

# Prison Governors Association

Representing: The Prison Governors of the United Kingdom since 1987



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## PRESS RELEASE

### JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT ON PRISONS – A RESPONSE BY THE PGA

The Prison Governors' Association (PGA) welcomes the findings of the Justice Committee report on prisons. The report reinforces what the PGA has been saying to the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the Prisons Minister for some time.

The PGA has been concerned with the scale and pace of change that has taken place in prisons over the last five years. There have been around 13 prison closures, an introduction of new terms and conditions, a further introduction of a new operating benchmark and a loss of around a third of our staff. All of these changes have taken place against a backdrop of an increase in incidents of self-inflicted harm, an increase in deaths in custody, higher levels of serious assaults and an influx of new psychoactive substances into our prisons.

The PGA has already requested that NOMS reviews its operating model, which was implemented three years ago, to take account of the changes in the population and the impact of 'legal highs', which are still not fully understood. These problems have been contributed to by the huge reduction in staffing levels, and the resultant loss of experience, without a proportionate reduction in the prison population. This policy now has staff feeling less secure about the environment they work in and less able to address many of the issues the report refers to.

The report acknowledges indications of rapid deterioration in standards of safety and levels of performance and the chronic low levels of staff morale. This echoes comments made by the Prison Service Pay Review Body, but despite this a significant number of PGA members will not get a pay rise and, with the cumulative effect of increased pension payments, will be financially worse off. PGA members up and down the country are feeling very angry.

In summary, the PGA is not surprised with the findings of the report because, as governors working in complex and difficult environments, we are dealing with these challenges on a daily basis with less autonomy and fewer resources.

**Please note that this is embargoed and is not to be printed in full, in part or in any form before 00.01am on Wednesday 18 March, 2015.** Thank you for your cooperation.

National Officers  
PGA

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Note for editors:

The Prison Governors Association was founded in October 1987 to represent the higher operational managers in the Prison Service in England and Wales. The PGA was placed on the register of Trade Unions on 6 November 1987 (No. 639T). On 28 July 1988 the Certification Officer under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1974 issued the Prison Governors Association with a Certificate of Independence. The status of the Prison Governors Association is that of an independent registered Trade Union.

For more information contact Stephen O'Connell, President, and / or John Attard, Dave Hoskins or Mark Icke, National Officers via the PGA office (Tel: 0300 047 5781 or 0300 047 5780).

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