

Ministry of Justice: Prisons: Staff

Written Answers

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, Chair, Liaison Committee (Commons)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what steps his Department and HM Prison and Probation Service are taking to speed up security clearance for health and social care staff commencing employment in prisons.

Rory Stewart The Minister of State, Ministry of Justice

The last year has seen a significant increase in the level of recruitment with a target of deploying an additional 2,500 prison officers in post by the end of 2018. This has impacted the overall volume of cases handled by our shared services provider, due to significant increases in the number of applications handled. This has resulted in backlogs in processing across all of the business.

The right balance needs to be struck between having staff appropriately security cleared and the speed at which they can begin employment with HMPPS. Steps have been taken to review the whole recruitment end-to-end procedure to look at the points in which delays have or can take place. Action has been taken to address these and the backlog of cases has been reduced significantly from last year. This in turn, has also resulted in speedier processing times in security vetting for all staff.

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, Chair, Liaison Committee (Commons)

To ask the Secretary of State for Justice, what the average number of days taken was to gain security clearance for health and social care professionals seeking to commence employment in prisons in each of the last five financial years.

Rory Stewart The Minister of State, Ministry of Justice

The average number of days taken to complete security clearance for health and social care professionals seeking employment within HMPPS from 2016 has been provided in the table below.

We are unable to provide this information for cases prior to 2016, as a different operating system was used and to which the now service provider to HMPPS does not have access.

Financial Year

Average days

Â 2016-2017

Â 56

Â 2017-2018

Â 71

Â April 2018 to present

Â 37

Please note - that the information in the table for health and social care professionals has been collated based on the job title of the campaign and may be subject to slight variations.