

## MJW February Newsletter



Dear <<First Name>>

This year holds many challenges and opportunities for the criminal justice system. We are still reeling from the fall-out from the riots as the numbers of prisoners reach a record high and there are serious concerns about gangs and young offenders. Yet there appears to be a political will to reduce the use of custody for those who would be better punished in the community, particularly women and those whose crimes are the result of mental health issues. We can't afford to let these opportunities slip away. But we urgently need to convince the many politicians and media who remain sceptical that such sentences really can work – and that they are not a soft option.

### Economic Research

The objective of this research was to generate evidence on the economic benefits of providing an intensive alternative to custody as an alternative to short term custodial sentences, based on two of the programmes we visited as part of our Enquiry: Manchester and Bradford. However, data is still in the process of being gathered about rates of reoffending post completion of these sentences. Nethertheless, the research does show even on a conservative assumption that such interventions would result in very significant savings if more widely adopted.

### Amendment to the Legal Aid and Punishment of Offenders bill

Thanks to the support of Tom Brake MP, Baroness Linklater and Lord Thomas, our amendment for a presumption against short-term prison sentences was tabled:

Page 43, line 8 [Clause 61], at end insert –

### Latest News

Wales' reoffending rates are among the highest in the UK - [Wales Online](#) 13/02/2012

Women's prisons in desperate need of reform, says former governor - [The Guardian](#) 11/02/2012

How we must get it right for victims and witnesses - [Huffington Post](#) 10/02/2012

Prisons info call from MP - [Fleetwood Weekly News](#) 09/02/2012

Roma Hooper Letter in the Guardian - [The Guardian](#) 24/01/2012

### MJW Videos

#### Perspectives - Prison and short term sentences

The first short film from Make Justice Work and Tall Wall Media's 'Perspectives' series. This film talks to previous

The court shall not impose a sentence of imprisonment for a term of less than six months, unless the court:

(a) Is satisfied that no other method of dealing with the offender is appropriate in all the circumstances of the case; and

(b) States its reasons for imposing a custodial sentence in open court.

Interesting debates also followed on from two other amendments tabled by the Magistrates Association, MJW and the Probation Chiefs Association, and the Prison Reform Trust. To read the debate in full, please follow this link

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201212/ldhansrd/text/120207-0001.htm>

## Meetings

David Barrie and I have met the lead on the Sentencing Review Team in the Ministry of Justice (the results of which will be out soon), as well as senior members of the Economic and Domestic Affairs Secretariat at the Cabinet Office. I have also had some excellent meetings with MPs, including Paul Maynard, Zac Goldsmith and Ben Wallace.

I attended the launch of the [Centre for Social Justice report, 'Rules of Engagement: Changing the heart of youth'](#) and the launch of the [Prison Reform Trust's 'Old Enough to know better'](#) report.

## Payment by Results (PbR)

PbR is all the rage, and a great deal depends on whether it can be made to work effectively. We are planning an event later this year to explore how PbR will actually work when applied to community sentence provision. Entitled 'Just Results', we hope it will reveal the challenges that need to be overcome if PbR is to succeed. More of this soon!

## Victim Support

We are working with [Victim Support](#) to find out how victims of crime view intensive community sentences for lower-level offenders before and after being given the chance to see such sentences in action. We hope also to conduct some wider public opinion research on this subject. We plan to

offenders about their experience of prison and short term sentences.



## Perspectives - Alternatives; effective sanctions delivered in the community

The second short film from Make Justice Work and Tall Wall Media's 'Perspectives' series. This film talks to previous offenders about their rehabilitation and the effectiveness of peer mentoring schemes.



## Future - Making the right change

The third and final short film from Make Justice Work and Tall Wall Media's 'Perspectives' series. This film talks to previous offenders about

bring our findings to the party conferences in the autumn.

### Restorative Justice

I met with the team from [WhyMe?](#) We are delighted that restorative justice is gaining momentum as can be evidenced by the increasing media coverage it is receiving.

### MJW in the Media

I have had a letter published in [the Telegraph](#) this morning. To read the letter and the rest of our blogs you can visit the [Make Justice Work website](#) "Given that the majority of women in prison are serving sentences as a result of non-violent crimes, there is a need to reconsider whether many of them should be separated from their children in the first place (Women should get time out of jail to see their children, Daily Telegraph 14.02.2012). Women are over-represented in the cohort of prisoners serving short prison sentences – at huge expense to the taxpayer. Not only are such sentences ineffective, but they also plunge families into deeper crisis. Tough and effective community sentences, don't punish innocent children but can ensure mothers address their behaviour and get their lives back on track. Such sentences also come at much less cost to the taxpayer." ([Daily Telegraph](#) 16/02/2012).

Make Justice Work have also been mentioned in the [Yorkshire Post](#) this morning, to read the article please visit the news page on the [Make Justice Work website](#).

### Social Media

Follow [@MJW\\_Roma](#) on Twitter  
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Go to our [Youtube Channel](#)  
Read the latest blog from MJW ambassador Simon Woodroffe on the [MJW blog page](#)  
Visit our website [www.makejusticework.org.uk](http://www.makejusticework.org.uk)

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

their future plans and how a community sentence helped to turn their lives around.



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