

## Prison Reform Trust calls for increased funding for prison drug treatment

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Today a leading prison charity has called for "a complete moratorium on prison building" and a review of the scope of investment in public health in order to cut crime.

The Prison Reform Trust (PRT) argue in their 2009 *Bromley Briefing*, a compendium of statistics and research findings about prisons and prisoner experience, that "failure to take a cross-governmental approach to being tough on the causes of crime" has led to a worsening of health and social inequality.

The *Bromley Briefing* is a regular series of reports looking into the latest data on prisons and prisoner experience, prison spending and prison effectiveness. Key findings of the report include:

- epidemiological studies show that around 55 per cent of those received into custody are problem drug users. That equates to 70,000 a year, or 39,000 at any one time;
- according to the Home Office, one sixth of all problem drug users are in prison at any one time;
- in some inner city local prisons, as many as 8 out of 10 men are found to have class A substances in their system upon arrival;
- transfers between prisons due to overcrowding often disrupt drug treatment - National Audit Office research found that a third of prisons were unlikely to be able to continue the treatment of prisoners transferred to them.
- nearly two thirds of sentenced male prisoners (63 per cent) and two-fifths of female sentenced prisoners (39 per cent) admit to hazardous drinking which carries the risk of physical or mental harm, and about half of these have a severe alcohol dependency;
- there are no specific accredited alcohol treatment programmes with ring-fenced funding in prisons in England and Wales.

Juliet Lyon, director of the Trust, said:

"Everyone knows that drink and drugs drive crime, and that it is cruel and inhumane to imprison people who are mentally ill or suffer from profound learning disabilities, so why are ministers still hell bent on pouring public money into prison building when they should be investing in treatment for addicts and effective health and social care instead?"

"Government must get a grip and deliver on its promise to reduce social exclusion. Ever-growing numbers of sick people recycled around a bleak prison system is not the way to do it. It's time to stop mindless prison building and cut crime by sensibly improving public health."

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[Prison Reform Trust Bromley Briefing webpage \(opens in new window\)](#)



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