

Fix St. John's penitentiary, says justice critic

Andrew Parsons said if the HMP can't be replaced, it should be overhauled at least

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The Liberal Justice critic says if Newfoundland and Labrador can't have a new penitentiary, there are ways to improve the correctional facility in St. John's.

Burgeo-La Poile MHA Andrew Parsons said Occupational Health and Safety has already ordered a mandatory clean up of Her Majesty's Penitentiary

He said overcrowding at the facility should also be addressed.

"What it's going to lead to is something bad, and ...we don't want it to have to get to that point before people take notice," Parsons said Tuesday.

He also said drug smuggling is a problem at the penitentiary that could be reduced if it was mandatory for inmates to wear uniforms.

"One of the reasons is it's very easy to smuggle drugs in and out of prison in your own clothes," he said.

Parsons has toured the facility twice since he was elected in October.