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Prefab solutions could unlock UK prison problem

The Prison Service has ordered a number of temporary custodial modules, in what could be the answer to Home Secretary John Reid's pledge to create 8,000 new prison places by 2012, reports The Sun.

The 11ft by 8ft steel blocks are built in days and, if trials are successful, could be sealed together to form entire prison wings.

Derek Tyler, managing director of prefab building firm Britspace, said: "Our jail cells are made seriously quickly and cheaply. It's a fast turnaround. They are made of impact resistant material and SAS soldiers have road-tested them.

"They're given 20 minutes to break in or break out. It identifies weaknesses quickly."

Each cell houses one prisoner and has its own sink and toilet.

They are made from a steel frame and covered with ultra-tough steel panels at Britspace's factory in Gilberdyke, East Yorks.

The temporary custodial modules are expected to come into use in July 2007.