

Drug use in jail now at 8-year high

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The number of prisoners disciplined for taking drugs in jail has now hit an eight-year high, figures have revealed.

Official statistics show 1164 inmates were caught either taking drugs or administering them to others last year, the equivalent of more than three a day.

This comes 6 months after the Scottish Conservatives highlighted the worrying upward trend of substance abuse in prisons.

Today's figures are nearly double the 634 caught four years ago.

The Scottish Conservatives have said the ever-increasing use of illegal substances in the country's prisons is undermining any attempts being made to rehabilitate criminals and cut reoffending rates.

And these figures don't include those convicts who have taken drugs and managed to get away with it.

In recent years the Scottish Government has introduced measures such as signal jamming trials to reduce the illegal use of mobile phones inside.

But no such progress has been made on drug-taking, with last year's the highest number of incidents since 2008-09, when 1257 were caught.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

"Yet again, we see offenders continuing their criminality within prison walls, an environment which is supposed to be completely secure.

"For the second year running, more than three inmates are being caught using drugs every day, and these figures indicate it's getting worse year after year.

"Detecting and recording these incidents isn't enough – it's crucial the SPS cracks down on this problem and stops these substances slipping through the net.

"All political parties agree that rehabilitation of offenders is critical if we want to reduce stubbornly high reoffending rates.

"But how can this be expected to take place while drug-taking remains so prevalent in prisons?"

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- **1164 prisoners were caught 'Administering, or allowing to be administered, a controlled drug to oneself' in 2016-17.** It's the highest drug use has been at since 2008-09. (*Scottish Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts 2016-2017*, Appendix 5, p76, link; previous annual reports are available at [link](#)).

Below are the numbers for prisoners disciplined for taking drugs in the last nine years: 2008-09 – 1257 2009-10 – 863 2010-11 – 664 2011-12 – 638 2012-13 – 634 2013-14 – 869 2014-15 – 1003 2015-16 – 1133 2016/17 – 1164 All previous reports can be found here:

<http://www.sps.gov.uk/Corporate/Publications/Publications.aspx>