

COMMUNITY JUSTICE FILES 4

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Reconviction, Reoffending and Recidivism in Sexual Offenders

Falshaw, Friendship and Bates investigated the relationship between official reconviction rates and other measures of reoffending and recidivism in a sample of 173 sexual offenders who participated in the Thames Valley Project (a multi-agency sex offender programme) between July 1995 and May 1999. The rate of sexual reconviction for sexual offenders is known to be low and the purpose of the study was to identify more sensitive outcomes for this group of offenders by making use of unofficial sources of data.

Their key findings were:

- Unofficial sources of data can be used in conjunction with official rates of sexual reconviction to aid the evaluation of sex offender treatment. Evidence which indicates a lapse into previous offence-related sexual behaviour (recidivism) provides a better indication of success/failure of sexual offenders following treatment, in terms of their future sexual offending, than using reconviction alone.
- The relationship between the official sexual reconviction rate and the unofficial sexual recidivism rate can be calculated. In this study, the recidivism rate was 5.3 times the Offenders Index rate. A multiplication factor such as this can be used to estimate the level of recidivism from the official reconviction rate. Levels of recidivism provide a more sensitive outcome measure in treatment evaluation research.
- This study demonstrates that when a broader outcome is measured, a higher level of offence-related sexual behaviour by sexual offenders is revealed than is reflected by reconviction rates.
- These results suggest that a broader outcome should be measured in future treatment evaluation research for sexual offenders.

Home Office Research Findings 183

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/r183.pdf>

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Youth Justice and a 'Rush to Custody'

The recently published Nacro report *A Failure of Justice. Reducing Child Imprisonment* criticises the government for failing in its stated aim to limit the number of children receiving custodial sentences. The Detention and Training Order, introduced in 2000, made it much easier for courts to lock up 12-14 year olds. In 2002, the Home Secretary proposed extending the order to children as young as 10. Nacro also argues that the current levels of child imprisonment in England and Wales constitute a breach of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The report outlines the significant rise in the number of children under the age of 15 sent into custody over the past decade and contrasts this with the fall in recorded crime committed by young people over the same period. This increase in custodial sentencing is linked with heightened public concern about juvenile offending and a growing fear of crime.

The report also highlights the fact that black children are disproportionately imprisoned. In 2001, 18% of children on long-term detention orders were identified as black or black British. The chances of being imprisoned also vary from place to place, with custody rates differing considerably across England and Wales.

A Failure of Justice: Reducing Child Imprisonment is produced by the Carlile Committee on Children and Crime and Nacro. It is available from Nacro publications, 169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU. Tel 020 7840 6500.

www.nacro.org.uk

Victims of Crime

Legislation in England and Wales to introduce statutory rights for victims of crime and a compensation fund which would ensure that victims received speedier payment was originally promised for the current parliamentary session. The compensation proposal became 'bogged down over a Treasury insistence that the fund is self-financing' according to *The Guardian* (10 March 2003). However, it has been postponed in favour of legislation introducing 'a crackdown on begging and antisocial behaviour' which was discussed in a White Paper, *Respect and Responsibility*, published a few weeks before the May local elections. The legislation on victims is now to be introduced in the 2003/4 session (Home Office, 2002, *A Better Deal for Victims and Witnesses*, <http://www.cjsonline.org/library/pdf>).

A six-month pilot project aimed at protecting the rights of women and children brought – often by deception or coercion – to work in the UK sex industry has been set up in collaboration with the charity Eaves Housing. It will provide 25 places in safe houses for women and children involved in giving evidence against traffickers, as well as counselling, health treatment, access to interpreters and legal advice (Home Office press release 065/2003, 'More help for victims of sex trafficking', 10 March 2003).

In addition to this, it is proposed that the guidelines followed by immigration officers be amended to make it easier to allow women exploited in this way to remain in the UK long enough to give evidence against offenders. This has been tried successfully in Belgium and Holland.

The Home Office has also published a 'tool kit' of relevant information and contacts for those working with victims of this trade. This includes comprehensive coverage of the effects of such victimisation, and can be found at <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/tp0801.htm>.

Scottish Victim Changes

As part of the implementation of the *Scottish Strategy for Victims* published by the Scottish Executive in 2000, a number of administrative measures have been put in place to improve the administration of victim work in Scotland. At national level, a new Victims of Crime branch has been established within the Scottish Executive's Justice Department to make policy in consultation with a Victim Steering Group on which the voluntary sector is represented.

After discussions between the Information Commissioner and Victim Support Scotland, problems with referrals from official agencies to Victim Support have been addressed and as a result there has been a substantial increase in the number of referrals being made.

The Victim Information and Advice Service has been set up within regional offices of the Procurator Fiscal. This is designed to ensure that prosecutors provide relevant information to victims and create opportunities for victims to express any concerns quickly to officials with the power to act upon them. A website has also been created to give easy access to information for victims at <http://www.scottishvictimsofcrime.co.uk>.

Victim statements are to be piloted in two or three areas over the coming two years, subject to the passage of the relevant legislation. The Bill also includes provision for victims to provide information to be considered during parole hearings.

Further information is available in the paper *Scottish Strategy for Victims: a Progress Report* which is available on the above website or from the Stationery Office Bookshop, 0870 606 5566.

Young People and Substance Misuse

The Home Office has recently published three research studies looking at patterns of substance misuse in particular groups of young people: care-leavers, the homeless and offenders. All three studies identified the requirement for specialist services that understood the needs of the young people. Some existing agencies, for example housing and social services, were identified as lacking experience or expertise in the area of substance misuse.

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The group of young offenders in the sample were highly delinquent, with most having committed many offences in the past year. They also reported much alcohol and drug use: over 85% had used tobacco, alcohol and cannabis. Less than 20% reported heroin or crack-cocaine use, although this is still a significant proportion given that all but one person in the sample was under 18. The study did find that substance misuse predicted offending, but alcohol, tobacco and cannabis use did this more than other drugs. 'Addictive-type' drug use (for example heroin, methadone and crack) was linked to shoplifting and 'stimulant' drug use to violence and stealing cars. The relationship between substance use and offending was found to be complex and multi-faceted. Substance misuse appeared to be neither the main problem faced by this group of young offenders nor something that will fade away when other problems were resolved.

Home Office Research Findings 192: Substance Use by Young Offenders: Hammersley, Marsland and Reid

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/r192.pdf>

Home Office Research Findings 191: Youth Homelessness and Substance Use: Report to the Drugs and Alcohol Research Unit: Wincup, Buckland and Bayliss

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/r191.pdf>

Home Office Research Findings 190: One Problem Among Many: Drug Use Among Care Leavers in Transition to Independent Living: Ward, Henderson and Pearson

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/r190.pdf>

Enhanced Community Punishment

The National Probation Service has launched the Enhanced Community Punishment (ECP) Scheme. ECP is a development of the existing community punishment order (CPO) drawing on the *What Works* principles and following on from the fully evaluated community punishment pathfinders that ran in 2001 and 2002. The aim of ECP is to develop the rehabilitative potential of community service work, whilst ensuring that the sentence retains elements of retribution and reparation.

The following five elements are key to achieving this aim:

- Integrated Case Management (ICM) – ensures that all CP cases use OASys as part of an integrated approach to assessment and supervision planning.
- Pro-Social Modelling (PSM) – a pro-social environment is created through staff modelling and reinforcing prosocial (as opposed to anti-social) attitudes and behaviour.
- Cognitive Skills Modelling (CSM) – CP supervisors are trained to illustrate and reinforce problem-solving skills, using specially designed materials.

- Guided Skills Learning (GSL) – uses opportunities within CP work for offenders to learn employment-related skills.
- Placement Quality Standards (PQS) – ensure that placements contain a range of characteristics which support the above elements, and encourage compliance with the Order and a reduction in future offending.

It is intended that, by October 2003, ECP will be running across England and Wales. All community service work will then be conducted as ECP.

National Probation Service Briefing Issue 8

http://www.probation.homeoffice.gov.uk/files/pdf/briefing_8_enhanced_community_punishment_ecp_dec_02.pdf

Forthcoming Conferences

Mentally Disordered Offenders: Changing the Focus? is NACRO's 3rd annual mental health and crime conference. It will take place at the University of Sheffield on 3-4 September 2003. The conference will look at work with mentally disordered offenders and consider the ways that policy and practice have changed in the 10 years since the publication of the Reed Report. The conference will be of interest to practitioners, managers and policy makers across health, social care and criminal justice systems.

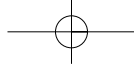
Further details are available from Jon Collins on 020 7840 6448 or jon.collins@nacro.org.uk

The National Probation Service plans an international conference on 28-30 January 2004 at the Queen Elizabeth 11 Conference Centre in London. The conference aims to give probation workers the opportunity to exchange good practice and hear about new developments. Plenary sessions will include presentations from the USA, Japan and the Czech Republic.

The conference will also include the presentation of the International Community Justice Awards to individuals and organisations for outstanding and innovative work.

For further information contact Susan Lord on 020 7217 8755 or susan.lord@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Urban Justice – Delivering a Safer London is a one-day conference and exhibition with the aim of examining how a coherent Criminal Justice System can contribute to creating a safer London. It is to be held at the Novotel London West on 8th July 2003. Confirmed key speakers include Sir John Stevens, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Dru Sharpling,



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Chief Crown Prosecutor for London and R David Mair, Deputy Chair, Metropolitan Police Authority.

For details and registration information see

<http://www.asaferlondon.com/>

