

PAP NEWS ISSUE 25 2017

Hello again from **PAP News**. The Penal Affairs Panel of the Unitarians sends you news of some current issues in criminal justice, Human Rights and in prisons. Follow the links for fuller information.

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1 New Bail Provisions Complaints arising from cases, for example, involving phone tapping, have led to many complaints about persons being released on bail during long police investigations. Bail, sometimes including conditions, for years is not unknown, with consequential damage to employment, reputation and even mental health. The proposals are to limit police bail to 28 days, which can be extended on review by a senior police officer. But the alternatives to bail are not without problems. See <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/comment-and-opinion/easy-way-round-new-bail-limits/5054159.article>

2 Four New Super-sized Prisons Announced Sites in East Yorkshire, Wigan, Rochester and Port Talbot have been identified for prisons which will each hold more than 1000 prisoners. While the prison population appears to have stabilised about 86,000 with few free places, the Government's policy of expanding the population by 10,000 by 2020 remains. Older prisons occupying valuable sites in cities are to close, notwithstanding that the replacement prisons are often very remote. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/mar/22/four-supersized-prisons-to-be-built-england-and-wales-elizabeth-truss-plan>

3 New Campaign to Release Indeterminate Sentence Prisoners Several bodies have begun to campaign to release the remaining 3,600 prisoners in UK prisons who were sentenced to indefinite sentences "for public protection", a sentence abolished in 2012 by the High Court. The ECtHR criticised the sentence as arbitrary and a breach of the Human Rights Convention. The Government has failed to change the test for release by the Parole Board and has abolished the right of prisoners to Legal Aid. See <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/free-the-remaining-ipp-prisoners>

4 Mental Health Court Orders Decline Whilst detentions under the civil provisions of the Mental Health Act 1983 have grown, the number of Court Orders made during the past five years has declined steadily. It has been suggested that the criminal justice system is again failing to identify persons with mental illnesses and learning difficulties. See <http://www.content.digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB22571/inp-det-m-h-a-1983-sup-com-eng-15-16-rep.pdf>

5 Police Spying on Protesters Revealed Have you ever taken part in a public protest? You may have been recorded in police files. Would you like to know if your name appears in the new Special Branch Files Project online archive? See <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/undercover-with-paul-lewis-and-robert-evans/2016/jan/14/files-detailing-police-spying-operations-against-protesters-published-online>

6 Five fold Increase in Detention of EU Citizens for Immigration Offences since 2010 The number of EU citizens detained in UK immigration detention centres grew by five times between 2010 and 2015. Is it a sign of Conservative government hostility to EU immigrants? Can the detentions only grow with Brexit? See <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/eu-citizens-detention-centres-immigration-detained-five-times-theresa-may-brexit-hostile-environment-a7534231.html>

7 Leading Lawyers Warn of UK Leaving Human Rights Convention The UK may have drafted the Convention as a victor in the late 1940s but the current Prime Minister, who as Home Secretary was often criticised by the ECtHR, has repeatedly stated she wishes the UK to leave. 50 leading UK lawyers have written in protest to The Observer. To leave the EU is one thing but to leave the HR Convention is quite another. See <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2017/feb/21/top-lawyers-warn-of-human-rights-crisis-after-brexit>

8 “Politics of Demonization” Report of Amnesty International Have you wondered why so many refugees and asylum-seekers are fleeing their own countries and why so many countries are becoming hostile to them? What contributions are being made to this hostility by politicians? See what is happening across the world according to Amnesty International country by country, including the UK. See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/02/amnesty-international-annual-report-201617/>

9 Government Rebuffs Criticism of Probate Court Fees Increases Following the completion of consultations, the Government has announced very substantial increases in Probate fees in May 2017. On an estate of £2 million, the fees are to rise up to 29 times. It appears that the increases are intended to subsidise the costs of all courts. See <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/probate-fees-soar-to-20k-to-fund-courts/5053754.article>

10 Evening Courts Hearings Anger Solicitors – The Government has announced that a pilot of evening sittings will start in May at six courts. The sittings will be up to 6.30 pm at Crown Courts, 7 pm at civil courts and 8.30 pm at Magistrates Courts. Solicitors' representatives complain that they were not consulted about the proposals and they come at a time when further pay cuts are proposed by the Government. It is not clear when preparation of cases or attendances at police stations might be done. See <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/solicitors-anger-over-late-night-court-pilot-/5060512.article>

11 Do Come to the PAP Presentation at GA2017 We are pleased to welcome Professor Kate Pickett, co-author of “The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better”, to give the presentation “Gone Too Far: The Impact of Inequality”. It is programmed for Tuesday, 11.4.17 at 15:45. Do come if you're booked in to the 2017 Annual Meetings. For an introduction, see <https://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/scale-economic-inequality-uk>

12 Please Send Your News for PAP News Do you have news for publication to Unitarians and our friends? Please send it with a link to your website to bruce_chilton@hotmail.com so we might include it in **PAP News**.