

# Press release: Government on track to hit target of 2,500 new prison officers ahead of schedule

Almost 2,000 prison officers have been recruited since the launch of a campaign to bring in 2,500 additional officers by the end of this year, new figures released by Justice Secretary David Gauke have revealed today (15 February 2018).

And a further 1,582 new recruits have been offered roles and are booked onto Prison Officer Training (POELT) courses, meaning the Government is on target to recruit the 2,500 officers nine months ahead of schedule.

Figures released today show there was a net increase of 1,970 officers from October 2016 to December last year, up from 17,955 to 19,925. The boost in staffing numbers will help deliver our new Offender Management in Custody model which will provide prisoners with a keyworker to support them in custody.

The recruitment efforts form part of a wider drive to ensure that all prisons are fully staffed so that they can deliver safe and decent regimes. Prison officer recruitment will continue over the coming months and new recruits, alongside existing staff, are being given improved Suicide and Self Harm (SASH) prevention training, with 14,300 staff members having now received it.

Justice Secretary David Gauke said:

I want to commend our hard-working prison officers who do a vital job in protecting the public every day, often in very challenging, difficult and dangerous circumstances. These figures show we are on target to recruit 2,500 additional prison officers.

I am determined to tackle the issues in our prisons head on and I am committed to getting the basics right so we can focus on making them safe and decent places to support rehabilitation. Staffing is the golden thread that links the solutions we need to put in place to drive improvement, so I am delighted our recruitment efforts are working.

Today's announcement shows that the government's nationwide drive to recruit the best talent from around the country into the prison service – regardless of age or background – is working.

Governors are being given greater flexibility over their local recruitment and encouraged to engage with new schemes and initiatives to attract the best and most committed talent.

By having more staff on the ground, staff will be better supported to do the job they came into the prison service to do, and spend more time reforming offenders.

## **Notes to editors**

Since publication of the White Paper:

- we are making a substantial investment in marketing and targeted recruitment to generate even more interest in these valuable roles
- we have increased our POELT training capacity by more than 75% for this year and next

Starting pay for a National based Prison officer ranges from £20,751 to £23,052 for a 37 to 41 hour week and this increases to a maximum range of £23,122 to £25,685 for the same hours.

Find out more about [Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Careers](#)