

Ministry of Justice response to The Justice Reinvestment Report issued 14 January 2010

A Ministry of Justice spokesperson said:

“We thank the Committee for their report, which we will consider and respond in due course.

“The Government remains committed to providing sufficient prison places to hold serious offenders who the courts deem should be behind bars. We are making good progress to increase net capacity to 96,000 by 2014 — having increased it substantially over the last decade.

“Prison is the most appropriate place to punish and reform dangerous and persistent offenders. But we agree with the report that it is better to stop the cycle of offending. That's why we have made prisons more constructive, investing in drug treatment, training and education. This has helped to cut reoffending by 40 per cent over seven years for those serving longer-term sentences.

“In addition, we have bolstered community punishments to ensure they are tough, innovative and offer locally based alternatives to custody. Often these are more effective than short-term jail sentences. We are also tackling the root causes of crime, particularly alcohol and drugs, anti-social behaviour and youth offending to prevent further escalation into criminal activity.

“The Government's approach is working. Since 1997, overall, crime has fallen by 36 per cent, violent crime has fallen even faster and the risk of being a victim is at its lowest for a generation. People who commit serious offences are going to prison for longer and are being rehabilitated — and the rate of re-offending continues to fall.”