

The Howard

● Less crime ● Safer communities ● Fewer people in prison ● 2016: 2

CRIMINAL CARE



John Birdsall

A major study by the Howard League for Penal Reform has indicated that children living in children's homes are being pushed into the criminal justice system needlessly.

The charity's research shows that the children are being criminalised at excessively high rates compared to other boys and girls.

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Charity in lead role for Europe guide

The Howard League for Penal Reform has helped to produce the first European Practical Guide dedicated to the monitoring of places of deprivation of liberty for children.

The guide was produced as part of a two-year project, Children's Rights Behind Bars, which brought together international experts on justice and children's rights.

The Howard League was the UK lead on the project, providing information regarding child custody in England and Wales as well as expert advice on the operation of domestic prison inspection and monitoring.

The 166-page guide, which was presented at the UN Human Rights Council, was developed in association with organisations from 13 other countries, 11 international experts, the Council of Europe, and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT).

Children's rights and needs differ from those of adults, but until now there had been no particular European guidelines for monitoring places where children are deprived of their liberty.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "Across Europe children are detained in places including prisons, secure units, police stations and mental health units. The Howard League has helped to develop standards for making sure they are protected from abuse and violence. Children in custody have to thrive so that they are able to live a good and useful life on release."

Research conducted for Children's Rights Behind Bars has shown that monitoring bodies rarely focus solely on children's institutions, and that inspectors often lack necessary knowledge and training on child-specific issues.

The new guide has been designed to address this, providing monitoring bodies with a practical tool to help them better prepare, implement and follow up on visits to child detention facilities.



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Children's homes call police too often

Children living in children's homes are being criminalised at excessively high rates compared to other boys and girls, including those in other types of care, research by the Howard League for Penal Reform has revealed.

The charity's study suggests that there is a systemic problem that leads staff to resort to the police, often over minor incidents that would never come to officers' attention if they happened in family homes.

Police data indicates that some forces have been called thousands of times in the last three years.

The Howard League's report, *Criminal Care: Children's homes and criminalising children*, calls for more support to be given to looked after children during their teenage years so that they

are not pushed into the criminal justice system by homes that are supposed to be helping them.

The report draws on Department for Education statistics, which indicate that about 4 per cent of children aged 10 to 12 who live

– and almost 20 times more likely to be criminalised than a non-looked after child.

The report states: "Levels of criminalisation of children in children's homes increase dramatically between the ages of

WHAT THE MEDIA SAY...

"Children living in children's homes are up to 20 times more likely to have got into trouble with the police, according to a penal reform group."

(Daily Telegraph, 30 March 2016)

in children's homes have been criminalised, rising to more than 19 per cent among children aged 13 to 15.

Among 13 to 15-year-olds, children living in children's homes are almost six times as likely to be criminalised as looked after children in other placements

13 and 15.

"The children who are being criminalised whilst teenagers are the same children who, when younger, were sympathetically viewed as vulnerable, innocent and highly deserving of society's help and protection. There appears to be a 'tipping point'

around the age of 13, at which time these children lose society's sympathy and, rather than being helped, they are pushed into the criminal justice system."

The report supports the Howard League's ongoing campaign to keep as many children as possible out of the criminal justice system.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "These children have been taken into care because they are in dire need and their parents cannot, or will not, look after them. They are wonderful young people who have had a really bad start in life. They deserve every chance to flourish."

"Private companies, charities and local authorities that are paid a fortune by the taxpayer should give these children what they need and deserve."

Celebrating 150 years of campaigning



The Howard League for Penal Reform celebrated its 150th birthday by holding an exhibition in the House of Commons.

Speeches at the launch event in March 2016 were given by the charity's Chief Executive, Frances Crook; the then Justice Secretary, Michael Gove; and Bedford MP Richard Fuller, who

sponsored the exhibition.

The display celebrated 150 years of penal reform and focused on the Howard League's achievements, including the abolition of the death penalty, the charity's legal service to support children and young people in custody, and its work to overturn restrictions on books for prisoners.

In his speech to visitors,

Michael Gove said: "You all know that it is perhaps not the most fashionable cause, and perhaps not the easiest one to raise money for, but without you the lives of some of the most vulnerable and fragile people in our country would be worse."

"So please, please, please take pride in the work that you do because we need organisations

like the Howard League.

"An opportunity tonight to look back on 150 years and to celebrate some of the campaign successes and achievements for which you have been responsible is a great thing, so thank you."

Pictured from left to right are Michael Gove, Frances Crook and Richard Fuller.

Ten years after the Carlile Inquiry... Illegal, systemic, physical abuse of children in custody is still happening

The “illegal, systemic, physical abuse of children, sanctioned by the state” has been laid bare in a landmark report on the use of restraint, solitary confinement and strip-searching in child prisons in England and Wales.

The report, published by the Howard League for Penal Reform, reveals that the majority of children in custody are detained in institutions where restraint is routinely – and unlawfully – used to get them to obey orders.

Children have suffered 4,350 injuries in the last five years while being restrained. Although the number of boys and girls in custody has fallen, the rate of restraint has more than doubled.

The report, *The Carlile Inquiry 10 years on*, looks at what progress has been made since the Howard League published the findings of an independent inquiry, chaired by Lord Carlile of Berriew QC, into the use of restraint, solitary

It has been supposedly banned in secure training centres and it is not used in secure children’s homes.

The Howard League’s report shows that this unlawful practice is widespread in young offender institutions, however, and accounts for 22 to 34 per cent of all times force is used on children.

The deliberate infliction of pain on children to secure compliance is banned in all forms of child custody. The report, however, highlights examples where painful restraint has been used to secure compliance in young offender institutions.

In one incident in Cookham Wood prison, Kent, a boy was restrained for refusing to leave a room after a review into whether he was at risk of harming himself. Inspectors found that force was instigated quickly and escalated to an officer causing the boy pain by kicking him.

The report states that more than

WHAT THE MEDIA SAY...

“The number of children in custody who are restrained has more than doubled in the last five years, according to research.”

(Press Association, 20 June 2016)

confinement and strip-searching in penal institutions for children.

The inquiry followed the deaths of two boys in secure training centres.

Gareth Myatt, 15, died while being restrained by officers in G4S-run Rainsbrook secure training centre, Northamptonshire.

Adam Rickwood, 14, was found hanging in his cell after being unlawfully restrained in Serco-run Hassockfield secure training centre, County Durham.

An inquest concluded that the restraint had contributed to Adam’s decision to take his own life.

Lord Carlile’s team recommended that restraint should never be used as a punishment or to secure compliance. The courts have since held that using physical force on a child to get them to do as they are told is unlawful.

a third of all approved restraint ‘techniques’ that can be used on children involve force that causes the deliberate infliction of pain.

The Carlile Inquiry also recommended that the routine strip-searching of children should end and be replaced by a risk-led approach. After continued campaigning by the Howard League, this new approach has been adopted.

In practice, however, there remain concerns that too many children are being strip-searched. The Howard League legal team continues to come across cases where children have been strip-searched inappropriately.

Lord Carlile of Berriew QC said: “I am very pleased that, as a result of my report and thanks to tireless campaigning by the Howard League, children in custody are no longer routinely strip-searched.



LANDMARK: Lord Carlile of Berriew QC chaired an independent inquiry into the use of restraint, solitary confinement and strip-searching in penal institutions for children

“It shows that change for the better can happen. We now need the Ministry of Justice to go further.

“It is time that the government recognises that the use of force on children, simply to make them do what they are told, is both unacceptable and unlawful.

“A healthy response to children in trouble with the law, which has their welfare at its heart, would recognise this use of violence by adults as an admission of failure.”

Another central recommendation of the Carlile Inquiry was that prison segregation units should not be used for children. In 2006 the inquiry described these units as “little more than

bare, dark and dank cells that exacerbate underlying risks and vulnerabilities”.

The Howard League’s report states that little has changed in the intervening years. There is no centrally-held data on the number of children placed in segregation units, nor any information on why and for how long children are confined.

The most recent survey of children in prison found that more than a quarter of boys had been held in segregation units at some point.

The long-term effects of solitary confinement on children are not well studied. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture,

studying its impact on adults in 2011, concluded that “some of the harmful psychological effects of isolation can become irreversible” after 15 days.

The Howard League’s report states that the use of solitary confinement is more widespread in children’s prisons than when the Carlile Inquiry examined the problem 10 years ago.

Prisons, faced with problems such as staff shortages and rising violence, have increasingly imposed restricted regimes. This means that children have been held in conditions of solitary confinement on main prison wings, locked in their cells for 23 hours a day.

All-star cast of experts at justice conference

Experts from across the world helped mark the Howard League for Penal Reform’s 150th birthday at a justice conference at the University of Oxford.

More than 100 papers were presented at the conference, held at Keble College over three days in March.

The event featured the first major speeches by the newly-appointed chief inspectors of prisons and probation, Peter Clarke and Dame Glenys

Stacey.

They were joined in a panel session by the heads of three other watchdogs: Dame Anne Owers, Chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission; Sir Thomas Winsor, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary; and David Strang, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland.

Other highlights included a discussion about public perceptions of penal reform, featuring Joe Twyman,

of YouGov; Professor Neil Chakraborti, of the University of Leicester; Yvonne Roberts, journalist and Chair of Women in Prison; Dr Tim Bateman, Policy Development Lead for Youth Justice at the Office of the Children’s Commissioner; and Neena Samota, Visiting Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Westminster.

The impact of economics on penal policy was considered by experts including Professor Richard Wilkinson,

Professor Emeritus of Social Epidemiology at the University of Nottingham Medical School and co-author of *The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*.

A session on terror and penal reform featured Professor Alison Liebling, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Cambridge; Professor Lucia Zedner, Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of Oxford; and Professor Mary

Bosworth, of Oxford Centre of Criminology.

The conference ended with a session looking beyond mass incarceration.

This discussion featured three speakers from the US – Michael Jacobsen, Executive Director of the CUNY Institute for State and Local Governance; Dr Todd Clear, Professor at Rutgers School of Criminal Justice, Newark; and Professor Lisa Miller, of Rutgers University.

Save lives and you'll save money, prison service chiefs told

The emotional cost of suicide in prison is unquantifiable, but research published by the Howard League for Penal Reform indicates that the financial cost to the taxpayer could be as much as £300million a year.

The research briefing, *The cost of prison suicide*, is the first publication of its kind to examine the financial impact that a prisoner's death by suicide can have on public services in England and Wales.

It sets out how the response to a death in custody puts pressure on numerous services – including the prisons themselves, police and local authorities – and shows how that

“Nevertheless, this briefing paper shows how greater investment in suicide prevention would make financial sense, generating savings for public services that would benefit everyone.

“Prisons are failing and wholesale reform is needed. Reducing the prison population remains the key to preventing more unnecessary pain and suffering.”

The briefing paper was published as part of a programme led by the Howard League and Centre for Mental Health.

It mirrors work done by public health researchers, who have begun to focus on the economic costs of a death, for example from smoking

WHAT THE MEDIA SAY...

“Prison suicides are costing the taxpayer up to £300million a year, according to estimates by a penal reform charity.”

(Wigan Today, 13 February 2016)

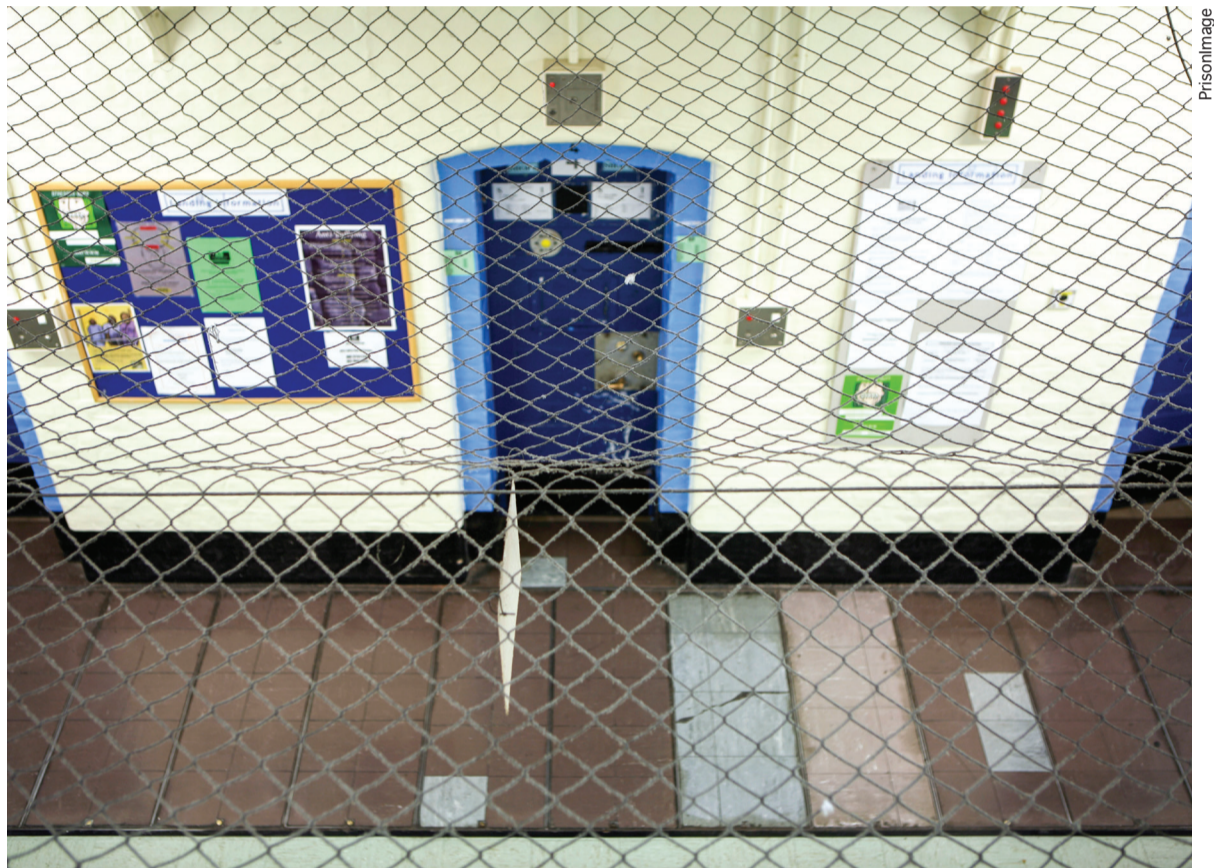
money could be better spent on measures to prevent people taking their own lives in the first place.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: “No one should be so desperate whilst they are in the care of the state that they take their own life.

“Similarly, when conditions in prisons are so dire that people are taking their own lives at a rate of one every four days, no one should have to rely on economic analysis to make the case for change.

or heart disease, to highlight how investment in prevention and health promotion can generate savings in other areas.

A similar approach has been taken within the rail industry, where about 400,000 minutes of delays on the network in 2013-14 were attributed to suicides. Network Rail has invested in a suicide prevention programme, in partnership with the Samaritans, which includes training for station staff to recognise those at risk of suicide and provide help and support.



RESEARCH: Greater investment in suicide prevention would benefit everyone

The briefing paper states that the financial costs resulting from a suicide in prison are likely to be substantially higher than the average cost of a suicide in the general population.

Whether a suicide occurs in prison or in the community, costs

will include the police investigation, the cost of an inquest and funeral expenses.

However, when a person dies whilst in the care of the state, there will be additional costs.

The Prisons and Probation Ombudsman has a statutory duty

to conduct an investigation into deaths in prison custody.

The coroner has a legal duty to investigate, and inquest costs – borne by the local authority – are likely to be significantly higher because of the complexity of that investigation.

Prisoners share views on suicide risk

Prisons need to change to enable staff to build relationships with prisoners and reduce the risk of suicide, according to research published jointly by the Howard League for Penal Reform and Centre for Mental Health.

Preventing Prison Suicide: Perspectives from the inside includes the views and experiences of current and former prisoners, particularly looking at what contributes to vulnerability and what increases or reduces their risk of suicide.

The report states that prisoners need to feel supported, cared for and able to confide in and trust staff.

Prisoners reported that staff shortages, inexperience and lack of training can all increase the risk of suicide.

They described a culture where distress was often not believed or

responded to with compassion. Arrival, being released and being transferred were all cited as times when prisoners felt most vulnerable.

Preventing Prison Suicide concludes that change needs to happen across the system to recognise the influence of the prison environment on people's vulnerability.

It finds that prisons should be Enabling Environments, striving to create a psychologically informed environment with an emphasis on the quality of relationships.

It also finds that prisons need more staff, with specialist skills, and better training in mental health awareness; more opportunities for prisoners to tackle isolation and boredom; a bigger focus on the wellbeing of prisoners, especially in the first few weeks; and better support for prisoners to transition

into society upon leaving prison.

Dr Graham Durcan, Centre for Mental Health associate director for criminal justice, said: “With growing concerns about suicide in prison, it is vital that the experiences of prisoners are heard in devising solutions and reducing the risk of more tragic losses of life.

“Current and former prisoners are clear that good quality relationships are key to reducing the risk of suicide in prison.

“We also need to take action to reduce the risk of suicide among people leaving prison and provide ‘through the gates’ support at this critical time in their lives.”

Andrew Neilson, Director of Campaigns at the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: “This report points at some key principles that should inform the government's prison reform agenda.”

WHAT CURRENT AND FORMER PRISONERS TOLD US...

“...I was in my 40s when I first went to prison, I had already had a breakdown [before prison], I didn't know what to expect...I was in a bad way and did consider suicide for the first time ever in my life...I learned to cope, but not everyone does...”

“I was vulnerable and prison disallowed me from feeling that because I had to put on a façade that I am coping, that I am a tough inmate...”

“I wasn't once asked are you okay? How do you feel? No one ever asked me that. So I guess they never asked anyone... unless you're screaming out for help”.

“I can't do anything for my kids, I can't help them, I can't do anything for them. What is the point?”

“People who do want to take their own life, quite often it happens and no one will know about it... they can't cry for help because they are not the sort of person who can, or actually, who's going to listen? It's all building up and they think, finish it...”

'Act now to stop suicides in prison'

The families of three young men who died in Glen Parva prison called for more action to prevent suicides after Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons published its latest inspection report on the jail.

The grieving mothers of Greg Revell, Liam Lambert and Jake Foxall joined the Howard League for Penal Reform in demanding major reform of the failing prison system in England and Wales.

The Howard League is aware of the deaths of eight young men in Glen Parva prison, which holds 18- to 21-year-olds, since 2011. All eight are believed to have taken their own lives.

The Howard League and another charity, Centre for Mental Health, are working together on a joint programme on preventing people from dying by suicide in prison.

Karen Revell, whose 18-year-old son Greg died while on remand in Glen Parva in June 2014, said: "Greg was a much-loved boy. Over 500 people attended his funeral, including teachers from his school.

"His death has left a hole in all of our hearts and we want to stop any other families from having to go through this living hell.

"My son should still be alive. Still, to this day, I feel exactly the same as I did when I was told that he had died. It never gets better. I have been ripped to pieces, and I am just lost without him."

Terri Batcheldor, whose 20-year-old son Liam Lambert died in March 2015, said: "I did not want what happened to Liam to happen to anyone else, but it has and I believe it will again."

Liam's grandfather, Tim Marshall, said: "It would appear on the surface that there is no, or very little, duty of care exercised in this prison system."

Mary Foxall, whose 19-year-old son Jake died in Glen Parva in November 2015, said: "To lose a teenage son is every parent's worst nightmare. No mother should have to go through what I am going



GRIEF: Greg Revell's sister Kelly (left) and mother Karen (right) speak about their loss at a Howard League conference

through."

Glen Parva was the subject of a terrible inspection report in August 2014. When inspectors returned to the prison in November 2015, they found it was "a safer prison but not safe enough".

The report, published in May 2016, indicated that levels of violence were high and rising.

In the six months prior to the inspection there had been 168 assaults on prisoners, of which 42 were serious, and 117 fights. There had been 32 assaults on staff, four of which were serious.

Self-harm had increased – there were 309 incidents in the six months prior to the inspection – and uses of force and segregation were higher than in similar

prisons.

Inspectors found that more than a quarter of young men were locked in their cells during the working day. Unemployed men had as little as one hour a day out of their cells.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "The death toll in prisons is a national scandal and

demands immediate action.

"The visceral pain of the families of the dead calls out to political leaders to put a stop to this. We cannot wait for grand plans, we need action today.

"The only way to protect people is to reduce the unnecessary use of prison and then to make sure resources are allocated for people who really need custody."

Rising toll of death and violence in jails

Deaths, assaults and self-injury are rising in prisons, with safety deteriorating at a faster rate year after year, figures seen by the Howard League for Penal Reform reveal.

Statistics published by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) show that, across England and Wales, 321 people died in prison custody during the 12 months to the end of June 2016 – an increase of 30 per cent.

They included 105 people who are thought to have taken their own lives.

The total number of deaths classed

as "self-inflicted" rose by 28 per cent compared with the 12 months to the end of June 2015.

The suicide rate among women in prison rose alarmingly. Eleven women took their own lives during the 12-month period to the end of June 2016, compared with only one during the preceding 12 months.

Women make up less than 5 per cent of the population, yet 10 per cent of those who died by suicide in the last 12 months were women.

Reported incidents of self-harm in prisons rose by 27 per cent in a year. There were 34,586 reported incidents in the 12 months to the

DANGER BEHIND BARS

Between April and June 2016, there were:

9,505 reported incidents of self-harm, of which **665** led to attendances at hospital,

6,086 assaults, including **1,540** assaults on staff.

These were the highest figures for a single quarter on record.

end of March 2016 – one every 15 minutes.

The MoJ named six prisons in England and Wales whose overall performance was deemed to be of "serious concern".

They were Bristol, Doncaster, Hewell, Isis, Liverpool and Wormwood Scrubs.

Andrew Neilson, Director of Campaigns at the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "Prisons are not only becoming more dangerous; they are becoming more dangerous more quickly.

"That more prisons have been awarded the worst-possible

performance rating provides further indication of how the system is failing after years of rising numbers, chronic overcrowding and deep staff cuts.

"It is particularly shocking to see a dramatic increase in the number of women taking their own lives. In the past, a sharp rise in the number of women dying in prison prompted a government review and promises of action.

"The high levels of violence shame us all, and the new Secretary of State for Justice and her ministers must set out concrete plans to reduce them."

Trouble on the increase as jails struggle to cope

Trouble in prisons has reached epidemic levels, with recorded incidents of "concerted indiscipline" rising by more than 200 per cent in the last three years, figures seen by the Howard League for Penal Reform reveal.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ) statistics show that prisons in England and Wales recorded 282 incidents during 2015 – more than five a week – as they struggled to cope with growing numbers of prisoners, chronic overcrowding and deep staff cuts.

The National Offender Management Service introduced a "new enhanced incident reporting standard" in 2015 to gain a better understanding of the scale of the problem.

The figures reveal that incidents had more than doubled before the new recording arrangements came in – rising from 92 in 2012, to 148 in 2013, to 191 in 2014.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "The government has recognised that prisons are failing and that wholesale reform is needed.

"But simply trying to build a way out of the problem will not work and would mean years of disorder, violence and people dying while we wait for new prisons to be built.

"Evidence shows that building additional prisons only compounds overcrowding and its consequent problems as the courts send more people to prison every day.

"We cannot go on cramming more people into jails without any thought for the safety of staff, prisoners and the public."

An incident is recorded as "concerted indiscipline" if it involves two or more prisoners acting together to defy a lawful instruction or against the requirements of the regime of the establishment. This includes major disturbances, such as riots.



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Indeterminate sentences rise by 250 per cent

More people are serving indeterminate prison sentences in England and Wales than in the other 46 countries in the Council of Europe combined, research by the Howard League for Penal Reform reveals.

Almost 12,000 prisoners are serving either a life sentence or an Indeterminate sentence for Public Protection (IPP) – a rise of more than 250 per cent since 2001.

As the number of people serving open-ended sentences has increased, so too has the length of time they spend in prison.

Tariffs – the minimum length of time a prisoner must spend behind bars before becoming eligible for parole – are getting longer and longer.

Average tariffs for mandatory and non-mandatory life sentences have increased by 32 per cent and 75 per cent respectively in under a decade.

Most people spend many years in prison beyond the minimum tariff length set by the court.

A Howard League briefing paper, *Faint Hope: What to do about long sentences*, shows that there are lessons to be learned from the way other jurisdictions approach long-term imprisonment. In particular, it examines prison systems in Canada, Portugal and the Netherlands.

The paper calls for an overhaul of recall policy and the reversal of sentence inflation.

It also recommends the introduction of a 'faint hope' law – similar to a measure already adopted in Canada – that would enable people sentenced to an indeterminate term, who had made an exceptional effort, to



PrisonImage

NEVER-ENDING: Almost 12,000 people are serving indeterminate prison sentences

apply for earlier parole eligibility.

These policies would save the taxpayer millions of pounds, reduce prison overcrowding, and give prisoners a greater incentive to behave well and turn their lives around.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "Prisoners should be incentivised to change their lives and reform, and the system has to be flexible and able to reward their efforts through earned release.

Otherwise, what hope do they have?

"This is also important for staff, because they need to see that the efforts they make to help prisoners are recognised through the system.

"Prisons are in crisis partly due to the log jam at getting people through the system safely. Our recommendations will protect the public, ease prison overcrowding and enhance staff safety and morale."

The briefing paper recommends that, once a prisoner is eligible for release, there should be a presumption in favour of release.

It should be for representatives of the Secretary of State for Justice to demonstrate that continued detention is needed, rather than on the prisoner to prove they pose no risk.

The paper also calls for a significant reduction in the number of people recalled to prison each year.

One million extra days in prison feed vicious cycle of punishment

More than one million days – or 2,890 years – of additional imprisonment have been imposed on prisoners found to have broken prison rules in the past six years.

Analysis by the Howard League for Penal Reform also shows that the number of additional days handed out increased by almost 38 per cent between 2014 and 2015.

In its 2015 report, *Punishment in Prison: The world of prison*

discipline, the Howard League looked at how jails in England and Wales operate disciplinary hearings called adjudications, where allegations of rule-breaking are tried.

The hearings, which cost between £400,000 and £500,000 a year in total, mainly concern disobedience, disrespect or property offences, which increase as prisons lose control under pressure of overcrowding and staff

cuts.

A prisoner found guilty at an adjudication can face punishments ranging from loss of canteen to solitary confinement and extra days of imprisonment.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "Punishing misbehaviour by prisoners languishing in squalid conditions is creating a vicious cycle of troubled prisons and troubling prisoners

and these figures reveal that this cycle is now spinning faster than ever.

"Our prison system is overcrowded and yet the system of adjudications simply feeds further pressure on the prisons. It is also a capricious system as the punishment of additional days can only be handed down to some prisoners and not others – for example those on remand or serving short sentences."

Penal reform is needed more than ever before

Upheaval at Westminster following the EU referendum has brought a new Prime Minister and a new Justice Secretary. The Director of Campaigns at the Howard League for Penal Reform, **Andrew Neilson**, looks at some of the challenges ahead.

In the space of only fourteen months, the spell of Michael Gove at the Ministry of Justice has ended. In the last edition of *The Howard*, we were hopeful that a new dawn for penal reform was on the horizon. Now, as with much else after the vote for Brexit, there is a great deal of uncertainty as to what will come next.

Ironically for a man who derided experts during his own Brexit campaigning, Michael Gove seemed to have a lot of time for academics and reformers while he was Secretary of State for Justice.

Unlike his predecessor, Chris Grayling, he listened to the sector. He revitalised a humane rhetoric around crime and redemption and allowed journalists and cameras into prisons to report on the shocking failures to be found behind bars.

Reversing Grayling's restrictions on books for prisoners, abolishing the criminal courts charge and charging Nick Hardwick to shake up the Parole Board demonstrated that he could not only recognise the right thing to do but have the courage to see it through.

At the Howard League's Annual General Meeting last year, Gove spoke eloquently about the need for change.

Ultimately, however, that change did not occur. Having styled himself as a visionary leader at the Ministry of Justice, Gove then went on self-combust over his vision for Brexit, and then the Conservative Party, as political chaos was unleashed after the European referendum. A White Paper and Prisons Bill still felt like distant dots on the horizon when Gove was removed from his position by Theresa May. His concept of reform prisons remains fundamentally untested, and the question of whether this was real institutional reform or a distraction from the underlying pressures on the system remains unanswered.

The case against Michael Gove rests largely on the shocking statistics which spell out the state



ALL CHANGE: Will Elizabeth Truss, sworn in as the new Lord Chancellor, deliver major reform of the justice system?

of the prisons he presided over. There were more homicides behind bars in 2015 than in any other year on record. Rates of suicide are at a ten-year high. All the indicators of violence and distress have seen sharp rises. Yes, it can be argued this was the legacy of the Grayling regime, but Michael Gove nonetheless left office with the same broad trends still in place.

Now the cudgels will be taken up by Elizabeth Truss and her new ministers. We shall be hearing from the new prisons minister, Sam Gyimah, at our fringe event at Conservative Party conference. Early signs would suggest that Elizabeth Truss understands the urgent need for change, although the precise size and scope of her reforms is as yet unclear. Will

there still be legislation in the autumn? Could a potential early general election mean a risk-averse approach? What will be the impact of Brexit on the Ministry of Justice, given the manner in which European law is interwoven within our own legislation?

One thing is clear, however. The prisons are not getting any better on their own. A bloated system

is manufacturing human misery faster than ever before. Our politicians may continue to appear and disappear at the Ministry of Justice like riders on a merry-go-round but the prisons they preside over are still with us and still failing.

As the Howard League approaches the end of its 150th anniversary year, our cause is needed now more than ever.

Conference to celebrate crime-cutting projects

Places are still available at the Howard League for Penal Reform's next conference on policing, crime and penalty.

The event, called Policing The Community, will be held at the King's Fund, 11 Cavendish Square, London, W1G 0AN, on Wednesday 30 November, from 9.30am to 4.30pm.

At least four Chief Constables past and present, and other speakers including a Police and Crime Commissioner and leading criminologists, will consider a range of issues throughout the day.

Topics for discussion will include child arrests, the overnight detention of children, and liaison and diversion services.

The conference will feature the presentation of this year's Howard League Community Awards, which salute the most successful community projects encouraging desistance from crime.

The awards celebrate best practice in diversionary work, as well as championing work in the community that challenges and changes people for the better.

Later in the day, at the same venue, the Howard League will hold its Annual General Meeting.

The first part of the meeting, which is open to Howard League members only, is scheduled to begin at 5.30pm and end at 6.30pm.

The public part of the meeting, open to all, is expected to start at 7pm.

A guest speaker will be announced in due course.

Professor Nick Hardwick, Chairman of the Parole Board and former HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, is to give this year's Howard League Parmoor Lecture.

The event is to be held on Thursday 20 October 2016 at Clifford Chance LLP, 10 Upper Bank Street, London, E14 5JJ.

Fair hearing at last for deaf man who suffered total isolation in prison

The failure of prisons to deliver appropriate medical treatment and support to those in their care has been highlighted by a recent Howard League case in the courts.

A young deaf man, 'Michael' (not his real name), was being held in a large local prison and had not had a functioning hearing aid for around six months. During this time, he was unable to communicate with the lawyers working on his criminal case or participate in prison life.

The Howard League's legal team, which operates a free and confidential advice line available to every person under the age of 21 in prison, was made aware of Michael's situation.

When it became clear that there was no guarantee Michael would get the medical attention he needed due to problems in arranging prison escort staff, the Howard League issued a judicial review on his behalf.

The judge considering the Howard League's case called the facts "worrying and distressing" and ordered the private healthcare provider in the prison and the prison authorities to work together to ensure Michael's needs are met.

The Howard League is concerned that overcrowding and a lack of staff mean that people in prison are not being taken to health appointments in the community.

Around 40 per cent of all health appointments are missed due to a lack of staff being available to escort prisoners – impacting not only on the prisoners and their health but also on the NHS itself.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "Michael's total isolation in prison resulted in him being doubly punished, in a chaotic and frightening prison system. As is now commonplace, this young man was being held in a jail where people have taken their own lives.

"This case represents the tip of the iceberg and illustrates the depth of problems across the system. It means a deaf young man can be left in prison without a hearing aid for months on end. It also means that people with long-term illnesses are not being taken to hospital, so their conditions deteriorate.

"In a way, Michael is one of the lucky ones – if only because he is being helped by the Howard League legal team. But many thousands of other people are not getting essential medical help. Last year missed hospital and GP appointments cost the NHS over £1bn, many of which will have

been people in prison unable to get there due to lack of staff."

The Howard League legal team provides advice and support to hundreds of young people in prison each year. The charity's legal advice line – 0808 801 0308 – is free to call and should be on the prison PINs of all those aged under 21.

Natalie's race to help the Howard League



Howard League supporters are going the extra mile to raise money for the charity by taking part in challenge events.

Runners are collecting sponsorship and taking on gruelling courses in Brighton, London and the North East.

They include Great North Run entrant Natalie Atkinson, who said that she decided to support the Howard League because of its work to help reduce child arrests and suicide and self-harm in prison.

She said: "These issues are close to my heart as I spent a significant period involved in the criminal justice system, served various custodial sentences and now work within the youth justice field.

"I believe that far too many children end up within the youth justice system, struggle to build a positive future and often find themselves trapped in a cycle of offending that has

become their life.

"The Howard League plays a vital role in influencing change within the system and this is why I have chosen to support this fantastic charity."

Supporters have taken part in other events, including the Vitality Brighton Half Marathon and the Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon.

Natalie said: "I would encourage others to run for the Howard League, as your fundraising would help support future campaigns, helping many vulnerable children and young people who find themselves trapped in a situation that I was once in.

"This is my first half-marathon and I am not an experienced runner. Well, in fact I rarely run.

"I just thought that it would be a good challenge, to increase my fitness, have fun and raise money for a worthwhile charity at the same time."

To sponsor Natalie, visit

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Natalie-Atkinson3

Join today

By becoming a member, you add your voice to our movement and help ensure its success. Our members are our strength, our advocates and our most important source of knowledge and financial support.

With your help, we can continue to achieve real and lasting change in the criminal justice system. Please join today.

Return to: The Howard League,
1 Ardleigh Road, London
N1 4HS

I would like to give a monthly amount to the Howard League for Penal Reform

£5 £10 £25 Other £ (minimum £2.00)

Your details

Name
Address
Postcode Tel
Email

I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to the Howard League for Penal Reform. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please pay the Howard League for Penal Reform Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with the Howard League for Penal Reform and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society

www.howardleague.org

Please collect my payment on the 1st/15th of every month (Please circle preferred date)

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Name(s) of account holder(s)



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- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by the Howard League for Penal Reform or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when the Howard League for Penal Reform asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.