

Press release: £12m pay boost to strengthen prison frontline and attract new recruits

- Prison officers at 31 prisons to receive immediate pay increase
- Thousands of staff to benefit from specialist training opportunities in skills such as self-harm and suicide prevention – further professionalising and building pride in the service

Thousands of frontline staff in London and the South East will benefit from an immediate boost to their pay, thanks to a new £12 million package announced today by Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss.

The new package will mean prison officers at the 31 establishments will see a pay boost of up to £5,000, with new recruits receiving higher starting salaries. New starters will receive up to £29,500 – an increase of £5,000 – while a prison officer in London could see earnings increase to £31,000.

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss said:

Prison officers do a challenging and demanding job day in and day out. I want frontline staff to know that their work, experience and loyal service is valued. We also want to attract the best new talent into the service, ensuring we recruit and retain the leaders of the future.

These hard-working, dedicated staff are key to delivering our ambitious reform agenda, and it is right that we offer them greater support as we move ever closer to transforming prisons into places of safety and reform.

Thousands of new learning and development opportunities which will help staff progress in their career will also be made available nationwide.

As part of a comprehensive strategy to further professionalise and upskill the service, staff who take part in the new training scheme will be required to support and mentor colleagues – handing down knowledge and supporting future leaders.

They will also be given specialist training in mental health and self-harm prevention, boosting their pay and progression in the Prison Service.

This investment supports the government's nationwide recruitment drive to recruit the best talent from around the country.

Governors at 30 prisons across the country have also been given greater freedom and flexibility to attract and recruit locally, reducing the time it takes to get new recruits through the door. Applicants will also be able to visit the prison before they take up post, and be in touch with a mentor while the recruitment process is underway

This wholesale, organisational reform will be supported by measures within the Prisons and Court Bill, which will set out a new framework and clear system of accountability for prisons, building on the wide-ranging reforms set out in the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper.

Today's news comes just days after ministers announced a new frontline service focused on reforming offenders and cutting crime, to launch from April 2017. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service will have full responsibility for the operational management of offenders in custody and the community, including strengthening security in prisons, tackling extremism and building intelligence about criminal gangs.

Notes to editors:

The pay increase will be granted to Band 3 Officers on Fair and Sustainable (F&S) terms at eligible prisons.

The prisons include: Aylesbury, Bedford, Bullingdon, Coldingley, Cookham Wood, Downview, Elmley, Feltham, Grendon, High Down, Highpoint, Huntercombe, Medway, Send, Stanford Hill, Swaleside, The Mount, Woodhill, Brixton, Belmarsh, Isis, Pentonville, Rochester, Wandsworth, Wormwood Scrubs, Erlestoke, Lewes, Whitemoor, Chelmsford, Guys Marsh and Littlehey.

The new award replaces existing pay increments for staff at the most difficult-to-recruit prisons.

Since publication of the White Paper

- 389 job offers have been made to new recruits wanting to join the Prison Service which puts the government on track to recruit the first 400 of the additional frontline officers committed to be in place by March 2017
- we are appointing 75 mentors for new starter Prison Officers to help them in their first few months in the job which we know can be a difficult time
- we have started targeted local recruitment initiatives at 30 sites so that governors can more easily recruit the people they need
- we are launching a new Prison Officer apprenticeship scheme that will help increase diversity and make it easier to join the Prison Service
- we have launched a new graduate scheme to attract people from top universities to join the Service
- we have launched a Troops to Officers scheme that will support people to join the Prison Service after leaving the military.

News story: Defence Secretary: Britain committed to leading European security

Sir Michael told the annual Munich Security Conference that while Britain is leaving the European Union, the UK would not be stepping back from its role in European security.

Britain's leadership this year is demonstrated by two new major commitments to the NATO Alliance:

- Leading NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, otherwise known as the 'spearhead force'. This UK-led NATO Brigade is ready and willing to respond to any threat the Alliance faces and shows how NATO is strengthening its collective defence and deterrence.
- Deploying a battle group of around 800 personnel to lead in Estonia NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, another way in which NATO is stepping up to deter threats. Britain will deploy as part of the battle group the United States is leading in Poland, with over 100 troops.

The Defence Secretary also met with his German counterpart, Ursula von der Leyen, where he discussed the unprecedented level of cooperation between the two countries. Sir Michael also welcomed Germany's commitment to increase its defence spending.

Sir Michael, along with the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, yesterday launched Britain's new strategy for engaging more internationally in defence activity.

The International Defence Engagement Strategy is the way in which all defence activity, short of combat operations, work abroad to prevent conflict, build stability and gain influence internationally.

Speaking at the Munich Secretary Conference, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Britain is committed to Europe's security, and we're stepping up our engagement internationally. Whether defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, deploying with our NATO Allies to deter threats, or engaging globally to help countries develop their security, Britain is playing a major role – and will continue to do so.

The Defence Secretary also confirmed that Britain would keep the momentum up in the fight against Daesh. In Iraq and Syria, the RAF are flying day and night to defeat Daesh.

The RAF hit over 300 targets as part of recent operations to liberate eastern Mosul, and is now focussing efforts on the approaches to the west of the city, where it is expected the liberation operation will begin within days.

News story: Defence Secretary calls on NATO to be fitter, faster, more agile

Attending the annual Munich Security Conference, Sir Michael said the Alliance should not wait for another crisis before it modernises itself.

Calling for an ambitious programme of change, the Defence Secretary outlined three areas for a fitter, faster, more agile NATO:

- Greater flexibility for NATO's top commanders, including the power to move more staff resources around to meet current and future threats.
- Less duplication – the Alliance has five financial control centres.
- Increased coherence – Sir Michael outlined that while improvements were being made, particularly in the merging of intelligence structures, more needed to be done to break down silos.

Describing Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 as a "wake up call" for NATO, the Defence Secretary said NATO members needed to invest more on defence and called on Allies to increase spending every year until the 2% Defence Investment Pledge, agreed at the UK hosted NATO summit in 2014, is met.

At the same time NATO should strengthen its relationships with other organisations, particularly the EU, while avoiding duplication.

Defence Secretary also called on NATO to project stability beyond its borders, by working globally to improve the security areas of fragile nations.

Speaking last night at the conference, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We want a fitter, faster, more agile NATO. This means more spending on defence by all the Allies, faster, more flexible decision making, and stronger partnerships.

Britain yesterday [launched](#) its International Defence Engagement Strategy, which contained a new plan for how the UK will strengthen cooperation with Allies and partners, allowing Britain to collectively pack a more powerful punch.

Greens denounce Ministers' pandering to industry lobbyists on plastic pollution



18 February 2017

Keith Taylor MEP: 'These latest revelations expose the Government's shameful decision to kowtow to industry lobbyists and roll back important recycling progress.'

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East, has issued a stinging criticism of government Ministers as documents reveal the [influence of plastics industry lobbying](#) on the decision to cut UK recycling targets. The revelations come as the latest 'Great Winter Nurdle Hunt' uncovers [widespread plastic pollution](#) on Britain's beaches.

The UK government quietly reduced recycling targets for plastic waste last year, after dozens of lobby groups and plastic producers pushed for lower rates, according to documents obtained by Energydesk.

Energydesk obtained 62 of the 63 responses to a government consultation on recycling targets.

The majority of respondents to the consultation were plastic producers or industry groups. Of those, all pushed for a reduction in the targets.

Keith, a member of the European Parliament's Environment Committee, said:

"Plastic pollution is choking our oceans and our beaches, but the documents obtained this week demonstrate the UK Government appears more concerned with protecting the profit margins of multinational corporations and industry lobbyists than safeguarding Britain's natural environment."

"It is extremely concerning that almost three-quarters of UK beaches are blighted by the raw materials of the plastic industry. These plastic pellets pose a significant threat to our precious wildlife and damage the health of our oceans and seas."

"These latest revelations expose the Government's shameful decision to kowtow to industry lobbyists and roll back important recycling progress. Far from

being a party working for the many, the Conservatives prove, once again, they are the party of powerful and privileged vested interests.”

“We cannot let the Government use the EU referendum as an excuse further water down essential recycling targets. The [EU Circular Economy Package](#) sets an ambitious and common EU-wide target for recycling 75% of packaging waste by 2030. Ministers must make a firm commitment to maintaining and implementing these ambitious targets post-Brexit.”

“Plastic pollution does not respect borders nor national sovereignty. For the sake of the health of our oceans and our beaches, to protect our precious environment and our beloved wildlife, Theresa May must also commit to maintaining a close relationship with our European neighbours to combat the problem.”

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Press release: Prime Minister's plans to transform the way we tackle domestic violence and abuse

Theresa May has today announced plans to transform the way we think about and tackle domestic violence and abuse – one of the most widespread and heinous offences, but one where victims are often let down by the legal system.

Domestic violence and abuse shatters lives but the way we deal with it at the moment does not go far enough – with a plethora of different offences and procedures scattered across the statute book.

This lack of clarity has led to an unacceptable diversity across the country in terms of the degree of effort put in to try and tackle it. Although the prosecution of, and convictions for, such offences have started to improve in recent years, there is inconsistency in the use and effectiveness of the various law enforcement measures across the country.

In recognition of this, the Prime Minister has announced plans for a major new programme of work leading towards bringing forward a Domestic Violence and Abuse Act.

The programme of work will look at what more can be done to improve support for victims especially in the way the law, and legal procedures, currently

work for such victims. Experts in this area will be invited to contribute ideas and proposals for improving the way the system works which is likely to lead to legislation – making it much easier for law enforcement bodies to find and use more consistently the measures at their disposal. The Prime Minister will also ask for any potential ‘quick wins’ in the intervening period to be identified and acted upon. The Prime Minister will directly oversee this work, which will be truly cross-governmental – but co-ordinated by the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice.

Like the [Modern Slavery Act](#), the Prime Minister believes that the measures that come out of this work will raise public awareness of the problem – as well as encourage victims to report their abusers and see them brought to justice.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Domestic violence and abuse is a life shattering and absolutely abhorrent crime; tackling it is a key priority for this government – and something I have always attached a personal importance to, both as Home Secretary and now as Prime Minister. I am clear that we need to build on the [measures I introduced as Home Secretary](#) – including the new offence of ‘Controlling and Coercive Behaviour’, Domestic Violence Protection Orders, and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme – and ensure that no stone will be left unturned in delivering a system that increases convictions, and works better for victims.

She added:

I believe that the plans I have announced today have the potential to completely transform the way we think about and tackle domestic violence and abuse. There are thousands of people who are suffering at the hands of abusers – often isolated, and unaware of the options and support available to them to end it. Given the central importance of victim evidence to support prosecutions in this area, raising public awareness – as well as consolidating the law – will prove crucial.