EPSU Prison Network

UK Prison Health Care
An RCN perspective
Ann Norman (Professional Lead) & Brian Morton (National Officer) ( @BrianRCN )
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rate per 100,000 population</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
<td>139</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>127</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>104</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Northern Ireland</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>Sweden</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
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The prison population has increased over the past 30 years—

- 90,000 people in March 2019
- 75,000 people in 2008
- 60,000 people in 1993
- 45,000 people in 1988
- 30,000 people in 1990
- 15,000 people in 2012

Prison population rate (per 100,000 population)

Source: International Centre for Prison Studies, 24 May 2019

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.

317 people died in prison in the year to March 2019

- 87 deaths
- 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

-Assaults and serious assaults are at the highest levels ever recorded

Source: Offender manager population and capacity brief
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)
Working together

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

Prison spice epidemic putting nursing staff at risk

Following pressure from the RCN, the prison service will review guidance on the risk of staff exposure to psychoactive substances. The decision to update guidance for prison staff is due to the recent attempts to smuggle "spice" into prison. "Spice" is a potent psychoactive drug made from synthetic cannabinoids.

At a meeting with RCN officials, Michael Spurr, Chief Executive Officer of HM Prison Service (HMPPS), agreed to work with the College to update guidance on the risk of staff exposure to 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 health at risk

Recommendations:

- Comprehensive workplace planning is needed to ensure appropriate nursing staffing levels to ensure the delivery of safe and effective care for patients. This should include the right number of nursing staff, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time across all prison healthcare settings regardless of the type of service.
- Strategic action is needed to attract, retain and retain nursing staff to address nursing staff shortages. This should include raising the profile of nursing opportunities offered within prison settings. Additional time, current nursing staff must have access to substantial 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 the demands of patient needs.
- More consistent access to opportunities which support the health, safety and wellbeing of nursing staff working in prison healthcare settings. This requires improvement to create safer working environments for nursing staff in prison healthcare settings, ensuring their protective measures are exposed to violence, aggression and physical attacks. This will help deliver the best-down workload.
- 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 healthcare services. This will ensure nurses working in prison healthcare settings are protected from exposure to violence, aggression and physical attacks. This will help deliver the best-down workload.
- The Secretary of State for Health and Care should develop a new national staff referral system to cover all nurses and healthcare assistants delivering healthcare in prison and care who are not directly employed by an NHS organization. A new national staff referral system would provide a mechanism to improve workforce planning, recruitment, retention, staff engagement, employment skills, standards of care and proactively supports and protects health and social care.
- A review of the guidance related to psychoactive substances, in particular, the dangers of the emergence of Spice drug, and to determine impact on both prisoners and nursing staff.
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, person-centred care to their patients.
Birth of Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance

Royal College of Nursing

University and College Union

BMA
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.
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
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
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.