THEMHOWARD

ISSUE 1, WINTER 2006 140 YEARS OF PENAL REFORM

HE HOUR

COUNCIL CAN'T FIND SAFE PLACE

1 IN 9 CHILDREN RELEASED WITH NOWHERE TO GO

Offenders to be given a chance to make things right

COMMUNITY SENTENCES CIII (RI

By Catryn Yousefi

Howard League Community Correspondent

COMMUNITY SENTENCES CAN HELP CUT CRIME, according to the leading penal reform organisation.

Research by the Howard League for Penal Reform shows that community service cuts reoffending rates by 14%. In contrast, most prisoners commit more crimes within two years of leaving jail.

The Howard League insists public confidence is "critical" and is launching a cam-

ways of fighting crime.

Britain's record prison population could top 90,000 by the end of the year and is equivalent to a town the size of Hemel Hempstead.

It is expanding by 800 inmates a month enough to fill a jail like Brixton Prison.

Frances Crook, director of the Howard League, said: "Prison isn't working. We already have our highest ever prison popupaign to educate the public about better lation yet the Government has announced

Continued on p. 2



Frances gainst prison or children

SEE PAGE 7

A SUCCESS RATE OF 61% - WHY WE'RE KEEPING IT IN THE COMMUNITY

plans to open even more jails.

"Effective community sentences can help stem reoffending among those convicted of less serious crimes."

In July, the Government announced plans to build more prisons with capacity for 8,000 prisoners.

Amid calls for YET MORE JAILS, the Howard League is calling for a more efficient solution.

Offenders given community sentences are 14% less likely to reoffend than those sent to prison.

Of nearly 130,000 people who began a community sentence in 2004, almost 80,000 successfully completed their punishment - a success rate of 61%.

The Howard League believes such sentences help create a safer society where people take responsibility and make amends for their actions.

Offenders interact with victims to gain greater understanding of the consequences of their actions and aid re-integration into the community.

Ms Crook said: "Mediation can transform a person's perception of

'These programmes help prevent future offending, recognise the needs of individuals, involve victims and reparation, and are cost effective'



the impact of the offence.

"It offers the victim the opportunity to voice their needs."

"These schemes make tangible improvements to local communities across the country by changing lives and reducing re-offending,' Ms Crook added.

"We know that community sentences vary in effectiveness and many have not been given the resources they need."

Catryn Yousefi, a senior researcher and campaign officer at the Howard League said: "These are problems that need tackling.

"Our community sentences campaign can be influential at a time of great change for the criminal justice system. We must reduce the numbers of victims of crime.

"In the last six years the number of people given community sentences has gone up by 40%.

"It is important to get them right so that people who have committed crimes make amends for the harm they have caused, so that victims experience some healing for their anguish, and the community is protected from future offending."

Dumped in a hostel with no support: the scandal of 'resettlement'

Young offenders who earn early release are "rewarded" by being dumped in homeless shelters.

17-year-old 'ALISTAIR', had achieved "gold level" for his behaviour, and was making such good progress, that the prison had agreed he could be released 2 months

He had been in care and had no home to go to. His local authority had failed to find him accommodation so he had to spend Christmas and New Year in PRISON. Out of desperation, Alistair told us his grandmother might be able to help. We contacted her and confirmed she was willing to accommodate him - but her home was

deemed unsuitable as it was designed for one person.

Meanwhile, the local authority's "strategy" was to drop him off at the homeless centre where he would be placed in crisis accommodation.

When he was eventually relased he was dumped into a bed and breakfast all alone. He contacted the Howard League for help and our lawyers went into action.

We tried to persuade the local authority to live up to its responsibilities but eventually had to resort to legal action.

A test case heard in the high court forced the local authority to care for 'Alistair' properly.

TINA'S criminal defence solicitor vital bonding time with her BABY. contacted the Howard League for old client, had been placed in a prilocal authority's refusal to provide her with support and accommodation while she awaited trial.

Tina had never been in trouble with the police, and before her arrest and charge was living in a children's home. She gave birth to a boy shortly before she was remanded. Bail was denied after the local authority offered no alternative accommodation to the court.

Tina's incarceration not only robbed her of her liberty. It also denied her

She was vulnerable, upset and very Penal Reform because her 16 year scared. The Howard League wrote to the local authority on Tina's behalf to vate children's jail following the remind them of their duties under the 1989 Children Act.

Following the Howard League for Penal Reform's application for judicial review in the High Court, the local authority gave in and agreed to provide accommodation and support and Tina's application for bail was success-

She is currently living in a children's home, where, although nervous about her trial, she is happy and settled, and sees her baby regularly.



'Alistair': denied release because the local authority weren't ready

OUR GOLDEN TEAM

We have 6 male prisoners working as paying tax in HMP Coldingley



BARBED DESIGNER

IDEA? How about setting up a design studio inside a prison, training the prisoners in Adobe software and giving them the chance to learn about graphic design from experienced names in the industry? HMPColdingley, a Category C Training Prison in Surrey accommodates of society's mixture 'failures', but BARBED

has

opened its doors to six

inmates keen to take

up the opportunity to

just

DESIGN



The unusual suspects: the team at Barbed are taking responsibilty for their lives

earn a minimum wage of £5.15 an hour. It's not all free and easy for these six individuals. They pay tax, National Insurance, donate to Victim Support and give 30% of their salary to enhance prison visits. After supporting their families and saving for their release in special

bank accounts, they are left with a normal weekly wage like all the other prisoners.

But the key point here is that they are learning a trade that will help them find work on release, build their self esteem and give them valuable work skills. Graphic design is a well

paid job out there in the community and designers with IT skills are in demand. With the chance to earn good honest money by WORKING instead of holding up a bank or dealing drugs this project will help improve peoples lives and reduce re-offending. If the idea went nationwide it would clearly help more people to stop re-offending, which in turn would save US the TAX PAYER money. A good idea all round!

Check out our work at www.howardleague. org or email: barbed@ howardleague.org

We have something to offer!

"THIS NEW social enterprise by the Howard League for Penal Reform has been a blessing and the best thing that has happened to me since the beginning of my sentence. My head and notebooks are filled with ideas and concepts that I now have a clear path for. The amount of wasted talent abandoned and not utilised within the prison walls depresses me. Hopefully our studio can affect real change towards purposeful activity.

I am now in the position to contribute both to my family and society. I have an amazing sense of achievement. I feel respected and that self-worth is something worth living for."

The barbed studio is open for business, with clients including NOMS. Shelter, Rainer and Radio for Development and we laid out this paper too! Perhaps we can help you with your next design challenge?

"reduce prison population by 25,000 over 3 years"



60 second in-**Berriew** resident of the **Howard League**

for Penal Reform....

Why did you agree to become *President of the Howard League?* Because I have a long-held and deep-seated belief that prison is inappropriate for most non-violent offenders and women, and worsens the problems of society.

You did an inquiry into children in custody and visited prisons, what shocked you most?

An EXCLUSIVE That we still strip-search children, place them in solitary cells I would ensure that only dangeras punishment, and use violence ous women were held in custody; **Lord Carlile of** upon them when it is not com-**QC**, pletely necessary.

> What changes would you like to see for children in custody?

At least half dealt with in the community; a realistic provision of Community Adolescent Mental Health Services; and the same standards as for children in the open community.

If you were Home Secretary today, what policy changes would you introduce?

Now there's a question! I would reduce the prison population by at least 25,000 over three years; I would enhance community punishment services; I would ensure that as few children as possible were in custody; and I would ensure a better organisation of police services. I would consolidate and codify all counter-terrorism

You have children yourself, what advice would you give to parents to keep them out of trouble?

Be patient, tolerant and never shocked. Always love them unconditionally. Never use violence of any kind against them.

You are a lawyer, what can people who work in the legal system do to make it better?

Understand it more for a start. Judges, whilst well-trained, often have only a sketchy understanding of what happens in prisons.

If you could put someone in prison for a day, who would you choose?

As many religious leaders as possible, in one cell, in the hope that greater understanding could be achieved.



Mother of courage speaks out over six suicides in HMP Stval

The Howard reveals the determination and grit of one woman who campaigns to protect others from the pain of her experience: having her daughter take her own life in prison.

By Anita Dockley

AFTER HER DAUGHTER took her own life in prison, Pauline Campbell didn't want anyone's pity.

She vowed to turn a mother's grief into a political force and insisted: "No-one can stop me".

Since her 18-year-old daughter Sarah died of an overdose in Styal Prison, Cheshire, in January 2003, 32 other female inmates have committed suicide.

Pauline holds a demonstration outside the prison gates every time it happens.

She told THE HOWARD: "I am campaigning to stop the needless suffering and deaths of women prisoners.

"This campaign means a lot to me: I will do whatever it takes to end the death toll.

"Despite 12 arrests while protesting outside women's jails, I remain determined."

Sarah Campbell was the youngest of the SIX women who took their own lives at Styal Prison in 12 months between 2002 and 2003.

'depressed and alone, she took an overdose'

She was convicted of a non-violent offence and had a history of depression and drug use.

She arrived at the prison too late at night for a full induction to be carried out.

But she was assessed as being at risk of self-harm or suicide and records show she had been crying and requested medication.

Medical staff recommended she was placed in a shared cell and kept under regular observation by prison staff.

Sarah ASKED to be put on the vulnerable prisoner unit to protect her from another inmate she knew.

But instead she was placed in a normal cell in the segregation unit normally used for punish-



Pauline Campbell and supporters protest outside Low Newton.

ment.

The next day, depressed and alone, she took an overdose.

She was vomiting and fitting and, when she died, was bleeding from her nose and mouth.

A coroner at the inquest into her death blamed the prison for failing in its "duty of care" and contributing to Sarah's death.

Sarah Campbell was 18 years old and had been at the prison for less than 24 hours.

There are many other shocking tales of vulnerable, neglected women, dying in desperation in our decrepid prisons.

The Government's own independent prisons monitor, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Anne Owers, reported earlier this year on the plight of women in prison.

She found that eight out of ten women inmates have a mental illness, two thirds are drug or alcohol dependent, half will have experienced violence in the home and one third will have suffered from sexual assault.

No wonder, then, that there are such high levels of self-harm and suicide.

Following Sarah's death, Pauline Campbell has dedicated her life to highlighting the social crisis and death toll in women's prisons.

She said: "Maternal grief can be transformed from a cause for pity into a political force. No one can stop me.

"I hope to achieve an end to women's imprisonment except for the few who pose a danger to society.

"Tough on crime? Think how tough it is for the innocent children whose mums die in prison."



"My daughter died in the 'care' of HMP Styal in 2003. 'Tough on crime'? Think how tough it is for the innocent children whose mums die in prison."

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

The Howard League for Penal Reform is calling for the Prison Service to set up first night centres to help reduce deaths and self-harm in women's prisons. Half of all prison suicides take place in the first month. For more detailed information you can order the report Care, Concern and Carpets: How women's prisons can use first night in custody centres to reduce distress, from www.howardleague.



Practical, cheaper than prison — and it keeps crime down too!

Prison population hits record high

Just after the Inquiry into the murder of Zahid Mubarek by his cell-mate recommended the ending of enforced cell sharing. the prison population reached an all time high of nearly 80,000 men, women and children. Nearly a third of prisoners are forced to share a cell.

The Howard League for Penal Reform today called for prison to be reserved for serious and violent offenders who are a continuing danger to the community.



Anna has completed a course in painting and decorating and hopes to go to college

Community sentences save taxpayers £690 million

much as more effective community based punishments.

keep a low-risk drug-addicted offender in jail.

A robust community sentence costs just £25-37 to

15-year-old 'Anna's' life was spiralling out of control three counts of causing crimal and her situation. inal damage.

But the youngster was sent to the Suffolk Reparation and Mediation Service (SRAMS) on part of a 12month referral order.

Her victims wanted her to work with SRAMS making amends for the damge she'd

'Anna', not her real name, carried out reparation work and wrote letters of apology.

Her work, again at the re-offending rates."

Jail costs up to four times as request of the victims, was within the community on a conservation site designed It costs £100 per day to to be accessible to local

> 'Anna' was encouraged to take responsibility for her actions by explaining and apologising for her behav-

This community sentence when she was convicted on was tailored to the individu-

> It met both 'Anna's' need for support and supervision and the wishes of her vic-

Title

Street

Email

Full Name

Town/City

Postcode

Telephone

House Number/Name

Praising the SRAMS's work, a Howard League for Penal Reform spokesperson said: "'Anna' was able to gain a clearer understanding of related consequences, with the added benefit of encouraging her to become part of the local community. This contributes to reducing



dance to celebrate 140 years of the Howard League. Dine with the Attorney General,

Cut out this form and send it to: The Howard League for Penal Reform, 1 Ardleigh Road, London N1 4HS.

Or you can call us on 020 7249 7373 or email info@howardleague.org.

Lord Goldsmith, and the Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer. You can also join the Howard

Please tick here if you are under 18



Reidre

15 year old boy asked to part buttock cheeks

Dear Reidre It was my first night in jail and when I got to the prison I was asked to get undressed and told by staff to squat and then another staff member asked me to part my bum cheeks or else they would make me.

I am only fifteen years old and this is my first time in prison. I was sexually abused when I was a child and it felt like it was happening to me all over again.

I didn't arrive until after midnight because of a long journey and I had no idea of what the prison rules were.

■ **REIDRE SAYS:** We have to strip search everyone who comes in to prison even if they are children who have been abused. We know it's not strictly necessary and it doesn't stop the drugs getting in but we like to look tough, OK.

Dear Reidre After years of drug use and petty crime I was sentenced to this local scheme that has transformed my life. I am finally clean and am able to give something back by working with victims who are really supporting me. Now I hear that because the probation service is being cut my scheme will close. If I lose this support I fear I will relapse and head back

to crime.

Dear Reidre I was convicted of a minor theft of forty quids worth of CDs and I was sentenced to a community order. I was doing unpaid work - digging ditches and painting - helping to put something back in to the commnuity. I was literally five minutes late for work one day, and they just sent me away. Then I was late on another occasion and they sent me back to prison. Why?

REIDRE SAYS:
We want to support community sentences because we know they work better. But it is quite complicated to convince the public of this and it's much easier to just keep filling up the prisons.

Read more true life stories and find out what you can do to help. Find out out the facts behind the government spin at www.howardleague.org



Let me know what you think....

Write to me at:

John Reid, Home Secretary The Home Office, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF

I'M SCARED THAT MY CELLMATE IS GOING TO ATTACK ME IN THE NIGHT

Dear Reidre I have been forced to share a cell with four different strangers this week and the latest man is clearly mentally ill and I am frightend he is going to attack me in the middle of the night. We spend all day locked up together and he is also a heavy smoker. Can I have a transfer? ■ REIDRE SAYS:

Somewhere between 25% and 80% of people in prison have one or more mental illness, so if only one of the four men you have shared with has a problem, you are doing quite well. Stay close to the call button and try not to breathe in his smoke too much. Overcrowding is a serious issue and every prison in the country is overflowing.

PRISON MADE ME CUT MYSELF UNTIL I NEARLY DIED

Dear Reidre I am a 19-year-old girl who has been in prison for the last two years and have cut myself and tried to commit suicide so many times I have had to go to hospital for blood transfusions. The prison just kept me in solitary confinement. Please help me.

League has been in touch with me and I have agreed to its request for an Inquiry. I was pleased to hear that the Howard League lawyers helped you move to a hospital and I know you are now doing much better.



STUDENTS

JOIN A HOWARD SOCIETY IN A UNI NEAR YOU!



WENTY-NINE **CHILDREN** have died in custody and I am committed to making sure that yet another child does not die by their own hand in a british prison. Every day children in prisons and the several hundred held in privately run jails for younger children, are restrained, forcibly strip-searched and held in solitary. And it is all an abject failure. Almost every one of them will go straight back out and commit more crimes, devastate more victims and wreck more communities.

The government has created a vicious circle and we are all suffering the consequences. It is just one big lie. The politicians tell us 'something must be done. This is something, so we'll do it.' And they destroy children already badly damaged and abused, by condemning them to languish in prisons. In fact this doesn't even interrupt crime as the bored teenagers torment each other - which is one reason why so many have committed suicide.

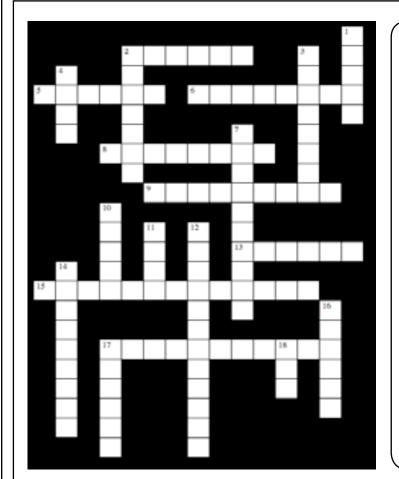
The Howard League is taking action. Our legal team is helping hundreds of children in custody to change their lives and get support. Our research shows that the best community sentences are popular with victims and reduce crime. Our campaigns engage with politicians and the public.

nce again we see a Home Secretary responding to a crisis, not looking at the long term impacts his proposals will have. Locking more men, women and children up for longer cannot be considered a serious, measured response to protect and reassure the public.

In the space of six months the Government appears to have completely reversed its position, from a recognition that prison doesn't work to one where it decides to waste more taxpayers money by building more prisons.

The best way to ease overcrowding in prison is not to build more prisons, which would themselves rapidly become overcrowded. The answer is to reduce the number of people being inappropriately sentenced to custody. Prison is supposed to be the ultimate sanction for those who pose a risk to the public. For the remainder, community sentences - which actually cut crime - are the far better option. John Reid talks about rebalancing the system in favour of victims, but when 67% of those released from prison are reconvicted within two years, his proposals will merely create further victims of crime.

Home Office's half-baked plans will create more victims of crime



ACROSS

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- Person hurt the most (6)
- Person in charge of prison (8)
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- Professional defender? (9)
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- Good; but not when you have to pay it! (4)
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Design and layout: barbed

Barbed is a social enterprise run by the Howard League for Penal Reform inside HMP Coldingley

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Frances Crook

Photography © Kanaglia, Tolga Kostak, Andy Aitcheson.

With thanks to Nick Sommerlad

Mission statement

- The Howard League for Penal Reform wants a safer society where fewer people are victims of crime
- The Howard League for Penal Reform believes that offenders must make amends for what they have done and change their lives
- The Howard League for Penal Reform believes that community sentences make a person take responsibility and live a law-abiding life in the community

The Howard is published by

The Howard League for Penal Reform

1 Ardleigh Road, London N1 4HS Tel: 020 7249 7373 Fax: 020 7249 7788 Email: info@howardleague.org Web: www.howardleague.org Registered charity no 251926 VAT no 689 7327 66. ISSN 1463-435X

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COLLEAGUES. TELL THEM THE TRUTH!

WHAT YOU CAN DO...



Baroness Linklater presents the award

Circles of Support

THE SCHEME SUPPORTS the re-integration of released sex offenders into the community, while holding them accountable for their actions. Circles of Support and Accountability have been established in the Thames Valley for the past four years. Their purpose is to enable high risk, high need sex offenders to be managed in the community through a group of volunteers supporting them and holding them to account.





Local Government calls for prison free zones for children

FOLLOWING AN APPROACH by the Howard League for Penal Reform, the Local Government Association is calling for the end of penal custody for children in all but the most serious of cases. Pilot community sentences in two local areas to keep children out of prison will be set up later this year.

Councillor Les Lawrence, Chair of the LGA Children & Young People Board, said:

"It's time we explored more effective ways of dealing with children in trouble, rather than locking them up. The problems many of these children have are deep seated, but we can help them and protect our communities at the same time."

Frances Crook said: "The Howard League for Penal Reform is extremely pleased to endorse the local government campaigns. We know that sending children to prison guarantees more crime, more mayhem for local communities and more victims. Public protection is best served by developing sound community sentences that help young people to make amends and learn from their mistakes."

MAKE YOUR NOMINATION

WHO WILL BE THE BIG WINNERS IN 2007?

The Howard League for Penal Reform ran its Award scheme in 2006 to find the top community programmes, but who will be the big winners in 2007?

We are looking for nominations from statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, individuals, clients or anyone else who knows of an INNOVATIVE community scheme. The winning schemes will be highlighted and widely publicised. and winners will be invited to make presentations at a national conference next summer.

For further information on the awards scheme, the judging criteria and how to nominate someone please contact: Catryn Yousefi on 020 7249 7373 ext 105, email: catryn.yousefi@howardleague.org or check out www.howardleague.org

