

Howard League for Penal Reform

150

the Howard League

1866-2016

for Penal Reform





John Howard, prison reformer, 1726-1790

Report of the Chair of Trustees

This is the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Howard Association. Set up in 1866 in the year that the first Royal Commission on Capital Punishment recommended that public executions be abolished, the organisation was at the forefront of the campaign over the next century to achieve complete abolition.

We celebrated this special year with some new fundraising activities. Members, celebrities, academics and lawyers all donated their birthdays by asking friends and families to donate to our work. As we are nearing halfway through the year, we have raised many tens of thousands of pounds and I want to thank everyone for their generosity.

The Board of Trustees has set the simple aim of 'stemming the flow' into the criminal justice system. The Howard League's Commission on English Prisons Today, an authoritative exploration of the principles and outcomes of the justice system that published some years ago, concluded that a smaller system would benefit everyone.

Charities have traditionally tried to mend the damage caused by failing social systems. Too much energy is wasted picking up the bodies after they have flowed down the river of despair and trying to heal the harm. The Howard League tries to prevent people getting wet in the first place.

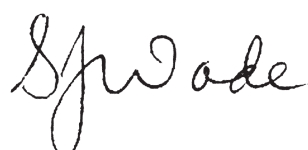
The charity has been particularly successful in reducing child arrests. When we started working with the police on this issue there were nearly a third of a million child arrests

each year. I am pleased that we are about to release new figures that show a reduction by more than two thirds. This means that over the past few years, hundreds of thousands of children have not had the life-blighting experience of being arrested – and the police have not wasted their time and resources on dealing with normal teenage behaviour.

The legal representation of young people in custody, the campaign to get the criminal courts charge lifted, the end to automatic strip searching of people on reception to prison, are areas of our outstanding achievement.

Sadly, there are many challenges ahead. The number of people in prison has increased and prison conditions have deteriorated to the extent that most people in and out of the system are very seriously worried about damage to people and damage to our national progress.

This is my last annual report as Chair of the Board of Trustees. After two and a half decades as a Trustee I am retiring but I will continue to support the work of the Howard League in other ways. I want to thank all the staff and trustees of the charity over the years I have been associated with it. It has been a privilege and a joy to work with such committed, passionate and knowledgeable people and I would particularly want to thank Frances Crook for her work over the same period of time. A truly inspirational leader.





Sue Wade OBE presenting Micheal Gove with a facsimile copy of John Howard's book on The State of Prisons

Report of the chief executive

This has been a momentous year in the history of our country. The referendum to leave the European Union will have consequences that are as yet untested, but, the commitment from the new Prime Minister to remain inside the European human rights structure is welcome.

Celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Howard Association in 1866 has prompted some thinking about the principles that underpin justice and the processes to achieve a safer society. We have much to be proud of, both as a nation and the role of the charity in leading public discourse as well as securing practical reform. There is much still to do.

Over 150 years we have achieved changes that have affected the lives of many citizens. Abolition of public and violent punishments was a humanitarian reform but it also affected the moral framework of the justice system.

This year has been a time when great change in the penal system has been heralded but has yet to come to fruition. As the political rhetoric has become more tempered, the prisons have deteriorated. It is to be hoped that the consensus that violent, drug-riddled prisons where most people experience enforced idleness is no longer acceptable. Now we appear to all agree that change is needed, it is to be hoped that change will happen.

One area of significant success has been the continued reduction in child arrests. The Howard League has been working with police for more than five years and we have succeeded in achieving a two-thirds reduction in child arrests across every force.

The charity's legal representation of children and young adults in custody has improved their treatment and prospects.

This report illustrates the range of work over the past year, but inevitably it is only the tip of the iceberg. The charity meets government ministers and officials regularly, we submit evidence to Parliament, link with practitioners and run campaigns based on our research and expertise. The launch of our new website has increased traffic and this and social media are now our main avenue of communicating our concerns and our work.

Frances Crook



Report of the trustees

The Trustees have set the aims for the charity:

- To stay radical
- To stay ambitious
- To continue to be influential

At the strategy meetings, the Trustees reiterated the principles and direction that are now well established:

- To grow the membership to provide authority, reach and income
- To create capacity for new ideas including strong academic credentials
- To develop government relations
- To conduct outward campaigns
- To invest in governance

As 2016 was the charity's 150th birthday, a special plan of fundraising to build a secure future for our work was set in place.





Investing in the community

Strategic aim: To focus resources on safer communities

Indicators of success:

Reduce first time entrants to the criminal justice system

- ✓ First time entrants have fallen, due to a wide range of factors. Our campaign to reduce child arrests has played an important role, while our successful campaign to abolish the criminal courts charge helped highlight some of the unnecessary cases which come before the lower courts.


Uncovering challenges around marketization

- ✓ Criminal justice services have been contracted out to the private sector for decades, but the creation of a market in justice was a new development. We influenced public discourse by highlighting the scandal of fraud by security companies delivering electronic tagging, the shocking abuse of children in privately-run jails and the failure of the marketization of the once successful probation service.

Pioneering new approaches to women

- ✓ The charity supported award winning women's centres by working with them to hold open days locally to celebrate their work. The charity ran the All Party Parliamentary Group on Women in the Penal System, chaired by Baroness Corston, that investigated the new landscape of community sentences and its deleterious impact on women.





Criminal care

Children's homes and criminalising children

Reform sentencing

Strategic aim: To reduce the use of prison

Indicators of success:

Reduce custodial remands by 10%



Custodial remands have started to reduce. Over 70 per cent of the men, women and children remanded to custody by magistrates are not subsequently given a custodial sentence. The charity has published its concerns to create public awareness.

Reduce prison population by 10%



The state of prisons is parlous. The number of men and women dying in prison is at an all time high, violence is rife and people are spending more time in idleness and filth. The cause of this is the closure of prisons, cuts to staff and budgets and an increase in the number of people in prison. The charity publicised the plight of prisoners and staff, gave evidence to Parliament, had meetings with the Secretary of State and Ministers, and is pleased that promises of reform are on the horizon.

Challenge use of breach and recall



The growth in the prison population has been fuelled by longer sentences and administrative recalls and breaches. The charity published a review of how international jurisdictions ease people through long sentences safely and quickly. We researched the incidence of people sentenced to short prison terms being recalled after release and started to campaign to overturn this power.





Justice for children and young people

Strategic aim: To reduce and improve contact with the criminal justice system

Indicators of success:

Reduce child arrests by 10 per cent

- ✓ This campaign has been one of our greatest successes. We published figures showing a 12 per cent reduction in 2014 with an overall 55 per cent fall since 2010. This means that hundreds of thousands of children have not had their lives blighted and not had relations with the police damaged. The police have been freed to deal with serious crime and victims have had apology or redress immediately. We have campaigned hard on this, publishing briefings, talking to MPs and working closely with the police at all levels.

Improve the access to justice of young people

- ✓ Every month more than 100 children and young people in custody call our legal advice line, or their families call for them. We give legal advice, take action to help get them moved or represent them at disciplinary hearings. We work with young people so their voice is heard on policy decisions and proposed reforms. We take judicial review when we must, to get redress for individuals and change policy.

Reveal issues around race and racism

- ✓ We investigated how black, Asian and minority ethnic young people face discrimination in the justice system. We applauded the youth justice system for trying to get to grips with it and the Crown Prosecution Service for hosting a seminar with us to confront it. We are now investigating how to reduce disproportionality in sentencing.





Change inside prisons

Strategic aim: To improve treatment for people inside prisons

Indicators of success:

Reduce self-injury and suicides



Prisons are in a terrible state, overcrowded and understaffed, with violence and self-injury rife. Last year the death rate, including suicides hit an all time high. We worked with the Centre for Mental Health to find ways to reduce suicides by lowering the prison population and learning good practice from the community. We investigated the financial cost of a suicide and listened to the views and experiences of prisoners to inform two publications that were discussed with prison managers and Ministers.

Challenge poor treatment



Our legal team was able to help hundreds of children and young people. We supported a challenge in the Supreme Court to curtail the use of solitary confinement. We were given permission by the High Court to go ahead with our judicial review challenging the curtailment of legal aid to prisoners. We kept up constant pressure publicly when any evidence of poor treatment came to light.

Uncover failings in practice



We achieved a successful conclusion to our long running campaign to end automatic strip searching of children and young people on reception. This intrusive indignity was unnecessary and a search will now only be conducted when there is evidence it is needed. Our legal team represented hundreds of young people at disciplinary hearings helping them get a fair outcome, which helped us to reveal that more than one million additional days had been added to prison sentences for misbehaviour. We challenged the failings of the new landscape of private companies running community sentences.





Strengthening the charity

Strategic aim: To increase the strength and influence of the organisation

Indicators of success:

To increase the membership and committed givers

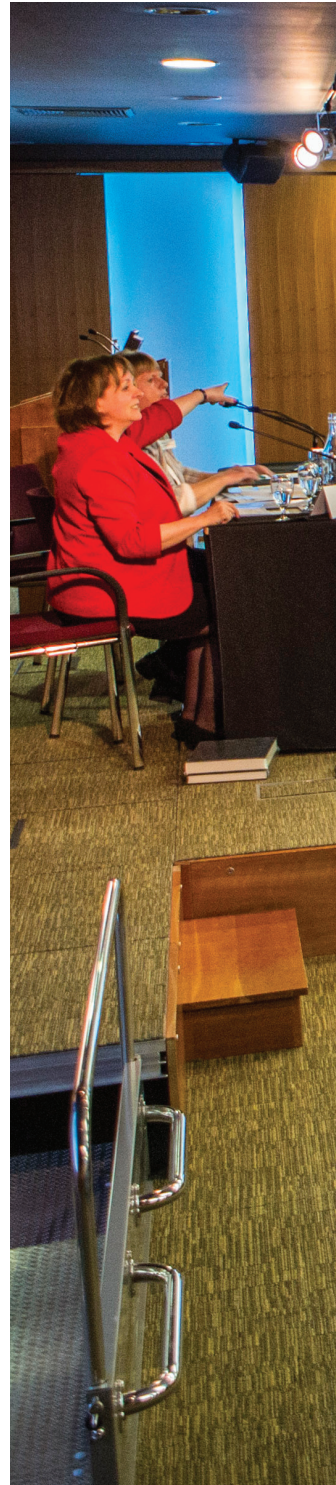
- ✓ We have trebled the membership to 12,000 people and affiliated organisations. This provides a reliable and regular income and means we can guarantee our independence for years to come. Our membership provides authority and campaigning reach to the charity.

Improved media coverage of our work

- ✓ The charity punches well above its weight! Our concerns are covered on television, radio and in the press. Our research and publications are reported seriously and extensively. We do a great many local radio interviews, enabling us to explain at some length the issues and to interact with people in their localities.

Increased fundraising income

- ✓ It is increasingly hard to raise funds. We did not increase the funds raised but we did succeed in maintaining our income. The Howard League does not accept funding from government or from the private security companies. Because we do not accept government contracts for services, unlike most of the bigger charities today, we rely on donations, membership and events. Thank you to all the people who ran marathons or donated their birthdays to raise funds for our 150th birthday.





Questions from the floor at our 2015 AGM

Develop influence with opinion leaders and practitioners

- ✓ We had excellent relations with government. The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice, first published in 1921, was relaunched with a new editorial team led by Professor Ian Loader of Oxford University. We work with prison governors, other charities, statutory agencies, MPs and Peers and Parliamentary Select Committees.

Improved digital communications

- ✓ We developed and launched a modern new website. The charity is lively on social media with over 21,000 Twitter followers. Our monthly bulletins go to over 30,000 signed up members and supporters.

Develop targeted supporters and networks

- ✓ Special bulletins go to our two growing networks for early career academics and to our Lawyers' Network. We held meetings for professionals to discuss topical issues of concern.

Be a learning organisation

- ✓ The trustees take their responsibilities to invest in staff development and support seriously. Staff are encouraged to develop their talents and skills. Our policy advisor was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to investigate how other jurisdictions deal with long sentences and spent several weeks in Canada and Europe.





Frances Crook and Richard Fuller MP launch the Parliamentary exhibition for our 150th anniversary

Publications

Annual report and accounts 2015

Faint Hope: What to do about long sentences

Preventing Prison Suicide: Perspectives from the inside (jointly with the Centre for Mental Health)

The Carlile Inquiry Ten Years On

Criminal Care: Children's homes and criminalising children

Practical Guide – Monitoring places where children are deprived of liberty (a collaboration with Defence for Children International)

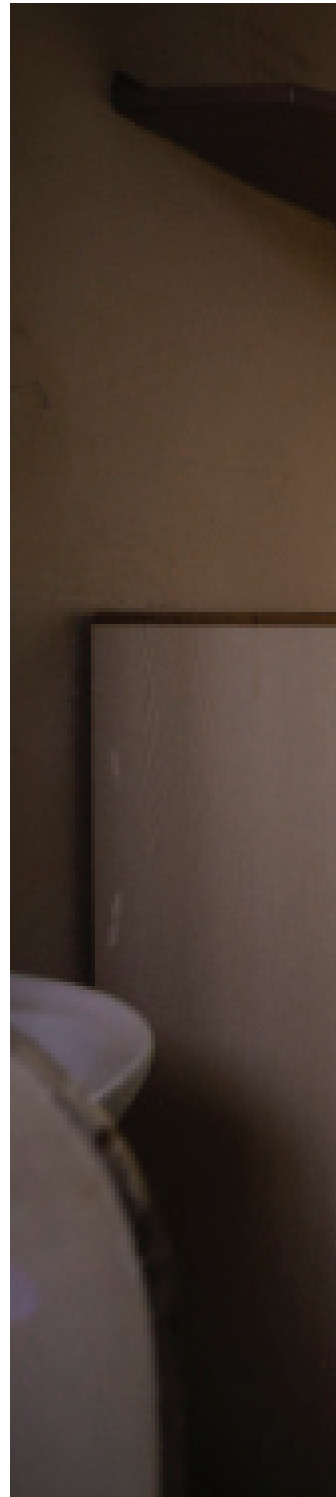
Child Arrests in England and Wales in 2014

The Cost of Prison Suicide (jointly with the Centre for Mental Health)

What if we abolished police bail? (jointly with the Mannheim Centre at the LSE and written by Professor Ed Cape)

The Howard newspaper

Punishment in Prison: The world of prison discipline





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Professor Simon Mackenzie
Dr David Scott

Publishing Editor

Brenda McWilliams

Managing Editor

Anita Dockley

The Howard League for Penal Reform is grateful to Clifford Chance LLP for seconding trainee solicitors to support the legal work for children and young people in custody and for the use of its premises for events.

The Howard League for Penal Reform benefited from the contribution of students, interns and volunteers during the year. Thank you.





Plans for the year ahead 2016–2017

Strategic aim: To promote safer communities

The Howard League will work to improve community support that prevents people entering the criminal justice system.

We will work to reduce the criminalisation of poverty and social exclusion.

We will focus attention on the treatment of women in the justice system and particularly work to reduce first time entrants.

Strategic aim: We will seek to reform sentencing and to reduce the use of prison

We will explore increased accountability in sentencing that should help reduce custodial remands and the overall prison population.

We will focus work on reducing recalls to prison

We will work to try to reduce the overall number of men, women and children detained in prisons.

Strategic aim: To achieve justice for children and young people by reducing and improving contact with the criminal justice system

We will continue our successful campaign to reduce child arrests. This year we will focus on reducing overnight detention of children.

We will seek to improve access to justice for children and young people in the penal system.

We will work to reduce the use of solitary confinement and the use of force in prisons.

Strategic aim: To transform prisons and to foster a good and useful life inside prisons

We will help to create a healthier prison culture.

We will continue our long campaign to introduce real work for long term prisoners.

We will work to reduce violence and deaths inside prisons.

Strategic aim: To strengthen the charity and to increase its influence

We will recruit new members and committed donors.

We will focus media coverage and digital communications to influence public discourse.

We will increase our fundraising income.

We will be influential.

We will develop our participation work with young people who have experience of the penal system to give them a voice.

We will be a learning organisation.

Financial review

In our 150th year we can confidently say the Howard League continues to be financially sound.

The organisation had an annual expenditure of £1.6m and total funds of £3m.

The income received was £1.1m; a slight increase from the previous year. The charity successfully applied for continuation funding for aspects of the participation work with young people and secured £450,000 over three years and the project started in April 2015.

The investment in recruiting new members and regular donors started to show returns during the year but the changing external charities' landscape had an impact on the door to door fundraising that led to a decision to end the initiative earlier than originally envisaged.

We continued the planned draw down from the Strategic Reserve that had been created with the donation from Lord Parmoor's estate to do two things, support our infrastructure and to fund specific projects.

The sum of £529,491 from the strategic reserve shows up in the financial statement of financial activities in the full accounts as funding the difference between unrestricted income and expenditure.

Funding from the strategic reserve supports our policy and communications work, membership recruitment, the research programme and the legal work for young people in custody.

Reserves

The total funds of the charity stand at £3.02m.

£365,217 represents restricted funds received for specific projects or purposes and is not available for general use. The strategic reserve accounts for just over £1.2m, from the original total £6m donation minus amounts which the trustees have agreed to use over the years, plus an increase in the value of the investments held.

£1.2m is tied up in our freehold property which is the office and centre of activities and other fixed assets.

The reserves policy is aimed at maintaining operating reserves at a level which would enable the charity to meet its commitments and ensure that there are adequate funds to run the charity for a period of at least 12 months. There is the equivalent of £2.6m, taking into account the unrestricted operating reserves, the property, restricted and designated funds and current and future commitments, which is considered adequate in the current circumstances.

Investments

The trustees have the power to invest in such assets as they see fit. Investment decisions were taken with a view to maximising the total return at a low level of risk; maintaining reasonable access to ensure the availability of funds for the purposes they are intended, and, avoiding investments that are not compatible with the aims of the Howard League or which are detrimental to its wellbeing.

As at 31 May 2015, our holding in Schroder's Charity Multi Asset Fund was valued at £1.2m.

Summary of financial information

Income £

Income item	£
Donations and legacies	292,972
Other trading activities	15,126
Investment income	62,742
Charitable activities	732,024
Total income	1,102,864

Expenditure £

Expenditure item	£
Raising funds	242,989
Charitable activities	1,413,011
Total expenditure	1,656,000

Investment losses 137,450

Assets & liabilities

Assets & liabilities item	Asset Value £
Own use assets	1,210,975
Long term investments	1,251,207
Other assets	611,326
Total Liabilities	(50,557)

Charitable spending

Spending type item	Value £	Spending type item	% of total spending
Raising funds	242,988		15%
Charitable activities	1,413,011		85%

The summary of financial information shows the income raised for our activities, the cost of raising the income and amounts spent on our charitable activities. The information is taken from the full financial statement which was approved by the trustees on 12 October 2016. In order to gain a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity, the full audited financial statements, trustees' annual report and auditor's report can be consulted. Copies can be obtained from the Howard League offices or www.howardleague.org

Natalie Atkinson and Steve Parr completed The Great North run to raise funds for the Howard League







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