



Ministry
of Justice

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REMOVAL OF WET-SHAVE RAZORS FROM PRISONS

I am writing in regard to the provision of alternatives to wet-shave razors in prisons, a topic which the Justice Select Committee discussed with Amy Rees (CEO, HMPPS) at the Committee's Oral Evidence Session on 'Work of the Ministry of Justice' on 5 March, and further to the Written Ministerial Statement I tabled yesterday.

The safety of prisoners and prison staff is of paramount importance to my Department and I am committed to taking action to reduce violence and self-harm in our prisons. As you will be aware, when the Government launched the Prisons Strategy White Paper in 2021, we pledged to look at alternatives to the use of wet-shave razors in prisons, which can be used to self-harm and to carry out assaults. Recent serious assaults on prison staff illustrate the potential danger posed by wet-shave razors in prisons.

To deliver on this commitment, we undertook pilots of electric shavers as alternatives to wet-shave razors at HMP Leicester and HMP Swansea in 2023, with a view to eliminating razor attacks on staff and reducing the risks of self harm.

As a result of these positive findings, I am pleased to announce that my Department has decided to implement a phased removal of wet-shave razors from the adult male closed estate. The phased removal will start with 30 prisons in the adult male closed estate with the highest levels of violence, with the intention of a subsequent roll-out across the whole adult male estate, subject to available funding.

We will initially invest over £1.5 million this year for the first tranche of 30 prisons to provide prisoners with alternative electric shavers which have been developed specifically for the Prison Service. We will work closely with key stakeholders, including Trade Unions, on the planning and implementation of this work.

My Department is committed to delivering on the promises we made in the Prisons Strategy White Paper and to tackling violence and self-harm in our prisons.

RT HON EDWARD ARGAR MP