



THE ASSOCIATION OF PRISON LAWYERS
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[Justice Committee Prison Reform Inquiry](#)

JSC: Scope of the inquiry:

A list of topics that the Justice Committee welcomes written evidence on can be read [here](#).

"On the assumption that, as indicated by the new Secretary of State for Justice, Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, there will be no substantial change to the ambitious programme of reforms to prisons already announced—including the £1.3bn estate modernisation programme, the creation of reform prisons to give prison governors greater autonomy, and the implementation of Dame Sally Coates' education review—the Committee launches an inquiry on Prison Reform.

As details of the reforms are still emerging, we pose high-level questions in our inquiry's terms of reference. In doing so we wish to seek overall views initially which will be followed up in greater detail with a series of sub-inquiries following the publication of the White Paper expected in October 2016."

27 July 2016

The Justice Committee launches an inquiry into the Government programme of reforms to prisons.

Background

The Committee welcomes the announcements in the May 2016 Queen's Speech that prison reform would be the centrepiece of the Government's agenda.

On the assumption that, as indicated by the new Secretary of State for Justice, Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, there will be no substantial change to the ambitious programme of reforms to prisons already announced—including the £1.3bn estate modernisation programme, the creation of reform prisons to give prison governors greater autonomy, and the implementation of Dame Sally Coates' education review—the Committee launches an inquiry on Prison Reform.

At this stage, as details of the reforms are still emerging, we pose high-level questions in our inquiry's terms of reference. In doing so we wish to seek overall views initially which will be followed up in greater detail with a series of sub-inquiries following the publication of the White Paper expected in October 2016.

Terms of reference

The Committee welcomes written evidence on the following topics:

1. What should be the purpose(s) of prisons?
 - How should i) the prison estate modernisation programme and ii) reform prisons proposals best fit these purposes and deal most appropriately with those held?
 - What should be the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of
 - i) prison staff
 - ii) prison governors
 - iii) National Offender Management Service
 - iv) Ministry of Justice officials and Ministers and
 - v) other agencies and departmentsin creating a modern and effective prison system?
2. What are the key opportunities and challenges of the central components of prison reform so far announced by the Government, and their development and implementation?
3. What can be learnt from existing or past commissioning and procurement arrangements for i) private sector prisons and ii) ancillary prison services which have been outsourced?
4. What principles should be followed in constructing measures of performance for prisons?
5. What can be learnt from i) other fields, notably health and education and ii) other jurisdictions about the creation of prison trusts or foundations and related performance measures?
6. Are existing mechanisms for regulation and independent scrutiny of prisons fit for purpose?
7. What are the implications for prison reform of i) the Transforming Rehabilitation programme and ii) devolution of criminal justice budgets now and in the future?

The Committee is conscious that this inquiry covers a wide range of matters and will be grateful for submissions in response to any or all of the initial terms of reference to be made by 30 September 2016. The Committee's current plans are to conduct a series of sub-inquiries into discrete aspects of prison reform as the Government's programme develops, and further calls for evidence which will provide an opportunity for more detailed comment will be issued as appropriate.

Submitting written evidence: The deadline for written submissions is Friday 30 September 2016.