

Make Justice Work: Intensive Alternatives To Custody Could Save £500 Million

Research commissioned by Make Justice Work into the economic benefits of providing Intensive Alternatives to Custody (IAC order) instead of short term custodial sentences reveals they could save up to £500 million over five years. Research practice at Matrix Knowledge Group conducted the research using the example of IAC orders in two pilot sites in Manchester and Bradford.

Roma Hooper, Director and Founder of Make Justice Work said, "Prison for short sentences is an expensive and ineffective way to deal with offenders. A 12 month IAC for a young adult offender in Manchester and Salford costs just £3,514 per offender, but a short term custodial sentence would cost nearly £13,900. It is estimated using Ministry of Justice figures on community sentences, that IAC orders can reduce reoffending by nearly 13% compared to short prison sentences.

"Typically IAC orders include a variety of demanding, robust and punitive requirements such as compulsory unpaid work, restorative justice, curfews, electronic monitoring and involvement in specific programmes to tackle drug and alcohol abuse and mental health issues. IACs also help to provide a structured programme of reform for offenders, with a focus on their rehabilitation and the importance of taking responsibility for their behaviour. Crucially IAC orders help to reduce costs to taxpayers, reduce levels of reoffending and reduce the number of victims.

"However, we recognise that more research is needed to provide a more accurate picture as to the economic and social benefits of IAC orders. We believe this latest report will contribute to the wider public debate on this issue. The Government is committed to implementing the policy of Payment by Results in some areas of the criminal justice system, which means it is essential that robust data collection systems are put in place to improve the monitoring of re-offending statistics across all types of sentences.

"In essence short-term prison sentences have a short-term focus, whereas IAC orders aim to address the underlying causes of criminality with long term benefits for offenders, victims of crime and society as a whole."

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Notes to Editors:

About Make Justice Work - Make Justice Work (MJW) is a campaign to boost public support for a change in how Britain deals with minor offenders – a switch from expensive short prison terms to intensive and effective sanctions. The organisation was launched in 2009 by the Director and Founder of MJW - Roma Hooper - as a campaign to highlight the cost of short-term prison sentences and to improve public confidence in community sentences. For more information visit: <http://www.makejusticework.org.uk/>

About IAC orders - Providing an IAC order for all eligible young adult offenders instead of a custodial sentence could save £500 million over the next five years. These total savings are broken down as follows: £177 million in reduced intervention costs, £69 million in reduced costs to the criminal justice system of dealing with

crimes, £29 million in reduced costs to the NHS of dealing with crimes and £225 million in reduced costs to the victims of crimes.

In the absence of IAC specific data, interventions similar to IAC orders were used to measure the impact on reoffending.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) 2011 Compendium on reoffending statistics and analysis estimates that community orders could reduce reoffending by 13% compared with short custodial sentences. Due to the more intensive support provided by IAC orders compared to general community orders, it is possible that an IAC order could have a greater impact on reoffending. For the purpose of this analysis, a 13% change in reoffending was used to estimate the cost savings.

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