

Press release: Justice Secretary visits HMP Wayland to see reform in action

- Elizabeth Truss thanks staff at HMP Wayland for their vital work in delivering major reforms to improve safety and turn prisoners lives around
- Follows the launch of Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service, giving governors greater autonomy to improve security and recruit staff
- Major recruitment drive across the prison estate as part of £100 million investment for 2,500 additional officers and specific funding for Wayland to tackle violence

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss, today (12 April 2017) paid tribute to the vital work of the Governor and staff at HMP Wayland as part of a nationwide tour of prisons to see reform in action.

The visit comes after the launch of Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS), a world-leading agency, which put governors firmly in the driving seat with the power and budget to determine how their prisons are run.

Since taking up post, the Justice Secretary has taken significant action to boost safety, announcing £100 million a year to recruit 2,500 prison officers to bolster the frontline and increase staff numbers.

A further £10 million has been invested for increased security measures in a number of prisons. HMP Wayland received a cash boost of over £200,000 which they are using to recruit new specialist staff to reduce violence as well as deterrents such as mobile phone detectors and improved CCTV.

Today the Justice Secretary sat down with the Governor and officers at HMP Wayland to hear first-hand how the reforms and security investment are helping to improve the prison.

Speaking after the visit, the Justice Secretary said:

I am committed to making prisons safe and decent places to live and work, reducing the risk of reoffending and in turn creating fewer victims of crime.

I have always been clear that as well as punishing offenders, our prisons must become places of safety and reform. We must do all we can to give prisoners the best chance to turn their lives around.

I came to Wayland today to make sure staff know I'm committed to giving them the support they need to do their jobs safely and securely.

The Justice Secretary recently unveiled the landmark Prisons and Court Reform Bill which paves the way for prisons to take action against people who break the law and give offenders the vital skills they need to turn their backs on crime.

With prison governors being given greater control over how they run their establishments – a key commitment in the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper – Wayland is creating necessary links with local employers to help reduce the risk of reoffending. This will help transform the lives of offenders by getting them into employment, with training opportunities which have secured sustained job opportunities with local employers including Camden Boss.

In the coming months, the Justice Secretary and Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah will continue to visit prisons across England and Wales to maintain their discussions with prison officers and governors and see wholesale reforms in action.