

[Strict compliance of 'Flag Code of India, 2002' and 'The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971'](#)

The Ministry of Home Affairs has issued an Advisory to the Chief Secretaries/Administrators of all State Governments/UT Administrations,

[I&B Minister meets Ethiopian Communication Affairs Minister](#)

India and Ethiopia have agreed to strengthen the cooperation in critical areas related to communication and outreach. The cooperation would be worked out through a policy and institutional framework in the various domains

[Press release: Justice Secretary announces plans to create 5,000 modern prison places](#)

- New builds to create up to 2,000 construction jobs and generate millions of pounds to British economy
- Builds on the government's commitment to create up to 10,000 modern places, aimed at reducing overcrowding and creating the right conditions for reform.

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss has today unveiled plans for the building of 4 new prisons in England and Wales – creating 5,000 modern prison places and replacing old and overcrowded establishments with new, fit for purpose buildings.

Sites in Full Sutton in Yorkshire; Hindley in Wigan; Rochester in Kent and Port Talbot in South Wales have been earmarked for development as part of the government's commitment to build up to 10,000 modern prison places by 2020, backed by £1.3 billion to transform the estate.

As well as creating modern establishments fit for the twenty-first century,

the proposed new builds will also act as a boost to regional economies across the country – creating up to 2,000 jobs in the construction and manufacturing industries and new opportunities for local businesses.

Final decisions on the new prisons will be subject to planning approvals, as well as value for money and affordability.

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss said:

We cannot hope to reduce reoffending until we build prisons that are places of reform where hard work and self-improvement flourish.

Outdated prisons, with dark corridors and cramped conditions, will not help offenders turn their back on crime – nor do they provide our professional and dedicated prison officers with the right tools or environment to do their job effectively.

This significant building programme will not only help create a modern prison estate where wholesale reform can truly take root, but will also provide a thriving, economic lifeline for the local community – creating hundreds of jobs for local people and maximising opportunities for businesses.

Today's announcement comes weeks after the opening of HMP Berwyn – the new, modern prison in north Wales which will hold over 2,000 prisoners. The construction of this new prison has already contributed over £100 million to the local economy and created around 150 jobs and apprenticeships before doors have even opened.

In creating a modern prison estate, old and inefficient prisons will be closed and replaced by the new accommodation. A programme of valuation work will now begin to help inform further decisions about the estate. Announcements on prison closures will be made later in the year.

Today's announcement builds on ambitious reforms to improve safety in prisons, including an additional £100 million to bolster frontline staff by 2,500.

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.

1. We will be applying for outline planning permission for new prisons in Yorkshire, the North West, Kent and South Wales.
 2. A Written Ministerial Statement detailing further information will be published at 0930 Wednesday 22 March.
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[News story: Almost half of UK financial services staff now covered by ground breaking Women in Finance Charter](#)

33,000 extra staff in the UK now covered by the plan to tackle gender inequality in financial services.

The news comes on the first anniversary of the charter, with 122 firms, employing over half a million people in the UK and covering almost 50% of the financial services sector, now signed up.

The [Women in Finance Charter](#), launched a year ago today, asks financial firms to commit to four industry actions to build the female talent pipeline for leadership positions. The Charter's innovative approach has been an unprecedented success with some of the UK's biggest and most well established firms signing up.

The latest signatories include retail banks such as CYBG, payment firms such as VocaLink, global banks such as the Royal Bank of Canada, insurers like Ageas UK, and other firms including Pinsent Masons LLP and NS&I, while Bank of America Merrill Lynch is the latest firm with headquarters in the US to sign up.

Since the Charter launched, 77 financial services firms have committed to have at least 30% women in senior roles by 2021 and 23 firms have committed to a 50/50 gender split in senior roles by 2021. New signatories will announce their targets in June.

The Commercial Secretary, Baroness Neville-Rolfe, said:

I know how difficult it can be for a woman to get the recognition she deserves and achieve her potential. And in financial services particularly, women progress too slowly or they leave the sector completely.

We have made a strong start – the first anniversary of the [Women in Finance Charter](#) sees 122 firms seizing the competitive advantage by tackling sex inequality head on.

But this is just the beginning. The financial industry is famed for its ability to identify opportunities to improve productivity. The [Women in Finance Charter](#) is one of those opportunities. It offers the chance to increase diversity of thought and for the financial services sector to better reflect the society it serves. This is why I encourage firms across the UK to step up and sign the Charter.

Jayne-Anne Gadhia, CEO of Virgin Money and the government's Women in Finance Champion, said:

I am delighted with the strong and ongoing momentum of the Women in Finance Charter. A truly diverse financial services sector will drive productivity and underpin the UK's position as a strong and competitive economy. There is still further to go and I urge more businesses to commit to the charter so that they can play their part in building an economy that works for everyone.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch is the latest firm with headquarters in the US to sign up, joining the likes of Morgan Stanley, BNY Mellon, BlackRock, Circle and Thomson Reuters. This proves that there are no barriers for international firms to show their commitment to gender parity by signing the Charter.

Alex Wilmot-Sitwell, President, EMEA at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, said:

Bank of America Merrill Lynch has a long history of supporting women's leadership and economic empowerment, but there is clearly more to be done.

Increasing the number of senior women and addressing gender balance is crucial for our long-term success. This means supporting and engaging women at all levels, to ensure a strong pipeline of talent.

We are wholly supportive of the Women in Finance Charter and the positive impact it will have on our industry.

FinTechs have also responded to the government's call to action with nine signing up including Nutmeg, RateSetter, Starling, Monzo, Zerado, Azimo, and FINTECH Circle.

The [Gadhia review](#) looked at the issue of unequal gender representation in financial services and found that in UK financial services female representation was around 23% on boards, but only 14% on executive committees. It is estimated that equalising the role of men and women in the labour market could increase GDP by 10% by 2030.

On 29th June, HM Treasury, in partnership with [GrowthBusiness.co.uk](#), What Investment magazine and Virgin Money, will launch the inaugural [Women in Finance Awards](#) at The Savoy in London.

These awards will celebrate the individuals and organisations who are leading change by driving the gender diversity agenda in financial services.

[News story: System launched to help tackle harms from new psychoactive substances](#)

Last year, according to the 2015 to 2016 Crime Survey for England and Wales, one in 40 (2.5%) young adults aged 16 to 24 took a new psychoactive substance and there is evidence of widespread use among vulnerable adults such as prisoners and homeless people. Whilst specialist services are responding, these harms are often poorly understood in frontline healthcare services and there is little guidance available to them.

Public Health England (PHE) in collaboration with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is piloting a national system to help better monitor the negative effects of NPS and share best treatment practice across a variety of settings, including A&E, sexual health clinics, mental health services, prison health services, drug treatment services and GP surgeries.

The UK-wide, easy to use Report Illicit Drug Reaction (RIDR) system will be accessible to all front line health staff. Information about the drug and its effects will be recorded anonymously using an online portal. Data from the tool will be analysed by experts to identify patterns of symptoms and harms. This will be used to inform treatment guidance and help staff deal more quickly with unknown substances, and improve patient safety.

Rosanna O'Connor, Director of Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco at PHE, said:

The contents of NPS frequently change and their effects can be dangerous and unpredictable. These substances can cause serious problems to both mental and physical health.

Last year's ban has helped reduce their easy availability, but we are still seeing the most vulnerable groups, particularly, the homeless, prisoners and some young people, suffering the greatest harm from these substances.

The new RIDR system will help health staff better deal with the emerging challenges we are seeing. We want to encourage all frontline staff in settings such as A&E, sexual health clinics, prisons, drug and mental health services, to use the system, which over time will greatly increase our knowledge of these new substances and ultimately improve patient care.

Dr Sarah Elise Finlay, Emergency Medicine Consultant, Imperial College

Healthcare NHS Trust, said:

The information and advice provided by this new system will ultimately ease some of the burden and stress of managing those tricky overdose and poisoning cases in the early hours over the weekend in emergency settings.

Emergency services are facing significant pressure, which is why we've made the RIDR system as easy as possible for health staff. It's great to know that, in future, help will be at hand for health staff dealing with the harms of these often unknown new drugs.

More information, including on how to register, is available on the [RIDR website](#).