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On Thursday, 25 staff members at the high-security HMP Swaleside prison on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent fell ill after allegedly consuming a curry spiked with the synthetic drug Spice. At least three officers were hospitalized following the incident, prompting calls for a thorough investigation by HM Prison and Probation Service.

The incident began at around 2:10 PM when paramedics attended to the affected individuals, setting up a medical incident unit on-site. The South East Coast Ambulance Service dispatched nine ambulances, and three officers were taken to Medway Maritime Hospital for further treatment. Symptoms reported included breathing difficulties and elevated heart rates.

The Criminal Justice Workers Union (CJWU) described the event as a "mass poisoning of staff." Andy Hamlin, a CJWU official, confirmed that inmates working in the staff canteen had spiked a "staff special curry" with New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), believed to be Spice.

HMP Swaleside houses approximately 1,100 inmates, including those convicted of serious offenses and posing high public risks. The prison has a history of high violence levels and easy drug access, as noted in inspections by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.

The Ministry of Justice acknowledged the incident but refrained from detailed comments due to the ongoing investigation. While no one was in critical condition, the event has raised significant concerns about staff safety at the facility.

Past issues at HMP Swaleside include a 2016 riot where prisoners took control of a wing, causing extensive damage before being subdued by specialist Tornado squads.