

# Prison Governors Association

Representing: The Prison Governors of the United Kingdom since 1987



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Prison Reform

The PGA was surprised with the statement made by the Prime Minister, David Cameron MP, in regards to the so-called “scandalous failure of prisons”. It is not often that the government confesses on such a public stage to its own failures and even less common to hear it from a Prime Minister. The assertion that there is a lack of talented leadership in our prisons is untrue. The stripping out of resources, including severe staffing reductions, has been the policy of the Government and of the senior management within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) for many years now.

Almost every function within our prisons has been centralised, from choosing who provides education and health to who changes the lights. The number of staff, including governors, has been drastically reduced yet at the same time the prisoner population has increased. This has led to an increase in the workloads of all staff, increasing stress levels and sickness rates, which has further exacerbated the problem. There has also been an increase, beyond acceptable levels, in violence, self-harm, self-inflicted deaths and the loss of good order. However, these failures cannot be laid at the doorstep of hardworking and overstretched staff who are doing their best to maintain an effective service.

Prison Governors will, of course, welcome an increase in autonomy subject to knowing what that actually entails. The PGA will continue to work constructively with the Ministry of Justice and NOMS's senior management but will robustly defend the hard work, commitment and dedication of those governors who have made astonishing progress with chronically diminishing resources.

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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.

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Thank you.