

MJW's Third Birthday



Make Justice Work: celebrating our third birthday

Make Justice Work celebrates its third birthday today. I want to take the opportunity in this edition of our newsletter to look back over the last three years and share with you some of our plans for the next 12 months. But most importantly, this gives me a chance to give a very big thank you to: my incredibly hardworking staff; Lulu Cane (on maternity leave), Sarah Pollard, Roma Walker and Peter Hand and my chair, David Barrie, who has been unstinting in his support; Champollion who provided much valued pro-bono support at the very beginning together with my advisory panel (who are now ambassadors), my MJW mentors - Nick O'Shea, Simon Buckby, Tom Lawson and Rose Grimond, our wonderful and generous funders, our board, ambassadors, our Enquiry Panel and all of our supporters for having faith in MJW and its mission. We would not be here without you all.

In June 2009 MJW was launched at the [RSA](#), underpinned by an independent economic analysis undertaken by [Matrix Knowledge](#) of whether short-term prison sentences are an effective and efficient use of public resources. The most startling finding was that diverting one offender from custody to residential drug treatment would save society approximately £200,000 over the lifetime of the offender.

This timely piece of research provided MJW with the necessary credibility to forge ahead with its mission - to encourage a wholesale shift in government thinking away from very expensive prison places to much more cost-effective sanctions delivered in the community.

The National Commission of Enquiry 2012-2011

The Enquiry was chaired by leading columnist and broadcaster, Peter Osborne, and involved a distinguished panel of experts: Lord Blair (Former Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police), Paul McDowell (Chief Executive of Nacro), Dame Anne Owers (Former Chief Inspector of Prisons), Javed Khan (Chief Executive of Victim Support) and John Thornhill (Chair of the Magistrates Association). The panel toured the country to visit a range of community sentences. The aim was to investigate the efficacy and cost of short-term prison sentences for lower-level offenders, as compared with robust community-based alternatives.

The final report ([Community or Custody?](#)) appeared in September 2011 and attracted extensive media coverage. It also caught the attention of politicians and key opinion-formers, and has helped to shape the debate about the need to use effective community sentences much more widely.

Networking

Over the past three years we have raised the profile of effective community sentences with key decision-makers and influential opinion-formers, forging relationships with Ministers, MPs, Peers, civil servants,

academics, judges, magistrates, police, probation and leaders in the third and private sectors. We have also built up our links with key journalists and broadcasters.

We continue to recruit ambassadors for our campaign and now have over 130 who help promote MJW in a wide variety of ways. The ambassadors are very important to MJW. Their diversity and stature give us credibility which spreads beyond the criminal justice sector.

Follow on from the Enquiry Report

MJW commissioned [Matrix Evidence](#) to follow up the Enquiry report with our second economic report (released yesterday), '[An economic analysis of alternatives to short term custody](#)'.

This report found that total savings from providing an IAC order for all eligible young adult offenders instead of a custodial sentence could amount to £500 million over the next five years.

The report is based on incomplete data, and we recognise that further research is needed to provide a more accurate picture as to the economic and social benefits of IAC orders. One important lesson is that robust data collection systems must be put in place to improve the monitoring of re-offending statistics across all types of sentences.

Just Results

On 25 May, Make Justice Work held Just Results, a one-day meeting of 30 leading experts, all of whom came together to explore the challenges and opportunities of Payment by Results (PbR) within the world of community sentencing.

The findings from this day will form the basis of a report outlining a number of key principles that must be followed if PbR for community sentences is to be a success. It will be launched on Friday 13 July. If you would like to see a copy of the report, please email info@makejusticework.org.uk

Victim Support

MJW have joined forces with [Victim Support](#) to examine victims' awareness and perceptions of community alternatives to custody.

On 21st of June, MJW and Victim Support invited victims of lower-level crimes to visit Reading Probation and see for themselves exactly what an offender has to do on a community sentence. There was a focus group at the beginning and end of the day independently moderated by the opinion research organisation, Populus. The aim was to gauge if, given a greater insight into community sentencing, perceptions of community sentencing would change.

In the next month, Populus will carry out a national poll to explore the views of victims of lower level crime. This will form the basis of a report which will be released in September and disseminated at the Party Conferences. To request a copy of this report, please email info@makejusticework.org.uk

Effective Community Sentencing Consultation Response

The Punishment and Reform: effective community sentences consultation was opened on the 27th of March 2012 and ran until the 22nd of June of 2012. The consultation sets out proposals for radical reforms in the way in which sentences served in the community operate.

[Read MJW's response to the consultation here.](#)

The Next Twelve Months

For all of us working hard to persuade politicians, the public and the media that community sentences are not a soft option and that short-term prison sentences are ineffective and a waste of public money, there remain challenges. But there is also room for cautious optimism. At a time of huge financial cuts, the government is obliged to find ways of reducing the massive prison population. Community sentences must play an important part in this process.

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If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter, or any of MJW's work please email info@makejusticework.org.uk

Thank you for all your continued support.

Best wishes,

Roma Hooper

Founder and Director

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