

New prison strategy to rehabilitate offenders and cut crime

- New technology to thwart smuggling and bolstered plans to tackle addictions to keep offenders clean
- Rigorous new literacy and numeracy standards and job-matching service to find employment
- 'Resettlement Passports' to ensure prisoners have the basics to stay crime-free upon release

Modern jails will cut reoffending and protect the public by giving prisoners the education, skills and addiction support they need to live crime-free lives.

The Prisons Strategy White Paper, published today (7 December 2021), sets out a new plan to deliver the biggest prison-building programme in more than 100 years – creating the right conditions to reform and rehabilitate offenders and ultimately cut crime, keeping streets safe.

Key measures include:

- A zero-tolerance approach to drugs – all new-build prisons will have cutting-edge body scanners and airport-style security as standard to prevent offenders from continuing criminal activity behind bars
- Getting offenders clean and treating addictions that thwart rehabilitation – assessing all prisoners on arrival for drug and alcohol addictions and putting in place a comprehensive plan to support them to properly recover from day one – including abstinence-based treatment
- Making sure prisoners gain basic standards of numeracy and literacy while inside – ensuring every single prisoner has a basic level of English and maths so they are equipped for work on release, and a new Prisoner Education Service to train up offenders with vocational skills including construction and coding – improving their job prospects and steering them clear of crime
- New drive to get offenders into work – introducing a new job-matching service that pairs offenders up with vacancies in the community on release and dedicated employment advisors in prisons to help offenders find work
- Resettlement Passports to put proper plans in place for prisoners on release – providing all prisoners with a personalised passport that brings together all the things offenders need to start looking for work straight away, including a CV, identification and a bank account as well as vital support services in the community
- New fast-tracked punishments – bringing forward a speedier punishment scheme when prisoners transgress. Penalties will be linked directly to their offence and support rehabilitation, for instance forcing prisoners to repair their cells or prison landings if they cause damage

Deputy Prime Minister, Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor Dominic Raab said:

We're building the prisons to incarcerate dangerous and prolific offenders. We're deploying the tech to stop the flow of drugs, weapons and phones into prisons. And we're re-orienting the regime to get offenders off drugs for good, and into work – to cut crime, and keep the public safe.

This new strategy will be backed by unprecedented investment and state-of-the-art infrastructure.

Last month, the government allocated an extra £550 million to reduce reoffending and £3.75 billion to create 20,000 extra prison places across the estate. These will ensure the right modern, innovative and secure conditions are in place to truly rehabilitate offenders and keep the public safe.

The 6 new prisons to be built over the next 5 years will have the latest in technology – meaning more in-cell learning so offenders leave prison with the skills they need to move away from crime and into employment. This will include basic education like maths and English, vocational skills such as IT and engineering, and even driving theory tests so they can get a licence on release – helping them get to and from work.

Frontline staff are also crucial to making the strategy a success, and the White Paper includes a new commitment to recruit an additional 5,000 officers, with 2,400 employed in the next two years, and a new retention programme to keep existing staff.

Prison governors will be given greater autonomy and freedom to run their jails, with new key performance measures and public league tables incentivising the spread of best practice right across the estate in vital areas including security, training and employment and drug and alcohol addiction.

New prisons, such as those currently under construction at Glen Parva, Leicestershire, and HMP Five Wells, Wellingborough, will play a crucial role in cutting crime by training prisoners in the skills of the future, helping them find a job on release and dramatically reducing their chances of reoffending.

These will act as a blueprint for the government's ambitious prison-build programme, which will create 20,000 modern, rehabilitative places by the mid-2020s.

The White Paper follows the publication of the 10 Year Drugs Strategy yesterday which outlines plans backed by record investment to crack down on supply chains and criminal gangs profiting from the trade in illegal drugs, as well as boost treatment services to get people off the drugs responsible for driving crime in the first place, so that everyone across the country can benefit from the safety and security that comes from a safe neighbourhood.

Note to editors

The [Prisons Strategy White Paper](#) can be found on GOV.UK.