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the **Howard League** for **Penal Reform**

LESS CRIME, SAFER COMMUNITIES, FEWER PEOPLE IN PRISON

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## REVEALED: THE TRUE SCALE OF OVERCROWDING IN PRISONS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

### Press release

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2 September 2013

#### Revealed: The true scale of overcrowding in prisons in England and Wales

Almost 20,000 prisoners were kept in overcrowded cells last year, figures obtained by the Howard League for Penal Reform reveal today (2 September).

New research by the charity illustrates the true scale of prison overcrowding in England and Wales – showing that the problem is far greater than ministers have suggested.

The figures show that, during the financial year 2012-13, about 19,140 prisoners on average were forced to share a cell designed for one person.

A further 777 prisoners were made to sleep three to a cell, when the cells were designed to accommodate only two.

Official government prison population announcements mask the full extent of overcrowding because they do not state how many cells are holding more prisoners than they are designed to.

The worst-affected prison in England and Wales was Wandsworth, where on a typical day 835 prisoners were forced to share cells which contain an open toilet.

Other overcrowded prisons included Altcourse, Doncaster, Birmingham, Pentonville, Preston, Manchester, Elmley, Nottingham and Durham.

The figures come less than a week after a report showed prison staff numbers have fallen by 17% over the last four years.

**Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said:** "At last, we have the picture of the real state of overcrowding in our prisons. It's far worse than anyone imagined: one in four people behind bars are packed like sardines into cramped cells.

"It should come as little surprise that such crowded conditions leave staff hugely overstretched, especially as more are being laid off. This means there are little to no opportunities for prisoners to work, learn or take courses to turn them away from crime.

"Staff cuts and overcrowding mean that grown men spend all weekend and up to 22 hours a day during the week cooped up like battery chickens – no wonder violence and self-injury is rife.

"If the Ministry of Justice is serious about reducing reoffending it must tackle overcrowding now. Successive governments have peddled the lie that you can build your way out of a prisons overcrowding problem.

"While public services are being cut, ministers should look at more effective and affordable solutions. They need to address the fact the prison population has doubled in just 20 years and move people on to community sentences.

"Government assessments published last month show that every probation service in the country is working efficiently at keeping the public safe, whilst failing prisons contribute to the crime problem.

"We can have the prisons that taxpayers deserve – ones that turn lives around rather than coop people up and make them more dangerous – but only if numbers are seriously reduced."

### Notes to editors

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1. The Howard League for Penal Reform is the oldest penal reform charity in the world. It is a national charity working for less crime, safer communities and fewer people in prison.
2. Details of prison staff cuts can be found in the [National Offender Management Service Workforce Statistics Bulletin](#), published by the Ministry of Justice:
3. The Howard League for Penal Reform obtained prison overcrowding data through a freedom of information request submitted to the Ministry of Justice.
4. The figures show the number of prisoners, on average, who were forced to share an overcrowded cell in 2012-13.
5. Overcrowding data for each prison in England and Wales is shown in the table below:

Prison	Number of prisoners per prison sharing overcrowded cells designed for 1	Number of prisoners per prison sharing overcrowded cells designed for 2
Albany	11	0
Altcourse	659	98
Ashfield	0	0
Askham Grange	0	0
Aylesbury	17	0
Bedford	277	12
Belmarsh	0	328
Birmingham	670	0
Blantyre House	0	0
Blundeston	35	28
Brinsford	0	0
Bristol	162	0
Brixton	128	0
Bronzefield	0	0
Buckley Hall	59	0
Bullingdon	366	0
Bullwood Hall	17	0
Bure	38	0
Camp Hill	254	0
Canterbury	160	0
Cardiff	483	0
Channings Wood	71	0
Chelmsford	240	0
Coldingley	0	0
Cookham Wood	0	0
Dartmoor	27	0
Deerbolt	0	0
Doncaster	729	0
Dorchester	176	1
Dovegate	128	0
Dover (IRC)	0	0
Downview	0	0
Drake Hall	0	0
Durham	559	0
East Sutton Park	0	0
Eastwood Park	58	0
Elmley	360	237
Erlestoke	0	0

Everthorpe	115	0
Exeter	416	0
Featherstone	23	0
Feltham	0	0
Ford	0	0
Forest Bank	539	0
Foston Hall	3	0
Frankland	0	0
Full Sutton	0	0
Garth	32	0
Gartree	0	0
Glen Parva	348	0
Gloucester	166	0
Grendon	0	0
Guys Marsh	92	0
Haslar (IRC)	0	0
Hatfield	0	0
Haverigg	31	0
Hewell	304	0
High Down	180	17
Highpoint	47	1
Hindley	0	0
Hollesley Bay	0	0
Holloway	0	0
Holme House	255	0
Hull	286	0
Huntercombe	103	0
Isis	209	0
Kennet	290	0
Kingston	0	0
Kirkham	0	0
Kirklevington Grange	0	0
Lancaster Farms	93	0
Latchmere House	0	0
Leeds	546	0
Leicester	307	0
Lewes	55	0
Leyhill	0	0
Lincoln	469	0
Lindholme	91	0
Littlehey	126	0
Liverpool	352	0
Long Lartin	0	0
Low Newton	32	0
Lowdham Grange	44	0
Maidstone	58	0
Manchester	601	0
Moorland	82	0

Morton Hall (IRC)	0	0
Mount	38	0
New Hall	31	1
North Sea Camp	80	0
Northallerton	162	0
Northumberland	0	0
Norwich	233	14
Nottingham	575	0
Oakwood	0	0
Onley	0	0
Parc	278	0
Parkhurst	141	0
Pentonville	659	0
Peterborough Female	0	0
Peterborough Male	129	0
Portland	0	0
Prescoed	15	1
Preston	642	0
Ranby	356	0
Reading	185	0
Risley	39	0
Rochester	0	0
Rye Hill	0	0
Send	0	0
Shepton Mallet	35	0
Shrewsbury	273	0
Spring Hill	0	0
Stafford	0	0
Standford Hill	0	0
Stocken	105	0
Stoke Heath	175	0
Styal	18	0
Sudbury	0	0
Swaleside	0	0
Swansea	356	21
Swinfen Hall	53	0
Thameside	253	0
Thorn Cross	0	0
Usk	190	19
Verne	55	0
Wakefield	0	0
Wandsworth	835	0
Warren Hill	0	0
Wayland	97	0
Wealstun	30	0
Wellingborough	0	0
Werrington	0	0
Wetherby	0	0
Whatton	71	0

Whitemoor	0	0
Winchester	402	0
Wolds	97	0
Woodhill	313	0
Wormwood Scrubs	124	0
Wymott	130	0

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