

New houseblock to boost prisoner employment prospects

- construction begins on new 200-place houseblock and workshop at HMP Stocken
- innovative partnership with DHL to boost inmates' skills and employment prospects
- more than 100 jobs for local people and ex-offenders during construction

Work has begun on a new 214-place houseblock at HMP Stocken (category C, Rutland) creating more than 100 new local jobs – with at least 10 roles earmarked for ex-offenders with constructors Wates.

As part of a drive to skill-up offenders to equip them for a life free from crime, the block includes an innovative partnership with shipping and logistics company DHL which will run courses at a purpose-built workshop. Prisoners will earn qualifications in the logistics industry, helping them find work upon release – boosting efforts to reduce reoffending and keep the public safe.

The new houseblock will also include new prisoner classrooms and fitness facilities for offenders to aid rehabilitation.

Prisons Minister, Stuart Andrew, said:

This government is delivering on its promise to create 20,000 new prison places, complete with the workshops and facilities that will help to steer offenders towards the straight and narrow.

This not only transforms the lives of the prisoners who will be set on a better path, it will protect us all by driving down reoffending and cutting crime.

HMP Stocken Prison Governor Russ Truman said:

This development will boost the prospects of prisoners by giving them even more opportunities to earn the skills and qualifications they need to find work on release.

The Prison Service's longstanding partnership with DHL sees them employ around 500 prisoners to pack more than 66,000 orders a week of food and toiletries purchased by offenders in jail.

Construction of the houseblock is expected to be completed at the end of 2023, with the first prisoners arriving in early 2024.

Andrew Riggs, Head of Government Sector, Wates, said:

I'm delighted construction can begin on this positive project at HMP Stocken.

We have been working closely with the MOJ for almost two decades to support the expansion of its estate and look forward to drawing on our in-house expertise to deliver these new prison places and create first-class facilities to help rehabilitate offenders.

The development is part of a programme to create more than 4,000 new places across England and Wales by expanding existing jails, with construction already underway at HMP High Down and two houseblocks earmarked for HMP Guys Marsh.

This is a key element of the government's overall £4 billion investment to build 20,000 modern and innovative prison places, ensuring the right conditions are in place to truly rehabilitate prisoners. This will give prisoners the education, skills and addiction support they need to live crime-free lives on release, helping to cut crime and protect the public.

Notes to editors

- The new houseblock will increase HMP Stocken's capacity by 214 places with 188 single cells, 12 double cells and two accessible cells.
- In its recent [Prisons White Paper](#), the Ministry of Justice pledged to commence a large-scale recruitment campaign for up to 5,000 additional prison officers in public and private prisons by the mid-2020s. The full list of sites due to receive additional houseblocks are HMPs Bullingdon, Channings Wood, Elmley, Highpoint, Hindley, Wayland, Guys Marsh, High Down (in the form of a workshop) and Stocken.