

# The Government cannot build its way out of the prison crisis, say Greens

Responding to the Justice Secretary, Shabana Mahmood's announcement that prisons may run out of space despite government plans to open 14,000 more prison places, Green Party MP Siân Berry said,

"The justice secretary is facing the reality that however fast the Government builds prisons, at the current rates of offending and reoffending, the respite from the current crisis of overcrowding will only last a handful of years.

"Instead of building more prisons, a planned programme of prevention and more effective alternatives to incarceration is required, particularly for women, young people and offenders whose crimes are driven by poverty and destitution.

"We need wholesale reform of short prison sentences, a focus on providing a real new start for people leaving prison, including safe housing, and a clear-headed look at the many ways people can repay their criminal debts to society more constructively."

She continued,

"At the heart of this crisis is a continuous error from successive governments – amplified by misleading front pages – in assuming that the way to reduce crime is to keep locking up more and more of our citizens.

"Reducing crime means investing in services and job opportunities for young people, and I am confident that Justice Minister Lord Timpson knows this.

"The only question is whether the Prime Minister is bold and brave enough to allow him to bring forward common-sense reforms to bring prison populations back down, rather than trying to build their way out of this crisis."

[Adblock test \(Why?\)](#)