

# The Howard

● Less crime ● Safer communities ● Fewer people in prison ● 2016: 1

# A NEW WAY FORWARD?



**Michael Gove has told members of the Howard League for Penal Reform that he wants to see fewer people in prison.**

The Secretary of State for Justice, who is responsible for prisons, said that the government was entering a “new era” in its approach to crime, punishment and rehabilitation.

**Full story: Page 2**

## Cruelty at G4S centre shown on TV

The Howard League for Penal Reform has responded to an investigation by the BBC television programme Panorama into allegations of child abuse at Medway Secure Training Centre in Kent.

Ten members of staff at the G4S-run centre have been suspended since the programme was broadcast in January.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "Watching this programme made me cry.

"The deliberate cruelty against children was one of the most upsetting things I have seen in this country. Shocking also was the institutionalised fraud being perpetrated to cover up abuse."

The Howard League has warned for years about the systemic problems in secure training centres. The centres were introduced in the late 1990s alongside the Detention and Training Order, a short prison sentence for children followed by supervision in the community.

Frances Crook said: "Both the secure training centres and the sentences designed to put children in them were flawed from the start. Over the years we have seen enough problems at the secure training centres to confirm that they are failed institutions for a failed sentence."

In April 2004, 15-year-old Gareth Myatt died from choking on his own vomit while being restrained in Rainsbrook Secure Training Centre in Northamptonshire.

Four months later, 14-year-old Adam Rickwood was found hanging in his cell at Hassockfield Secure Training Centre in County Durham. An inquest later found that he had been unlawfully restrained and this had contributed to his death.

The Howard League legal team has dealt with numerous concerns raised by or on behalf of young people at Medway dating from at least 2008. The team has also worked with adults who were detained there as children and who have raised concerns about their treatment.



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1 Ardleigh Road, London N1 4HS  
Tel: 020 7249 7373  
Fax: 020 7249 7788  
Email: [info@howardleague.org](mailto:info@howardleague.org)  
Web: [www.howardleague.org](http://www.howardleague.org)  
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# Child arrests fall by 54% in four years

Arrests of children have fallen by 54 per cent in four years, police data obtained by the Howard League for Penal Reform reveal.

The figures confirm the continued success of a long-running Howard League programme of work to keep as many children as possible out of the criminal justice system.

Every police service in England and Wales made fewer child arrests in 2014 than in 2010, with some constabularies reducing their numbers by more than 70 per cent.

Several police services have reviewed their arrest procedures and policies as a result of the Howard League's engagement with them.

Police made 245,763 arrests

of children aged 17 and under during 2010, but that number has fallen every year since. There were 112,037 arrests during 2014, of which boys accounted for 83 per

cent and girls accounted for 17 per cent. The sharp reduction in arrests has led to a significant fall in the number of children in prison – down by 56 per cent since January 2010.

### WHAT THE MEDIA SAY...

*"Following advice from the Howard League for Penal Reform, child arrests dropped by up to 70% in some constabularies between 2010 and 2014."*

(Daily Mirror, 22 November 2015)

Due to improvements in recording practices, for the first

time the Howard League is able to publish a briefing paper that includes a robust breakdown of child arrests by ethnicity for 2013 and 2014.

rate, raises questions for both the Crown Prosecution Service and the youth courts.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League, said: "The Howard League has worked closely with police forces round the country to stem the flow of children being sucked into the criminal justice system."

"The fantastic success of our programme of work and the police improvement to their practices means that thousands of children have not had their life chances blighted."

"It is for parents and schools to deal with normal childish challenging behaviour, not the police."

Police made 202,961 child arrests in 2011; 149,983 in 2012; and 131,403 in 2013.

## 'This will be a new era' - Gove



**Britain is entering a "new era" in its approach to crime, punishment and rehabilitation, Michael Gove has promised.**

The Secretary of State for Justice added that he wanted to see the prison population in England and Wales – which has doubled in the last 25 years – "fall over time".

He made the claims as he addressed Howard League members at the charity's annual general meeting in London.

There was standing room only as he made his speech and then answered questions from the audience.

Michael Gove said: "Everyone in this room knows that there

are big problems in prison. "Violence, self-harm and the dangers faced by staff are all hugely concerning."

He pledged to give prison governors more autonomy, which he said could "bring significant gains", and announced plans to replace Victorian jails with new ones.

Michael Gove said that, in his view, prison was intended "to incapacitate, to deter and to rehabilitate" but, of those three tasks, "rehabilitation" was the most important.

He also indicated that he would consider changing the way in which children in custody are treated.

"It is often the case that those

children who suffer abuse and neglect do not receive the affection that we would give our own children," he said.

In February the Prime Minister, David Cameron, called for a change in justice policy in a major speech, in which he recognised that prisons were failing and that wholesale reform was needed.

He said: "The failure of our system today is scandalous."

"Forty-six per cent of all prisoners will reoffend within a year of release."

"Sixty per cent of short-sentenced prisoners will reoffend within the same period."

"Current levels of prison violence, drug-taking and self-

harm should shame us all.

"In a typical week there will be almost 600 incidents of self-harm; at least one suicide; and 350 assaults, including 90 on staff."

Frances Crook, Chief Executive at the Howard League, said that the government's plans to close Victorian prisons and build new ones were "a non-starter" as "the problem is not the buildings, it is the overcrowding".

But she added: "I was encouraged that the Secretary of State responded to a question from the audience about reducing prison numbers positively."

"That is the way forward. It is sensible, it is safe and it is cost-effective."



# Yet another campaign victory for the Howard League as ministers abolish unfair charge that punished the poor

**The Howard League for Penal Reform has secured another major campaign victory after the government announced the abolition of the criminal courts charge.**

Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Justice, scrapped the controversial policy on Christmas Eve.

The charge was introduced in April 2015, and the Howard League led the opposition to it in the months that followed, highlighting dozens of cases from across England and Wales that illustrated why the policy was unfair, unrealistic and unjust.

Cases that the Howard League brought to national attention included a woman "who had not eaten in days" but was ordered to pay more than £300 for stealing a 75p pack of Mars bars; a homeless woman who was told to find £200 for begging in a car park; and a frustrated judge who was told he had no choice but to impose a £900 charge on a homeless shoplifter.

The Howard League presented its dossier of cases to the House of Commons Justice Committee. The charity also gave oral evidence to the Committee, which subsequently called for the charge to be abolished.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "We welcome this decision and applaud the Secretary of State for acting quickly to get rid of a charge that was simply unfair."

"This is a victory for justice. It augurs well for changes being made to the courts and penal systems, which both need radical reform."

"There remains the problem of people who have had the criminal courts charge imposed on them, many of whom will simply not be able to pay."

"We call on magistrates to exercise compassion and common sense when these unfortunate people are returned to court."

In a report published in November 2015, the Justice Committee said that the charge was a policy that "creates a range of serious problems and benefits no one".



**SUCCESS:** The Howard League collected media reports from magistrates' court hearings across England and Wales and brought them to national attention to show why the charge was unfair, unrealistic and unjust

## WHAT THE MEDIA SAY...

*"The scrapping of the levy just seven months after it was introduced follows an avalanche of opposition from magistrates, lawyers and campaign groups."*

(Telegraph, 3 December 2015)

*"The fee had been condemned by magistrates, lawyers, civil rights groups and even the Conservative-dominated Commons Justice Select Committee."*

(Independent, 3 December 2015)

*"The swift decision implies that early returns from the criminal courts charge did not deliver the anticipated income of up to £135m a year that (Chris) Grayling's officials initially promised."*

(Guardian, 3 December 2015)

## WHY WE CAMPAIGNED TO SCRAP THE CRIMINAL COURTS CHARGE

**The criminal courts charge was introduced to recover some of the cost of administering criminal courts.**

In a magistrates' court, it rose from £150 for pleading guilty to a summary offence to £520 for a conviction after a not guilty plea.

In the crown court, the charge stood at £900 for a plea of guilty and £1,200 for a conviction after a plea of not guilty.

These escalating charges were unfair as they put pressure on people to plead guilty at the

earliest opportunity – even if they had not been convicted of an offence.

The mandatory nature of the charge meant that sentencers had to impose it even when it was clear that the person before them did not have the means to pay.

It made a mockery of the justice system.

People who were homeless and begging, or were addicted to drugs and alcohol, were being given charges when it was unclear how they would ever make the payment.

The injustice of the charge made waves, and some magistrates even resigned in protest.

On Twitter, thousands of supporters tweeted the message: "I support @TheHowardLeague's campaign for an urgent review of the #CriminalCharge".

Supporters also wrote to their local MPs, urging them to raise the criminal courts charge with the Ministry of Justice.

[www.howardleague.org/criminalcharge/](http://www.howardleague.org/criminalcharge/)





• Celebrating our 150th birthday • Celebrating our 150th birthday •

# Kind celebrities give their birthdays to the Howard League

**The world's oldest penal reform charity, the Howard League for Penal Reform, celebrates its 150th birthday this year with a busy programme of events and fundraising activities.**

The charity has led a host of successful campaigns since it began life as the Howard Association back in 1866 – including drives to abolish the death penalty; to set up the probation service; to scrap corporal punishment; and, more recently, to repeal the criminal courts charge and overturn restrictions on

sending books to prisoners.

To mark the anniversary, celebrities including actor Emily Mortimer and historian Bettany Hughes, have agreed to 'donate their birthdays' to the Howard League, asking friends to make donations to the charity instead of giving presents.

Barrister Felicity Gerry QC said: "I support the Howard League wholeheartedly for their independent stance and scrutiny of the criminal justice system. I am very happy to donate my birthday



**STAR:** Emily Mortimer

to the Howard League and I hope you will join me in supporting their work."

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League, said: "The achievements of the Howard League over 150 years show the importance of civil society in a democracy.

"We can lead change, we can improve lives and we can temper excesses. It is a great personal honour to be part of such a successful team. I am confident the Howard League for Penal Reform

will be contributing to the life of the nation for centuries to come."

Many Howard League members are also donating their birthdays. Would you like to donate yours?

If you would like to take part in the celebrations, email [claire.dixon@howardleague.org](mailto:claire.dixon@howardleague.org) to add the date of your birthday to the Howard League's calendar.

Eight weeks before the date, you will receive an email to remind you to set up a JustGiving page and encourage friends and family to make birthday donations.

## Road runners go the extra mile to help charity mark anniversary

**The Howard League for Penal Reform is giving its supporters the chance to take part in challenge events to mark its 150th birthday.**

Runners are entering the Vitality Brighton Half Marathon, the Great North Run and the Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon to help raise money for the charity.

Some 13,500 runners are expected to be on the start-line for the half-marathon in Brighton on Sunday 28 February.

Among them will be Miranda Butler, Kate Snow, Charlie Blythe and Steve Caldwell, who have each pledged to raise at least £350 for the Howard League.

General ballots have closed for the Great North Run and the Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon, but the Howard League has places

available in both races.

The Great North Run, between Newcastle and South Shields, is to be held on Sunday 11 September.

The Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon in London is to be held on Sunday 9 October.

If you would like to take part in a race, or if you already have a place in an event and want to raise money for the Howard League, email [challenge@howardleague.org](mailto:challenge@howardleague.org) giving your name, address and contact number.

Please also indicate if there is a particular reason why you would like to raise money for the charity.

All supporters who take part in a challenge event for the Howard League will receive a technical t-shirt.

Runners will also receive a fundraising pack.



**STYLISH:** Take part in a challenge event and receive a Howard League technical t-shirt



• Celebrating our 150th birthday • Celebrating our 150th birthday •

# Experts gather for justice conference

Experts from across the world will mark the Howard League for Penal Reform's 150th birthday when they gather for a major three-day conference in March.

Places are still available at the conference, Justice and Penal Reform: Re-shaping the penal landscape, which will be held at Keble College, University of Oxford, from Wednesday 16 March to Friday 18 March.

Western societies are grappling with how to manage social institutions at a time of austerity. The same countries are experiencing falling crime whilst supporting policies of penal expansion.

Howard League supporters can join international experts as they debate the possibilities of creating social and penal institutions that can make a safer and more cohesive society.

Panel sessions confirmed so far feature experts from the UK, Ireland, Canada, Hungary, Philippines, Croatia, Brazil, US, Bangladesh, India, Australia, Turkey, Pakistan, Poland, Netherlands, South Africa, Israel, Slovenia, Belgium and Morocco.

The conference will provide ample opportunity for questions and debate, and networking.

It forms part of the Howard



**VENUE:** The conference is to be held at Keble College, Oxford, from 16 to 18 March

League's What is Justice? symposium.

The symposium is aimed at generating intellectual debate that can act as a springboard to contest the conventional role of the penal

system.

Ultimately, it is hoped that the symposium will promote a new, achievable paradigm that will deliver a reduced role for the penal system while maintaining public

confidence, fewer victims of crime and safer communities.

Places can be booked from the Howard League website at: [www.howardleague.org/conference-booking-form/](http://www.howardleague.org/conference-booking-form/)

## SPEAKERS INCLUDE...

- Professor Mary Bosworth**, University of Oxford
- Professor Neil Chakraborti**, University of Leicester
- Peter Clarke**, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons
- Dr Todd Clear**, Rutgers School of Criminal Justice
- Professor Alison Liebling**, University of Cambridge
- Phillippa Kaufmann QC**, Matrix Chambers
- Dame Anne Owers**, IPCC
- Yvonne Roberts**, Women in Prison
- Dame Glenys Stacey**, HM Chief Inspector of Probation
- David Strang**, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland
- Professor Dirk Van Zyl Smit**, University of Nottingham
- Professor Richard Wilkinson**, University of Nottingham
- Sir Thomas Winsor**, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary
- Professor Lucia Zedner**, University of Oxford



**PRESENTATIONS:** Dozens of experts are scheduled to appear at the Howard League for Penal Reform's three-day conference, including (from left to right): Professor Alison Liebling, Dame Anne Owers, David Strang, Professor Dirk Van Zyl Smit, and Professor Richard Wilkinson

## New title and editor for academic journal

The Howard League for Penal Reform's journal has been relaunched as the charity celebrates its 150th birthday.

The journal, which was founded in 1921, has a new title, *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, with a new editor – Professor Ian Loader, from the University of Oxford.

The new title better reflects the

scope of the publication which, as an international peer-reviewed journal, seeks to publish high-quality theory, research and debate on all aspects of the relationship between crime and justice across the globe.

It will be a leading forum for conversation between academic theory and research and the

cultures, policies and practices of the range of institutions concerned with harm, security and justice.

Anita Dockley, Research Director of the Howard League for Penal Reform and Managing Editor of the journal, said: "The Howard League has a proud history of publishing an academic journal which supports and develops thinking in the area of

crime and penal reform.

"The charity is really excited about the potential that the newly established *Howard Journal of Crime and Justice* presents under the leadership of Ian Loader.

"We are seeking to develop the level of debate about crime and justice among academics as well as those interested in crime and

penal policy, drawing on the best scholarship from around the world."

Professor Ian Loader said: "This is an exciting and unique opportunity to develop *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice* into an influential international journal at the forefront of thinking about ideas and issues that impact on crime and justice globally."



## 'Monster' system punishes troubled prisoners

**Almost 160,000 days – or 438 years – of additional imprisonment were imposed on prisoners found to have broken prison rules last year, a report published by the Howard League for Penal Reform reveals.**

*Punishment in Prison: The world of prison discipline* looks 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.

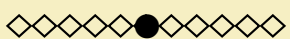
The report reveals that the number of adjudications where extra days could be imposed has increased by 47 per cent since 2010.

The number of extra days imposed on children has almost doubled in two years – from 1,383 in 2012 to 2,683 in 2014 – even though the number of children in prison has halved.

The rise in the number of adjudications has come at a time when prisons across England and Wales are struggling to overcome problems caused by a growing prisoner population, chronic overcrowding and cuts of almost 40 per cent to frontline staffing.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League, said: "The system of adjudications has become a monster, imposing fearsome punishments when people misbehave often as a result of the dreadful conditions they are subjected to."

"This bureaucratic, costly and time-consuming system of punishments then further feeds pressure on the prisons, creating a vicious cycle of troubled prisons and troubling prisoners."



**If you would like a large print version of this newspaper, please contact the Howard League for Penal Reform on 020 7249 7373.**

# Homicide rate highest since records began

**Eighty-nine people took their own lives in prisons last year as the suicide rate behind bars remained at an alarmingly high level, figures seen by the Howard League for Penal Reform reveal.**

A further eight prisoners were killed in apparent homicides during 2015 – the highest number in a single year since current recording practices began in 1978.

Figures published by the Ministry of Justice show that, in total, 257 people died in prisons in England and Wales last year.

The report also shows that the number of deaths by suicide in 2014 has been revised upwards from 86 to 89, raising concern that the total in 2015 could yet rise further as unclassified deaths are subject to further investigation.

Deaths by suicide have risen by 46 per cent in the last three years, at a time when prisons across England and Wales have struggled to cope with growing numbers of prisoners, chronic overcrowding and deep staff cuts.

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.

"The numbers hide the true extent of misery for prisoners and families – and for staff, who have been given the impossible task of keeping people safe in overcrowded prisons starved of resources."

"The question now for the

### WHAT THE MEDIA SAY...

*"The number of inmates taking their own lives behind bars remains at an alarmingly high level"*

(ITV News, 29 January 2016)

*"Andrew Selous, the prisons minister, said: 'These figures illustrate the problems facing the Prison Service. Reform is badly needed'."*

(Daily Telegraph, 28 January 2016)

Ministry of Justice is: what to do? This level of deaths, violence and anguish in prisons cannot continue to rise in a civilised society.

"We cannot go on cramming more people into jails without any thought for the consequences."

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

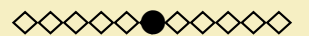
Analysis of cases reported to the Howard League last year suggests that people who are held in prison on remand, or have been recalled to prison while on licence, are disproportionately likely to take their own lives.

About 40 per cent of prisoners who died by suicide in 2015 were on remand at the time of their deaths, even though people on remand make up only 15 per cent of the prison population at any one time.

About 14 per cent of prisoners who died by suicide in 2015 were in prison due to a licence recall. Recalled prisoners account for only 7 per cent of the prison population.

### SAFETY IN CUSTODY?

**There were 30,706 reported incidents of self-injury in prisons during the 12 months to the end of September 2015 – a 24 per cent rise on the previous year.**



**There were 23,291 reported incidents of self-injury by male prisoners during the 12 months to the end of September 2015 – a rise of 63 per cent since 2009-10 and 102 per cent since 2005-06.**



**There were 2,606 serious assaults in prisons during the 12 months to the end of September 2015 – a 30 per cent rise on the previous year.**



**The number of serious assaults on prison staff has doubled since 2011-12.**

## Care for children after prison is 'still inadequate'

**Too many children are being released from prison to places where they have never been before and where they do not know anyone, Lord Carlile of Berriew QC has said.**

Lord Carlile, the author of a landmark report into the treatment of children in custody, said that post-sentence care for children was "still inadequate".

He added that progress to end the use of painful restraint on teenagers had been "horribly slow".

Lord Carlile made the remarks as he gave the Howard League for Penal Reform's Parmoor Lecture.

The event marked the 10th anniversary of the Carlile Inquiry, which made more than 40 recommendations about the

use of physical restraint, solitary confinement and strip-searching of children in custody.

Lord Carlile said that he was "absolutely appalled and shocked beyond belief" when he first visited children's prisons.

He said that there had been some progress since, however, and in particular pointed to a significant fall in the number of girls in prison. He also welcomed statistics that showed that the number of child arrests made by police had reduced by two-thirds since 2008, due in part to the Howard League's successful campaigning.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League, said: "We were delighted that Lord Carlile of Berriew QC agreed to give the Parmoor Lecture."





# To reform prisons, we must reform sentencing

David Cameron has promised "wholesale reform" to tackle problems in "failing" prisons. But are his plans bold enough, and will they work? **Ellie Butt**, Policy Adviser at the Howard League for Penal Reform, analyses the Prime Minister's proposals.

**David Cameron has taken a break from negotiations with the European Union to talk about the scandalous failure that is the prison system in England and Wales.**

Prison reform rarely captures the attention of Prime Ministers, but conditions have deteriorated so rapidly and substantially in the last few years that it has become hard to ignore.

That the speech took place at all was much more important than what was in it – the policies announced are all fairly small-scale and will have little to no impact if pushed through without comprehensive sentencing reform.

But let's start with the positives.

It is important when a Prime Minister rightly says that the prison system in its current form is wasting both money and lives.

David Cameron busted the perennial tabloid myth that prisons are holiday camps, clearly telling anyone who didn't already know that they are miserable places where many of the most socially excluded and mentally ill members of the community are locked in cramped, squalid and violent institutions.

These messages matter and his intervention certainly gives the Secretary of State for Justice, Michael Gove, the green light to make some changes.

David Cameron's plans to give governors more autonomy, improve the quality of work in prisons and hire more teachers are welcome.

So too is tasking the Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, and Michael Gove to work on 'alternative provision' for those with mental health problems suffering in our prisons.

But it is a nonsense to believe we can really make prisons places of education, hard work and rehabilitation without tackling the sheer number of people inside them, and sentencing reform was notably absent from David Cameron's speech.

The prison population currently



PrisonImage

**OVERCROWDED:** The prison population currently stands at more than 85,000 - double what it was 25 years ago

stands at more than 85,000 – double what it was 25 years ago.

Average sentence lengths have increased by a quarter in the last 10 years alone and the number of people on licence recalled to custody has risen by an astonishing 55 per cent since the mid-1990s.

At the same time budgets have been slashed and the numbers of staff cut by over a third.

At the moment it does not matter how many excellent workshops or well-qualified teachers are waiting

in the activity block – there are simply not enough staff to unlock a prisoner from his overcrowded cell so he can attend a maths class or his bicycle repair job.

The £1.3 billion prison building programme has been sold (in part) as a solution to the overcrowding issue, but history has taught us that you can't build yourself out of a prison crisis.

As soon as the new prisons are built they will be filled, leaving no choice but to keep open our

decrepit Victorian institutions.

We will be left with the same failing prison system, just bigger and more expensive.

Politicians frequently duck the sentencing reform issue by claiming they have no control over who judges sentence to prison, but they know this not to be true.

Legislation, sentencing guidelines and political rhetoric all have a huge impact on the decisions judges and magistrates make.

As the Howard League detailed

in its response to the Spending Review, increasing the custody threshold, reviewing sentence lengths and reforming the Parole Board would greatly reduce the prison population in a fair and sustainable way.

It would also save millions of pounds and create an environment where David Cameron's reforms could have a real impact.

● This article originally appeared on the Huffington Post website.

## Time to overhaul police bail powers, urges academic

**Police bail powers should be radically overhauled as their current use is neither proportionate nor necessary and often punishes innocent people, a criminal law professor has argued.**

In a pamphlet for the Howard League for Penal Reform, Professor Ed Cape writes that a person can be placed on police bail

having been arrested "on the basis of little or no credible information" and in circumstances "where they are arrested despite the fact that they are willing to co-operate with the investigation".

His recommendations for change are outlined in *What if police bail was abolished?*, the latest in a series of pamphlets published by the Howard League and the

Mannheim Centre at the London School of Economics with the aim of challenging conventional thinking on penal and criminal justice issues.

Professor Cape, Professor of Criminal Law and Practice at the University of the West of England, Bristol, writes: "Police powers to impose pre-charge bail, originally introduced as a safeguard of

liberty, have become, particularly with the relatively recent addition of the power to impose conditions, a serious infringement of liberty which blights the lives of many people."

Professor Cape draws a distinction between "street bail" – where police place someone on bail immediately after an arrest, without taking them to a police

station – and "pre-charge bail" – whereby someone is put on bail after being taken to a police station, either because there is insufficient evidence to charge or because officers wish to carry out further investigations before making a charge decision.

He argues that street bail should be abolished, while pre-charge bail should be limited to 14 days.



# Free advice line helps young people in crisis

**A busy winter for the Howard League for Penal Reform saw the charity's legal team receiving calls to help dozens of children and young adults in custody.**

The charity's lawyers and caseworkers carry a huge caseload, working with children and young adults to get the best outcome for them and to show that the law can work for them.

The Howard League's free advice line is the only confidential legal service available to children and young adults in custody for help about their incarceration. They do not have access to the internet and there are restrictions on who they may phone.

The majority of the calls that the Howard League receives come directly from the children and young adults.

But some of the initial contacts come from advocates or prison staff asking for the charity's help to get safe resettlement arrangements for the person who is about to be released.

In November 2015, the line received calls relating to 96 children and young adults, about a range of issues including adjudications, safeguarding, resettlement, early release, criminal defence or appeal, recall, treatment or conditions, transfer, segregation, licence conditions, inquests, complaints, mental health, parole and regime.

Calls came from prisons – Feltham, Aylesbury, Parc, Hindley, Cookham Wood, Wetherby, Portland, Deerbolt, Werrington, Thameside, Isis, Moorland and Swinfen Hall – as well as secure training centres.

Some calls came from young people who had been recently released and were struggling in the

community.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "A 16-year-old boy in Cookham Wood prison who was segregated for approximately two months called to ask for help.

"He was limited to one hour of exercise per day, had to have his meals in-cell, was permitted 30 minutes to shower and 10 minutes for phone calls.

"The Howard League is battling away, trying to stop children being placed in segregation."

In December 2015, the advice line received calls relating to 80 people – fewer than normal because of the holidays.

The most common issues were prison punishments and adjudications, resettlement, complaints, segregation, poor treatment and transfers.

Fifteen of the calls received in December 2015 related to children and 41 were about young adults.

Callers sometimes contact the Howard League about adults in custody, and adult prisoners also call themselves, but the charity's legal team only works with young people so it normally recommends a more suitable service.

More than half of the calls received related to people from BME backgrounds.

Frances Crook said: "We receive calls for help with children and young people who are recalled to prison.

"We assisted a 15-year-old boy who was recalled for breach of curfew; his licence conditions included a six-month curfew, which he complied with.

"Following his being the victim of an unprovoked attack outside his care home, resulting in his being hospitalised, he was put back on

curfew for another three months at the same address.

"He was so concerned for his safety at the care home that he would only return at night when he thought he had to. Despite this, he was recalled for breaching the curfew."

The cases reported to the legal advice line show why members' support and donations to the Howard League are so welcome

and so vital.

Sophie Lumsden, Membership Development Manager at the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "The charity is entirely independent of government and is funded by voluntary donations and membership subscriptions.

"Members are our best advocates and they help us to create a mass movement for change.

"The Howard League's

membership is the highest it has ever been and, as well as joining the charity, people can also help by leaving a legacy."

The Howard League's legal advice line – 0808 801 0308 – helps children and young adults aged under 21. Calls are confidential and free.

The line is open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 12pm and from 2pm to 5pm.

## A bouquet to say 'thank you'



**Long-serving treasurer Coral Newton receives a bouquet after stepping down from the Howard League for Penal Reform's board of trustees. Coral (centre) was presented with the flowers by Director of Corporate Services, Euginia Lolomari (left), and Chair, Sue Wade (right).**

# 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

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