

PSAP News Issue 29 2018

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Here are some current issues in criminal justice, Human Rights, prisons and social problems. Follow the links for fuller information.

1 Women's Community Prisons plan scrapped The UK government were to create five new prisons for women to reduce the distances from the prisoners' homes areas and the disruption to relationships with children. The proposal for "community prisons" has been replaced by five "community centres" where women sentenced to community orders will be required to live. Problems have emerged immediately. The £50 million for the community prisons has been returned to HM Treasury. Critics demand the community centres must be properly funded. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/women-prison-uk-community-sentences-centres-reoffending-rates-children-funding-a8418271.html>

2 Asylum-seekers held after Courts order release The Home Office has been accused of failing to release asylum-seekers for months after Court orders for their release. The Home Office is said to argue that while in a detention centre, a person does not qualify for emergency homeless housing and most emergency housing is of a standard less than that of the detention centres – a "Catch 22" argument. See <https://www.rt.com/uk/428013-uk-detention-asylum-seekers/>

3 Grayling's reforms of probation will never work The Justice Committee of the House of Commons has issued a damning report on the major changes introduced in 2014 at a cost of £3.7 billion. The reforms destroyed the successful, locally-run Probation Trusts. The MPs urge the Department of Justice to review the new system and find better alternatives to the partially-privatised system. It has been reported that for many probationers supervision has sunk to one telephone call every six weeks. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jun/22/part-privatisation-of-probation-sector-is-a-mess-mps-say>

4 Child Benefit provisions force nearly 200 women to prove rape After April, 2017, only two children qualified for child benefit in each family unless the mother could prove a further child was the result of assault. In the first year, 190 women have had to prove they were raped in order to claim the state's financial assistance for a child. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/rape-victims-child-benefits-women-dwp-universal-credit-work-pensions-support-a8421086.html>

5 Black teenage boys more likely to get maximum prison sentences In her first speech as Prime Minister, Theresa May, pointed to the profiling of black boys as criminals as a problem in UK society she wished to change. Little evidence of

change has since appeared. Statistics for 2009 – 17 show one in four black teenage boys guilty of manslaughter were given maximum sentences while all white children guilty of manslaughter were sentenced to no more than 10 years and most less than four years. See

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/black-boys-discrimination-teenagers-children-white-racial-bias-prison-a8466606.html>

6 HMP Pentonville's Board of local people reports gang brawls and vermin

The Independent Monitoring Board has revealed serious conditions at UK's largest local prison including overcrowding, gang warfare and "crumbling" infrastructure. The prisoners are not treated with humanity or dignity. A prisoner was killed as he entered a prayer meeting. It concludes the problems are mainly the result of too few prison officers and the special position of this prison at the centre of a number of mental hospitals. See <http://islingtontribune.com/article/pentonville-prison-still-inhumane-and-sees-gang-fights-during-prayer>

7 Ambulance calls to prisons almost double in four years Emergency calls from prisons for ambulances for inmates are now made every 40 minutes in England. At least two prison officers are taken to hospital for treatment each day. Self-harm and violence in prisons is now at record levels. Evidence of a crisis in UK prisons seems a daily event.

See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prisons-ambulance-callouts-jails-doubles-crisis-a8520376.html>

8 Prisons Minister will resign if he makes no difference in 12 months

Rory Stewart MP, the Prisons Minister of State since January, 2018, has responded to the reports of crises in the prison and probation services for which he is responsible by demanding 12 months in which to make a difference. It is not clear when the period began or what a difference means or to what. What he might do in the absence of funding and many more prison officers is not clear. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45214414>

9 "The Inner Level: How More Equal Societies Reduce ..." The long-awaited follow up book by Professors Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett to "The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better" is now on sale. If you want evidence why neo-liberalism or "Reagan economics" is not good for you, you can buy the book at most bookshops or online through <https://www.google.co.uk>

10 Local Government Association issues own Green Paper on Adult Care The LGA considers the ability of local authorities to care or pay to care to care for adults is "at breaking point". See <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-launches-own-green-paper-adult-social-care-reaches-breaking-point>

11 Mentors needed for released prisoners Rev. Phil Silk is in the Chaplaincy at HMP Dovegate, near Uttoxeter, and the prison releases men to schemes in the Midlands which meet and support them through the first months. All schemes need help to find short-term addresses and need mentors to befriend the men in accord with the careful training and rules of each scheme. If you would like more information, email pandjsilk@yahoo.co.uk

12 Please Send Your News for PSAP News Do you have social responsibility news? Send it with a link to fuller information to bruce_chilton@hotmail.com

Social responsibility is religion in action