
- 6 winners for the promoting opportunity award

Eight businesses have won 2 awards this year, receiving awards for both international trade and innovation:

- DNAFit Ltd, a business in London using genetics to personalise exercise and eating plans
- Harrison Spinks, a Leeds-based family business with a novel process for

manufacturing luxury mattresses and pocket spring components for furniture, footwear and automotive industries

- Lumishore, a manufacturer in Swansea of underwater LED lighting for leisure marine vessels
- Omnitek, a manufacturer in Hampshire of equipment for all areas of audio and video broadcasting
- Resilience Communications Limited, a Cornish electronics company that has created a solution to radio incompatibility
- SkyDemon, a developer in Somerset of software used by pilots to plan and navigate flights throughout Europe
- Solentim Ltd, a Dorset developer of a high-resolution imaging tool for use in the life sciences industry
- Telensa, a Cambridge manufacturer of wireless streetlight controls that accurately meter and reduce electricity usage

According to research by the University of Strathclyde, 73% of international trade award winners between 2012 and 2015 directly attributed increased international sales to winning a Queen's Award for Enterprise. The winners will attend a royal reception at Buckingham Palace in the summer to celebrate the Awards. Entry to the 2019 Awards opens on 8 May 2018 and closes on 12 September 2018.