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Here are some current issues in criminal justice, Human Rights, prisons and social problems. Follow the links (with control and click) for fuller information. Do print or forward **PSAP News** for other Unitarians and friends.

**1 Knife crime in England and Wales at record high** – Offences with knives and sharp instruments have reached 44,000 in the last year, almost twice the number in 2011. The crimes solved rate has fallen to 7.4%. However, the number of knife crimes has not increased in London which the police attribute to the wider use of stop and search powers. Moreover, the number of murders in England and Wales has fallen by 5%. See <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/17/knife-crime-hits-new-record-high-england-wales-7-last-year/>

**2 Safer Kitchen Knives now available** – Manufacturers of knives have responded to the record high knife crime by producing knives with square tips that cannot be used for stabbing. The British company Viners has produced a range of kitchen knives called Assure in response to the decision to bring kitchen knives within the legal description of offensive weapons. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/knife-crime-statistics-stabbings-latest-cutlery-square-tip-blunt-viners-a9281791.html>

**3 Drug Treatment for Heroin users starts in Middlesbrough** – The Crime Commissioner for Cleveland is helping to finance treatment of 15 heroin addicts with Class A drugs in an effort to explore alternative ways of reducing crime by removing street heroin. This is the first such trial in UK of treatments used in other countries. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/heroin-drug-diamorphine-class-a-middlesbrough-addict-police-crime-pilot-a9149631.html>

**4 Prisoners developing Drug Use Problems double in five years** – According to a report by Reform, the proportion of prisoners who have developed drug problems whilst in custody has doubled to 15% in the past five years. The Inspectorate of Prisons note the availability of new drugs such as Spice. The growth continues despite airport-style scanners. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jan/20/proportion-of-uk-prisoners-with-drug-problem-doubles-in-five-years-study>

**5 PM proposes immigration controls on low-skilled from end of transition** - Businesses have asked for the end of low-skilled immigration from the EU no earlier than 2023. Boris Johnson has announced the controls will start immediately at the end of the transition. It is not clear how UK farmers are to harvest in 2021 without many workers from the EU or whether asylum-seekers might be allowed to work to close the gap.

See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-eu-immigration-boris-johnson-limit-restrict-low-skilled-workers-transition-period-a9290921.html>

**6 Judges sentencing in Crown Court to be broadcast** – Following the broadcasting of hearings in the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, the Government proposes to allow the televising of sentencing in major criminal cases. Lawyers warn that this risks presenting inadequate explanations and the creation of a new “spectator sport”. See <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2020/jan/16/judges-sentencing-in-high-profile-court-cases-to-be-televised>

**7 And Masters of the Rolls again want to broadcast family cases** – This has been proposed by several heads of the Court of Appeal in recent years. See <https://www.legalcheek.com/2018/05/a-new-youtube-star-is-born-court-of-appeal-to-be-live-streamed/> and, most recently, proposals for live-streaming on YouTube, see <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/live-stream-family-cases-in-court-of-appeal-says-master-of-the-rolls/5102703.article>

**8 EU nationals immediately denied basic rights on Brexit** – Those of the three million EU nationals in the UK without “settled status” are being denied employment, housing and other rights notwithstanding the requirement for “settled status” does not arise until June, 2021. The charity, 3 Million, also reports that funding by the Government for advice to EU nationals on obtaining “settled status” is being withdrawn. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/eu-nationals-settled-status-brexit-employers-landlords-housing-rights-a9289186.html>

**9 Rushed Legislation to prevent release may breach Human Rights Convention** – The UK may have to derogate from parts of the Convention to bring in legislation extending sentences to keep potential terrorists in prison. Apart from the controversy this would cause in the UK, relations with the ECtHR and further negotiations with the EU would clearly become more difficult. See <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/04/uk-may-bypass-human-rights-convention-to-rush-through-terror-laws>

**10 Who has the £14.6 trillion of UK's wealth?** – Here is interesting article about inequality of wealth in the UK and how it has developed in recent years. Have you considered subscribing to the Equality Trust as suggested at the GA in 2018? See <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/who-owns-all-the-pie/>

**11 And finally – good news!** - Prison inspectors in 2017 in HMP Liverpool found “the worst conditions ever seen” but reducing the population from 1150 to 700 has made it safer and “clean and decent”...“a remarkable achievement”. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-51094549>

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