

Prisoners must work in order to make prison work, says Mark

Mark Lancaster has called for prisoners to spend more time at work than in their cells.

The city MP told Justice Minister Ken Clarke that his constituents are concerned that prisoners are 'not spending their time inside constructively'.

His comments come at a time when a new Justice Bill is looking at ways of reducing crime rates.

Mr Clarke said he agreed with Mr Lancaster, adding: "A significant change in the culture of parts of the prison service would add to the good work that goes on at the moment, which is quite rare and is scattered across the prison estate."

There is a growing feeling that prison is not successful, since nearly half of all offenders reoffend within a year of release.

However, Mr Lancaster said he believes that 'making prisoners work will make prison work'.

He added: "We all have to undertake jobs, so prisoners should be no exception. If people can leave custody with skills to help get them on the straight and narrow, surely this will help address the enormous problem with reoffending rates. Plus, by engaging in meaningful employment, the prison population can add something of great value to our society. It will also put the message across that a stint inside is far from an attractive option."