

## Letters to the Editor



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### Prison day release

Sir, David Gauke makes good suggestions about expanding the small number of Category D prisons ("Move criminals to open prisons, ministers urged", Dec 27).

I was a prisoner in one of them for five months in 1999. One of the most successful features of the regime at HMP Stanford Hill was, and still is, the release on temporary licence (Rotl) scheme. It allowed 30 prisoners each day to leave early in the morning, to do real jobs or volunteer in the local community, and then return to custody in the evening.

Rotl is one of the quiet success stories of the prison system, but it has been cut again and again by successive justice secretaries. Frustrated resettlement officers used to ask: "Who'll be next to throttle Rotl?" I hope Gauke's sentencing review persuades the government not only to expand the low-cost D-Cat estate, but also to introduce Rotl in selected C-Cat prisons.

**The Rev Jonathan Aitken**  
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