

MJW August Newsletter



Always unwise to think that August is a quiet month.... I don't need to reiterate the extraordinary events of this month. The riots have brought out the worst and best in people, and the criminal justice system has certainly had a very busy time. We now need to let the dust settle and hope that once the initial kneejerk responses have subsided, a more calmer and more rational debate will begin. In the meantime, our prisons are bulging again.

MJW did not get involved in any media responses until last week when the discussions shifted to sentencing and you will see below under Media where I commented. I continue to focus my comments and responses on our campaign message – short-term prison sentences for lower level offenders are expensive and ineffective, whilst community sentences, with the right ingredients, are more demanding, and can be much more effective - both in terms of costs and the reduction of re-offending.

What continues to shock me is the public's and politician's lack of awareness about the range of community sentences available – they are not all community payback schemes! MJW is committed to tackling this ignorance and we are working on a range of ways to deal with it.

National Commission of Enquiry

With our final enquiry completed, the team are now writing the Final Report. This is to be launched at the House of Commons on 12 September, and the report will then be hand-delivered to Number 10. We aim to get as much media coverage as possible and the report will be disseminated through a series of roundtable seminars at all the Party Conferences.

To further support our argument with regard to the cost-effectiveness of community sentences, we have commissioned Matrix Evidence to undertake an in-depth analysis of the costs and benefits of each of the four programmes we have visited over the last twelve months. We aim to publish the findings in the autumn.

The Media

As I mentioned above, we have been busy responding to the sentencing of the rioters in the last week.

On Tuesday 16 August I had a quite hectic day. In the afternoon I was interviewed by Julia Hartley-Brewer on LBC (if you have a subscription to LBC and would like to listen to the interview [click here](#)). Then in the evening I was on Sky News talking about the importance of restorative justice within community sentencing. If you would like to see the interview please e-mail info@makejusticework.org.uk and we will send you a copy. Then I was interviewed on BBC Radio Wales on Wednesday 17 August. To listen please [click here](#)

MJW in the media...

24.08.11 | The Guardian
Unemployed offenders face tougher work in the community
[Read more here>>](#)

22.08.11 | The Guardian
Riots: Metropolitan police planned to hold all suspects in custody
[Read more here>>](#)

20.08.11 | The Independent
Riots: Now governors warn of prison time bomb
[Read more here>>](#)

18.08.11 | Metro
Prisoners have zero chance of rehabilitation as UK rioters push prison population to breaking point
[Read more here>>](#)

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I have had an open letter published on the Guardian website about how we can improve public confidence in community sentences. To read the letter please [click here](#)

On the 28th I was also mentioned in the Independent discussing community sentencing, to read the full article [click here](#) . On the same day I was on LBC discussing the Independent piece, once again if you are able to listen to the LBC podcasts please [click here](#)

Who we are talking to:

I continue to visit prisons, speaking to staff and prisoners about the impact of short-term prison sentences, as well as courts. Despite it being the holiday period, it has proved a useful time to touch base with a range of voluntary sector agencies, magistrates, judges, and even MPs!

I was fortunate enough to part of a small team that presented to the Palestinian Deputy Justice Secretary and his delegation about community sentences, particularly for women. Palestine does not have a community sentencing structure and they are very keen to reduce the use of prison for those serving under twelve months. They face many challenges, not least the ones we are all very well aware of – that is net-widening, up-tarriffing... In other words, the unintended consequences that can come out from all the right intentions.

Social Media

Do remember to follow me on Twitter if you are up for it: [@justicecampaign](#)

And don't forget we have our guest blog section – and thank you very much to those who have already contributed. Hugely appreciated. Take a look at the latest on the website

Best wishes,

Roma Hooper
Director, Make Justice Work

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