



Press Release

Probation Chiefs respond to the Justice Committee report 22-07- 08

The newly formed Probation Chiefs Association agrees with many of the conclusions reached by the House of Commons Justice Committee report released today. Probation Chiefs have long held the view that the availability of and confidence in community sentences are key to reducing re-offending.

According to the government's own re-offending statistics for 2005 (published in 2008) almost 60% of ex-prisoners are reconvicted within 12 months of release compared to 38% sentenced to a community sentences. All community sentences reduce re-offending compared to the predicted level. But some specific programmes, for example, those targeted at sex offenders, drink impaired drivers and general offending are particularly successful.

Also, while it costs about £37,000 to lock up an offender for a year, in 2006/07 offenders contributed the equivalent of £33m of labour (based on the minimum wage rate) to a range of projects across England and Wales which were of direct benefit to local communities.

So in terms of demands on the public purse and the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in reducing re-offending, it makes sense for the Probation Service to have the capacity to deliver community orders that rehabilitate offenders without unnecessary use of short term prison sentences.

Issued by: David Scott, Chair of the Probation Chiefs Association
Chief Officer, London Probation

Please contact Donna Leigh, Communications Adviser: (t) 077 77 7667 607

Email: donna.leigh@cps.gsi.gov.uk

