

# Press release: Record numbers of new prison officer recruits

- Prison officer recruitment numbers are at their highest since records began
- Government on track to hit target of 2,500 new officers by 2018 as part of commitment to improve safety across the prison estate
- Comes as a wave of new graduates join the service from the ground-breaking charity 'Unlocked'

Prison officer recruitment numbers are at their highest since records began, according to new figures released today by Justice Secretary David Lidington.

From January 2017 there has been a net increase of 868 new prison officers joining the hard-working and dedicated staff in our prisons in order to turn them into places of safety and reform.

In addition, a further 738 job offers have been made to potential recruits who are expected to start after June 2018. The new officers will provide a boost to the frontline and, significantly, put the government on track to meet its target of recruiting 2,500 new officers by 2018.

Staffing, and how staff are deployed, is crucial to improving safety and security. The new officers will each be responsible for supervising 6 offenders – providing prisoners the challenge they need to change their behaviours as well as the support they need change their lives.

These new figures come as more than 600 top graduates and career changers applied for just 40 places through new independent charity Unlocked Graduates, with thousands more registering their interest. The 40 recruits have already started work at prisons around London under supervision of some of the most experienced prison officers.

Justice Secretary David Lidington said:

I am delighted to welcome the new prison officers who join thousands of dedicated and hard-working staff undertaking important work to keep our prisons and the public safe.

These record numbers show our recruitment efforts are working. It is encouraging to see that we are on track to meet our target of an additional 2,500 new prison officers by December 2018, with the numbers joining the service still rising.

Boosting the frontline is critical to achieving safety regimes and I am committed to building on these figures.

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.

Launched in January, the Unlocked Graduates programme, saw more than 2,000 expressions of interest to join. This scheme provides applicants the chance to work alongside some of the most experienced prison officers, developing vital and diverse skills whilst completing a Master's degree.

Natasha Porter, CEO of Unlocked Graduates said:

Many people did not believe that the role of the prison officer could ever appeal to graduates.

The overwhelming interest in our programme shows an incredible desire from graduates to tackle one of the major social challenges of our time and provide the skills that will equip you for many future careers.

We are particularly pleased that our first graduates will so visibly challenge the misconception that prison officers are older, white men.

This recruitment drive forms part of the Secretary of State's prison reform agenda, where 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**

- Published figures show that the current rate of prison officer recruitment is at its highest level since 2007.

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](#)