Green Party: Government has no viable plan for prisons crisis

13 February 2017

The Green Party is calling on the Government to tackle the growing prisons crisis after an undercover BBC investigation discovered chaos in HMP Northumberland, one of the country's largest prisons [1].

Justice Secretary Liz Truss is expected to call the plan to cut prison numbers a 'dangerous quick fix' in a speech to the Centre for Social Justice today [2].

A separate report published today highlighted the rising number of suicides in prisons, the impact of staff shortages and a 'toxic' working environment [3].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"The Justice Secretary appears to be caught like a rabbit in the headlights. A huge crisis in our prisons is bearing down but there is no viable plan to deal with it.

"Liz Truss has repeatedly ignored the calls for sensible moves to bring prison numbers down to manageable levels. Reducing overcrowding would ease the excessive workload of prison officers, ensure a focus on rehabilitation and help stop the riots, deaths and escapes that are becoming commonplace.

"We're not talking about turfing dangerous criminals out onto the street. We need a long term, common sense approach, including investment in education, youth services and anti-poverty measures to tackle crime at its root, as well as restorative measures to cut reoffending.

"The privatisation of prisons has proved disastrous and profit-focused companies should never have been allowed to take control of such a large part of our justice system. A complete overhaul of our failing prison system is necessary, with all prison services brought back into public hands."

Notes:

1. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38931580
2. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/feb/13/liz-truss-rejects-calls-to-cut-sentences-to-reduce-prison-population
3. http://home.bt.com/news/uk-news/profound-shift-needed-to-change-trend-on-prison-suicides-11364150503382

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