

Criminal Justice Committee
Wednesday 24 September 2025
24th Meeting, 2025 (Session 6)

Tackling Harm from Substance Misuse in Scottish Prisons – Session 6

Note by the Clerk

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 30 April 2025, the Criminal Justice Committee agreed to undertake a short inquiry into the harm caused by substance misuse in Scotland's prisons. This follows a recommendation from the [Scottish Parliament's People's Panel](#), which raised concerns about the increasing prevalence and potency of synthetic drugs in prisons, the impacts on both prisoners and staff, and the adequacy of rehabilitation and support systems.
2. The inquiry was formally launched on Friday 16 May 2025, alongside a [public call for views](#). The Committee invited written submissions until **Friday 22 August 2025**.
3. The Committee has held its two preparatory evidence sessions in May and June ([28 May](#) and [4 June](#)). The Committee heard from different bodies on the scale of substance misuse in Scotland's prisons, and how public services, policing and the justice system currently respond to it.
4. On 3 September, the Committee heard from a number of witnesses from advocacy and support organisations in the third sector and those with expertise in public health and prison healthcare. The session focused on throughcare and in-custody rehabilitation, and on alcohol harm and community reintegration.
5. On 10 September, the Committee heard from the Prison Officers Association (Scotland); Police Scotland; a representative of the Scottish Prison Service Research Project and Police Scotland. The session focused on prevention and enforcement.
6. On 17 September, the Committee heard from bodies responsible for care of those in prison, namely, senior representatives of the Scottish Prison Service and those leading on prison health care for Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership and Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership.

Evidence

7. Today, the Committee will take evidence from Angela Constance MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs and her officials; and from Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Sport, and her officials.

Actions

8. Members are invited to reflect on what they have heard throughout their inquiry into the harm caused by substance misuse in Scottish Prisons when questioning the Scottish Government ministers.

**Clerks to the Criminal Justice Committee
September 2025**