

[Sturgeon warned that inmates are taking advantage of 'breaking point' prison guards](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Sturgeon warned that inmates are taking advantage of 'breaking point' prison guards

25 Jan 2019



Scottish prison officers have warned the First Minister that they are at "breaking point", and inmates are now "taking advantage" of the situation.

In a letter published by the Scottish Government through Freedom of Information, one prison officer – who described himself as an SNP voter – laid bare the bleak situation going on in prisons.

He told her: "The prisoners can see we are basically at breaking point and are taking advantage of this for their own agenda."

In addition, he criticised potential staff cuts in jails at a time of "higher NPS use, staff assaults, prisoner assaults, prisoners getting younger and more violent, convictions of organised crime gangs".

Shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr outlined his concern at the revelations, adding that the SNP's soft-touch approach is undermining discipline throughout the justice system.

He repeated a call made last week by the Scottish Conservatives for all prison officers to be given body-worn cameras to increase protection, and urged ministers to ensure guards are sufficiently resourced to deal with increasing challenges inside.

Scottish Conservative shadow justice secretary Liam Kerr said:

"This allegation is truly shocking.

"The SNP-supporting prison officer appears to be suggesting that the party's prison policy is giving convicted criminals an 'advantage' in jail.

"That would severely undermine discipline and safety within Scottish prisons at a time of rising threats.

"Scottish prison officers are dealing with the most dangerous criminals on a daily basis – the SNP simply cannot expect them to do that without proper support.

“As a first step the SNP must consider rolling out of body-worn cameras to all prison officers, as they have been in the rest of the UK.

“Prison officers clearly feel unsafe, the SNP must urgently address that.”