



Royal College
of Nursing

EPSU Prison Network

UK Prison Health Care
An RCN perspective



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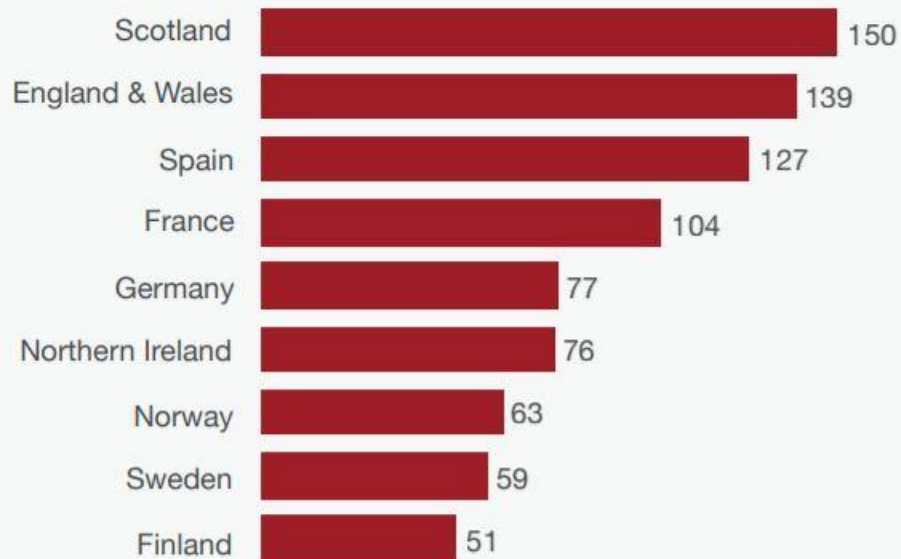
Tweet your support for the industrial action of RCN members (other unions too) in Northern Ireland



11, 12, 18 December

Sentencing and the use of custody

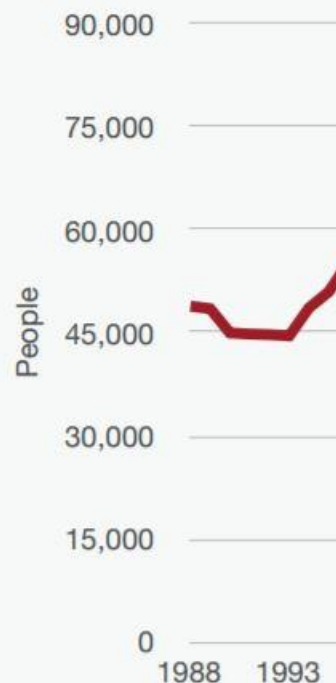
Scotland and England and Wales have the highest imprisonment rates in western Europe



Prison population rate
(per 100,000 population)

Source: International Centre for Prison Studies, 24 May 2019

The prison population last 30 years—b



Source: Offender management
Population and capacity brief

317

People died in prison in the year to March 2019



Over a quarter were self-inflicted

of which 83 were men and 4 were women

Self-inflicted deaths are 6.2 times more likely in prison than in the general population.

Self-harm

Rates of self-harm are at the highest level ever recorded



Safety in prisons

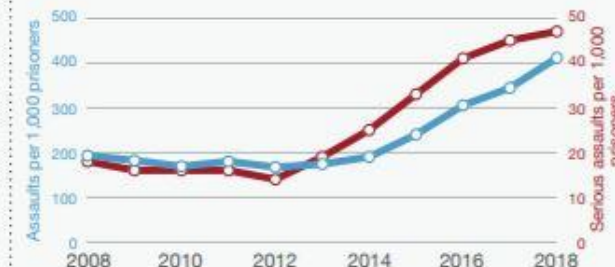
Safety in prisons has deteriorated rapidly over the last seven years. Prisoners and staff are less safe than they have been at any point since records began, with more self-harm and assaults than ever before. Despite a brief decline, the number of self-inflicted deaths is rising once again.

Rates of death in prison continue to rise after a brief decline—and have almost doubled in the last decade.



Assaults

Assaults and serious assaults are at the highest levels ever recorded

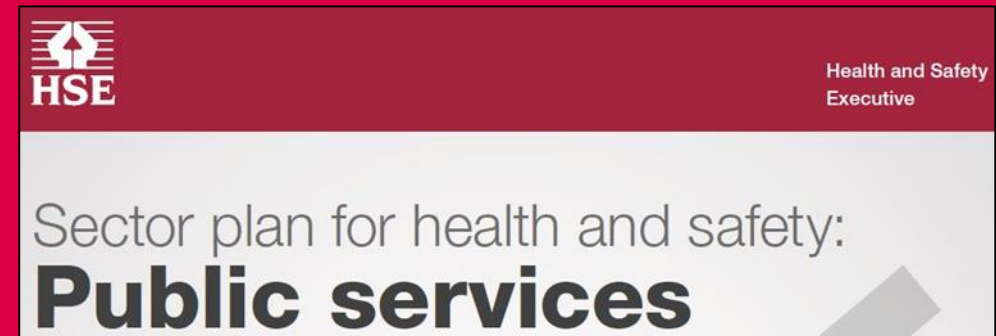


Prior to RCN Congress '18

Two significant issues raised by RCN members:

- Violence against nursing staff working in prisons
- Secondary Exposure to Psychoactive Substances

Health & Safety Executive
HMPPS (E&W)



Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service

Working together

- RCN Resources
- Other resources
- RCN expertise
- Engaging with members & employers
- Media & Parliament



Royal College
of Nursing



Nursing staff in prison settings: 'Holding keys', 'escorting prisoners' or 'opening cells'

Prison spice epidemic putting nursing staff at risk

Following pressure from the RCN, the prison service will review guidance on staff from exposure to psychoactive substances. The decision to update the RCN members reported suffering from the effects of inhaling spice and substances.

At a meeting with the RCN, Michael Spurr, Chief Executive Officer of HM Prison Service (HMPPS), agreed to work with the College to update guidance for clinical staff dealing with unpredictable and dangerous psychoactive substances.

- [Prison guidance to be updated to protect nursing staff from spice](#)
- [Prison spice epidemic putting nursing staff at risk](#)
- [Unsafe place. Fumes from psychoactive drugs like spice are putting...](#)



Royal College of Nursing response to the House of Commons Health and Social Care Select Committee inquiry into prison healthcare

Summary

- Nursing staff are on the frontline of delivering health care to those in prison, yet they increasingly find themselves unable to provide high-quality, person centred care to their patients. Staffing pressures, poor opportunities for development and training, and an increasingly challenging and risky working environment has contributed to staff feeling undervalued and unsupported.
- The environment that nursing staff in prisons face every day is tough. Overcrowding, increased drug use, violence and the high number of prisoners dying by suicides have left the prison system in crisis and staff traumatised and exhausted. Across the UK, the prison population is ageing, bringing fresh challenges for those providing care.
- The challenges faced by prison nurses mean this under-served population is not having their essential needs met. In May 2017, we surveyed our members working in prison settings to ask them about conditions on their last shift. Of all respondents to the survey, those working in prisons rated the quality of care most poorly, with 64% reporting that care was compromised on their last shift and 45% attributing this to staff shortages.¹

Recommendations

- **Comprehensive workforce planning to ensure appropriate nursing staffing levels to ensure the delivery of safe and effective care for patients.** This means the right numbers of nursing staff, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time across all prison healthcare settings regardless of provider, to meet the holistic needs of the prison population.
- **Strategic action is needed to attract, recruit and retain nursing staff to address nursing staff shortages.** This should include raising the profile of nursing opportunities offered within prison settings. Alongside this, current nursing staff must have access to continuous professional development opportunities to develop and expand their skills and knowledge. This will also be crucial for retaining current nursing staff working in prison settings and equip them to meet fast changing patient needs.
- **More consistent access to opportunities which support the health, safety and wellbeing of nursing staff working in prison healthcare settings.** Employers must do more to create safe working environments for nursing staff in prison healthcare settings, ensuring their protection from exposure to violence, aggression and physical attacks. This will be central to retaining the current workforce.
- **The Secretary of State for Health and Care should provide direct (ring-fenced) funding to improve the pay of all nurses working in prison settings** employed by contractors delivering NHS services, to prevent a dangerous imbalance of nurses moving from the independent sector to the NHS because of better pay.
- **The Secretary of State for Health and Care should develop a new national staff council to cover all nurses and healthcare assistants delivering health and social care who are not directly employed by an NHS organisation.** A new inclusive sector council would provide a mechanism to improve workforce planning, recruitment, retention, staff engagement, employment skills, standards of care and productivity across independent health and social care.
- **A review of the guidance related to psychoactive substances,** particularly in light of the emergence of the Spice drug and its detrimental impact on both prisoners and nursing staff.



Health and Safety
Executive

Sector plan for health and safety: **Public services**



Nursing in justice and forensic health care

Nursing in prisons, police custody, immigration centres and other secure care settings



Supporting Nursing Staff Caring for Patients From Places of Detention



 **Healthy Workplace, Healthy You**
Supporting employers and RCN representatives to improve working environments and the wellbeing of nursing staff

HOME ABOUT RCN REPS EMPLOYERS TOOLKIT PLEDGE BLOG HEALTHY YOU CASE STUDIES



That this meeting of RCN Congress calls on Council to work with employers to improve the morale and working conditions of prison nursing staff across the UK.

This resolution passed.

Nursing staff are on the frontline of delivering health care to those in prison, yet they increasingly find themselves unable to provide high-quality, personcentred care to their patients.



Birth of Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance



Safe inside

www.ucu.org.uk/jupa



Safe inside www.ucu.org.uk/jupa

New research shows shocking impact of violence and drug use on staff working in prisons

Over a quarter (26 per cent) of staff working in prisons have been the victim of physical violence within the last year, according to new figures from a coalition of trade unions and professional organisations.

The survey, published by the Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance*, showed that one in seven (14 per cent) of staff who reported experiencing recent physical violence have been assaulted more than ten times in the past year.

Of those who reported a physical assault to their employer, 57 per cent were dissatisfied with the action taken. In a further 20 per cent of cases, respondents said no action was taken at all. Almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of survey respondents reported feeling unsafe at work in the last twelve months.

17 JUN 2019

RCN joins other unions calling for urgent action to stop violence against nursing staff and other workers in prisons.



The RCN says that violence against staff in prisons should be seen as exceptional, and always unacceptable.



<https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/news/uk-violence-against-prison-staff-almost-routine-170619>

Safe inside

www.ucu.org.uk/jupa

Calls for action:

- Tackling violence against all staff in prisons, including the targeting of violence against women workers
- Preventing exposure of all staff to Spice/psychoactive substances
- All workers to have proper access to health & safety systems
- Effective consultation with unions on Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work
- Safe staffing levels of prison officers and all staff working in prisons to ensure we can achieve the other objectives

Safe inside

www.ucu.org.uk/jupa

Next steps:

- publicise & capitalise on opportunities
 - Parliament
 - HMPPS
 - HSE
 - Safety Summit (25 February 2020)
- further develop member engagement
- continued RCN UK wide collaboration

Safe inside

Improving the morale and working conditions of prison nursing staff and other prison workers in the UK

RCN Safe staffing

#SafeStaffingSavesLives

Safe staffing means having enough nursing staff with the right skills and knowledge, in the right place, at the right time. Without safe staffing levels in place, nursing staff are struggling to provide patients with the safe and effective care they would like to, and which patients deserve.

We're calling for safe and effective care to be enshrined in law in each UK country.