

X-ray scanners stop over 1,000 illegal items entering prisons

Press release

Advanced X-ray body scanners have stopped over 1,376 illegal items, including drugs, weapons and phones, getting into prisons, just 4 months after being installed.



- game-changing X-ray technology finds over 1,000 illegal items within months of being installed
- 28 prisons across England and Wales now have the technology to bolster defences against drugs and mobile phones
- part of the government's £100 million package to tackle violence and boost security

The innovative equipment being rolled out across England and Wales is part of the government's bold £100 million package to boost security in prisons and crack down on crime behind bars.

The 28 scanners, developed specifically for the Prison Service, allow staff to see instantly whether prisoners are smuggling in illegal contraband items internally, and have picked up Spice, morphine tablets, mobile phones, SIM cards, phone chargers and tobacco. The illegal items would have been destined for the prison wings, fuelling the illicit economy and potential violence.

Prisons and Probation Minister, Lucy Frazer QC MP said:

Stopping the flow of illegal items into jails is a huge priority for us.

The scanners form part of our wider plan to step up security in prisons to cut crime and better protect the public.

HMP Hindley Governor, Natalie McKee, said:

We are confident this equipment will prove to be a successful deterrent to anyone wanting to smuggle illegal items into our establishment.

The X-ray body scanner supports our aim to provide a safe environment for our prison officers and the men in our prisons.

The cutting-edge technology is being installed at jails with high numbers of remand prisoners – posing the greatest risk of smuggling.

A further 24 scanners are due to be installed in prisons by March 2021.

The equipment is being funded by the government's £2.75 billion commitment to transform the prison estate. This includes:

- £100 million to bolster prison security, clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence, self-harm and crime behind bars
- £2.5 billion to provide 10,000 additional prison places and create modern, efficient jails that rehabilitate offenders, reduce reoffending and keep the public safe
- £156 million to tackle the most pressing maintenance issues to create safe and decent conditions for offender rehabilitation.

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