

There is a real danger that our prisons will move beyond crisis to a full-blown emergency – Burgon

Richard Burgon MP, Labour's Shadow Justice Secretary, responding to the speech by Secretary of State David Lidington on prison reform, said:

"This speech was shockingly complacent, failing to outline a serious plan to tackle the prisons crisis caused by Tory cuts to staff numbers and budgets.

"One in four prisons has seen a fall in officer numbers over the last year, including those housing the most dangerous prisoners and those prisons that the government itself labels as being of concern. Yet the Secretary of State failed to guarantee that those prisons would see any increase in officer numbers. Nor did he set out a vision for tackling widespread prison overcrowding.

"When understaffing and overcrowding mean prisoners spend 23 hours a day locked-up in their cell, this makes a mockery of the government's claims that it is turning prisons into places of reform.

"With further drastic budget cuts planned by the Ministry of Justice over the coming years, there is a real danger that our prisons will move beyond crisis to a full-blown emergency."