[Newly trained dogs heading for prison wings to sniff out illegal drugs](#)

- 176 new drug-dogs trained to stop illegal items entering the most challenging prisons
- 1000s of items, including sim cards and spice, diverted by dogs each year
- part of the government's £100 million package to bolster security in prisons

The new pack adds to the 630 dogs already in place across the estate which have proven to be crucial in the battle to keep illegal drugs, phones and tobacco out of our prisons.

In the past year alone more than 2,000 illegal items, including over 100 kilograms of drugs such as heroin, cannabis and spice, have been stopped from getting onto the wings by drug dogs currently in post. The new dogs are expected to aid this work even further.

Over 50 prisons are set to receive their new additions by March next year – with Bedford, Lewes, Norwich, Rochester and The Mount among the first in line. Each dog will be paired with their own dedicated handler, specially trained in detecting contraband items and further boosting the frontline.

Prisons and Probation Minister, Lucy Frazer, said:

> The smuggling of contraband into prisons puts hardworking staff at risk and undermines attempts to rehabilitate offenders.
>
> These dogs and their handlers will make prisons safer, more secure and ultimately better environments for rehabilitation.

Training for the latest cohort is currently underway, with the dogs having to complete multiple courses and assessments before being posted to the frontline. Their handlers, who are trained prison officers, will also have vigorous training and be re-assessed with the dogs yearly.

Drug dog handler, Nick Hayes who is based at The Mount, said:

> Drugs dogs are a great proactive tactic to address the conveyance of illicit items into our prisons.
>
> They are a force for good and such a powerful tool which can be used to keep all of us who live and work across the estate safe.

The dogs and handlers are being funded by the government's £2.75 billion

commitment to transform the prison estate. This includes:

- £100 million to bolster prison security, clamping down on contraband such as drugs, weapons, and mobile phones that fuel violence, self-harm and crime behind bars
- £2.5 billion to provide 10,000 additional prison places and create modern, efficient jails that rehabilitate offenders, reduce reoffending and keep the public safe
- £156 million to tackle the most pressing maintenance issues to create safe and decent conditions for offender rehabilitation.

Notes to editors

- The prisons included in the roll-out are listed below
- The 176 trained dogs and 93 handlers will be in the 47 selected prisons by March 2021
- Training for this new cohort is currently underway, which sees each dog/handler complete a 6-week course before undergoing an assessment. They then complete a further four weeks training, again with another assessment, and are re-assessed yearly
- Handlers can use the dogs for people (passive) searches and area (active) searches
- Between April 2019 to March 2020 there were 2,236 finds of illicit items by dogs in prisons
- There can be more than one item within a find i.e. 2 phones in one find
- The value of illicit items varies within prisons. The current price of Psychoactive Substances (PS) ranges from £130 to £1000 for an A4 sheet of impregnated paper. Smaller pieces of impregnated paper, credit card sized, can range from £40 to £100 based on recent intelligence.

List of sites which will receive funding for dogs and handlers:

- Norwich
- Chelmsford
- Wandsworth
- Nottingham
- Doncaster
- Bristol
- Erlestoke
- Wormwood Scrubs
- Bullingdon
- Altcourse
- Lancaster Farm
- Featherstone
- Brinsford
- Brixton
- Forest Bank
- Berwyn
- Gartree
- Channings Wood
- Exeter
- Peterborough

- Hewell
- Lewes
- Pentonville
- Swaleside
- Thameside
- Bedford
- Lincoln
- Buckley Hall
- Aylesbury
- Dovegate
- Cardiff
- Onley
- Hindley
- Elmley
- Lowdham Grange
- Garth
- Ranby
- Risley
- Swansea
- High Down
- The Mount
- Preston
- Leicester
- Rochester
- Winchester
- Birmingham
- Northumberland