

Prison Governors Association

Representing: The Prison Governors of the United Kingdom since 1987



PGA Office: Room 3.10
Clive House
70 Petty France,
London, SW1H 9EX

PGA Officers: President
Vice President
Finance Officer
National Officers

Andrea Albutt
Nick Pascoe
Shaun Williamson
John Attard
Dave Hoskins
Duncan Scales

Telephone: 020 3193 5770

Email: james.bryant01@hmps.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.prison-governors-association.org.uk

Twitter: @PGA_Prisons

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PRESS RELEASE – New Prison Places

The PGA welcomes the Ministerial Statement released today on future investment in new prison places.

Many of our prisons are not suitable for a modern 21st century service and a policy of new for old is sensible. We are hopeful that the new builds and re-development of existing sites will include all that is required to deliver a culture of rehabilitation including safety, decency and security.

This renewed focus on building prisons fit for purpose, along with sufficient resources to run them, will make a meaningful contribution to reducing reoffending. However, this is also dependent on the empowerment that government promised governors not being diluted, which appears to be happening as contracts are being developed. Getting these right is crucial and the setting of performance targets must be more than mere measures for the production of meaningless league tables.

It is also important to state that the new build programme addresses only a part of a much bigger challenge, specifically the recruitment of staff at all grades, not just prison officers. The Prison Service has had to shed over 500 governors in the last four to five years with no plans to replace them and, put simply, prisons will struggle to run well without them.

We would expect the existing policy of redeployment of staff to be applied, particularly during this very difficult to recruit period, if closures are announced.

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 James Bryant, Office Manager, on 0203 193 5770 (Email: james.bryant01@hmps.gsi.gov.uk)