

The Justice Secretary's new prison plan

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Last week, the Justice Secretary announced that three new prisons are due to be built to deal with the prison overpopulation problem.

She also announced a shake-up of prison recall measures, which will mean prisoners serving between one and four years' jail time can be returned to prison only for a fixed 28-day period.

Soft services provider **SBFM** has worked with the Ministry of Justice's HMP Academies Programme to help develop new opportunities for prisoners at the end of their sentences.

Colin Shute, founder of the organisation and a chair of the Employee Advisory Board, has shared his comments. He said: "The government's announcement of three new prisons and new recall measures is a direct response to the debilitating issue of prison overcrowding, fuelled in part by reoffending.

"Prison leavers reoffend due to several reasons, but often it is because they are released with nowhere to go, no one to turn to, and a lack of stable support or income. The stigma many face can make reoffending seem like the only option, furthering overcrowding.

"These people have skills and untapped potential that businesses and the government need to unleash by offering employment opportunities and the right pastoral care to match.

"SBFM has launched a cleaning training academy at HM Prison Wealstun, as part of the Ministry of Justice's HMP Academies Programme for offenders at the end of their sentences. The academy is one part of the overcrowding solution; It opens up employment opportunities through work with our recruitment team. Opportunities like these give prison leavers the long-term employment opportunities they truly need.

"Building more prisons is not enough. Businesses and the government need to enable the reintegration of

ex-offenders into the labour market, to address labour shortages and provide a crucial lifeline to those who truly need it.”