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PCS calls on new government to invest in UK's prison service

Union warns of over-crowding and staff burnout

The Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union has called on the new government to invest in the UK's prison service to ease over-crowding and avoid staff burnout.

PCS members working in Offender Management Units to prepare prisoners for release have been put under massive pressure to free up cell spaces.

PCS general secretary Fran Heathcote said: "Many of our members working in prisons have reached breaking point because of the long hours they're working and the stress of not knowing when they will be given additional tasks to free up cells.

"Overcrowding leads to unsafe prisons – increased violence, increased time in cells with little access to rehabilitation and preparation for release, all of which heightens the risk to staff.

"We're not prepared to accept that risk, nor are we prepared to accept the burnout, stress, exhaustion and impact on the work-balance on our members."

PCS is calling for an incoming government to address sentencing policy, including the use of non-custodial sentences and community-based rehabilitation as well as society-wide investment in public services – education, housing, welfare and employment – which would lead to a reduction in crime.

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