

Press release: Radical extremists moved as first separation centre opens

Some of the most dangerous and radicalised extremists are now being housed in the government's first specialist centre at HMP Frankland – helping stem the flow of radicalisation behind bars and preventing their influence over others.

More than 4,500 frontline officers have also received the latest specialist counter-extremism training to identify and challenge extremist views, boosting the government's ability to tackle this evolving threat. New recruits to the prison service now receive the training as standard, and work will continue at pace to train every prison officer across the estate.

HMP Frankland is the first of 3 separation centres, forming part of the wider government strategy to tackle extremists in prisons. Two further centres are planned to follow at other establishments in the coming months, with the 3 centres combined holding up to 28 of the most subversive offenders.

Offenders are placed in the specialist centres if they are involved in planning terrorism or are considered to pose a risk to national security. Those seeking to influence others to commit terrorist crimes, or whose extremist views are purposely undermining good order and security in the prison estate, may also be placed in the centre.

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Extremism must be defeated wherever it is found. The most dangerous and subversive offenders are now being separated from those they seek to influence and convert – an absolutely crucial element of our wider strategy to tackle extremism in prisons and ensure the safety of the wider public.

It is also right we give our hard-working staff the skills and knowledge they need to keep our prisons and communities safe. Over 4,500 frontline staff have now received the specialist training they need to identify and counter the poisonous and repugnant activities of extremists – work that is essential to the safe running of prisons and fundamental to public protection.

The new centre at HMP Frankland was one of the central recommendations of a landmark review into extremism in prisons. The government takes the threat of radicalisation and extremism in prisons extremely seriously and has built on the recommendations in the review to further boost efforts to tackle extremism.

Today's news forms part of the government's wider strategy to tackle extremism, which includes:

The formation of a new directorate for Security, Order and Counter-Terrorism – responsible for monitoring and dealing with the evolving threat of extremism.

A launch of a new unit that will analyse intelligence and advise prisons in England and Wales on how to deal with specific threats, as well as instruct and train prison and probation staff on how best to deter offenders from being lured into extremism.

Extremist literature being banned from prisons and the removal of anyone from communal worship who is promoting dangerous views.

A new training package to identify, report and combat extremism being rolled out to all prison officers and new pre-employment vetting check for chaplains and imams was introduced in February 2017.

Notes to editors

The first of a number of offenders were placed in the separation centre last week. For operational security reasons, we will not comment further on the identity or number of offenders held within the centre.