

Press release: Prison officer recruitment passes halfway target

- prison officer recruitment numbers have reached the halfway milestone for additional numbers of officers

A target to recruit 2,500 prison officers has already surpassed the halfway mark – putting the government well on track to bring in the staff it needs to help improve safety, Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah revealed today.

[New figures](#) published today show that from October 2016 to August 2017 there has been a net increase of 1,290 new prison officers. These new recruits will provide a necessary boost to the frontline so prisons can better tackle violence, self-harm and self-inflicted deaths.

A further 872 men and women are expected to have started their training by January 2018.

The commitment to increase staffing is a crucial strand of the government's strategy to create prisons that are safer and more purposeful.

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah said:

We are taking unprecedented action to improve the safety in our prisons and the additional 2,500 prison officers are a key measure in creating calm and ordered environments.

I have met prison officers across the country and am continually impressed by the work they do to manage prisoners day in and day out, to keep our prisons and the public safe.

Bringing in these additional officers is critical to achieving safe regimes and I am committed to building on these figures.

In addition, this month saw the launch of a new campaign to recruit over 200 Operational Support Grades. These staff will help to maintain the everyday roles which are vital to creating a stable regime.

With the boost to recruitment some prisons have already begun to plan and implement the new key-worker scheme. This will see each officer working more closely with around six offenders – building stronger relationships to bring about positive change.

The government has consistently said that a key element of prison safety is the recruitment of the 2,500 additional prison officers, along with a £1.3 billion investment to create 10,000 modern prison places.