



Prince's Trust

## Written Evidence from The Prince's Trust

Home Affairs Select Committee  
Inquiry into Effective Sentencing

28<sup>th</sup> February 2007

**Contact:**

Emma Langbridge  
Head of Public Affairs  
The Prince's Trust  
18 Park Square East  
London  
NW1 4LH  
020 7543 7334

[emma.langbridge@princes-trust.org.uk](mailto:emma.langbridge@princes-trust.org.uk)

1.

## Executive Summary:

a. The Prince's Trust is helping to **break the cycle of crime** by offering offenders training and support so they can turn their lives around and give back to society. The Prince's Trust helps offenders and ex-offenders move into employment, training or education:

- 65% of offenders and ex-offenders The Prince's Trust supported in 2005/6 went on to employment, training or education.
- 67% of people released from prison go on to re-offend within two years.<sup>1</sup>

b. **Promoting Non-custodial sentencing:** Non-custodial sentencing can work if positive activities are incorporated. The Trust is running a pilot with the Youth Justice Board supporting non-custodial sentencing by referring young offenders (e.g. those on Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programmes) onto Trust programmes.

c. **Diversionsary measures in the community:** Much can be done to increase the success of diversionary measures (e.g. statutory orders) in reducing a young persons' re-offending. The Trust is taking part in a Crown Prosecution Service pilot (March 2007) in Merseyside and Lancashire around conditional cautions. In this pilot the young person selects (from a choice of options) to participate in a Trust programme as part of their conditional caution.

d. **Cost Effectiveness:** The Social Exclusion Unit stated that re-offending by ex-prisoners costs society at least £11 billion per year. It costs an average of £40,992 to keep a person in prison<sup>2</sup>. It costs £3,120 to send a young person on The Prince's Trust's 12 week personal development programme 'Team' and 71% of unemployed participants find work or enter full time education or training after completing the programme.

e. **Employment:** Research shows that employment reduces the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half.<sup>3</sup> As part of the learning and skills sector, all Trust programmes aim to improve the skills and employability of young people. We help young people with work experience, job prospects and self-employment. We believe more partnership work with corporate employers will open up employment opportunities for ex-offenders.

f. **Partnership works:** Many offenders have complex needs so a holistic approach to support is required. By drawing on expertise across the board, a combination of public, private and voluntary sector support can be very effective.

g. **Positive activities:** We believe that to reduce offending young people need support and positive things to do. Our research shows that young people believe there are significant gaps in provision and they need more to do in their community.

h. **Constructive activities in custody:** The Trust is supporting prisoners by running some custody-based activities. In one example 60% of prisoners, who took part in a custody-based Trust initiative, went straight onto other Trust programmes on release. The Trust also offers prisoners Big Boost Awards which are grants that benefit the local community.

---

<sup>1</sup> Prison Reform Trust (2006) Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile

<sup>2</sup> Prison Reform Trust (2006) Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile

<sup>3</sup> Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners. Report by the Social Exclusion Unit 2002

## 2. The Prince's Trust: A brief introduction:

The Prince's Trust is a charity that believes in young people who often don't believe in themselves. We seek out those young people that need our help the most and work with young people who struggle at school, are in or leaving care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law. We work with young people aged 14-30 to help them get back into work, education and training.

The Prince's Trust is helping to break the cycle of crime by offering offenders training and support so they can turn their lives around and give back to society. In 2005/6 over 3,500 participants on Prince's Trust programmes were offenders or ex-offenders. Almost 65% of the (ex)offenders we assisted moved into employment, self employment, further education or training.

The Trust's age range starts at 14 and we recognise that many young people who come to us may already be offending or at risk of offending. We therefore work on reducing their offending behaviour and do this through a number of programmes, e.g.:

**xl clubs** are a team-based programme of personal development based in schools for pupils aged 14-16 'at risk' of truanting and under-achievement. Clubs aim to improve attendance, self-esteem, motivation and social skills and enable young people to take part in a community project. By engaging young people back into education we are helping them to increase their basic skills and reduce their likelihood of getting into crime. In 2005/6 13,886 pupils took part in xl in more than 621 schools across the UK.

**The Team Programme** is a 12 week personal development programme for 16-25 year olds, the majority unemployed, to develop their confidence, motivation and skills through teamwork in the community. In 2005/6 8,802 took part in the programme in over 300 locations across the UK. 71% of unemployed participants find work or enter full time education or training after completing the programme. Through the Team programme The Trust contributes more than £4.75m to local communities through community projects.

The Trust's success is dependent on the strength of its partnerships and we work with a range of statutory and voluntary organisations to provide better outcomes for offenders, e.g.: Youth Justice Board, Probation Service, prisons, NACRO and Clinks. The Trust supports the Smart Justice campaign for alternatives to custody and is part of the Coalition on Social and Criminal Justice. The Trust also works with the Police, the Ministry of Defence and Fire Service to build community confidence.

Many of the young people The Trust works with often have complex needs that need a holistic multi-agency support system. One intervention on its own will not necessarily help break the cycle of offending. The Trust actively engages with the multi-agency approach and works with specialist partners such as Mind, Rethink, Addaction and Drugscope.

The Trust understands and acknowledges the strong link between mental health and offending. Our programmes help develop self-confidence and motivation, improving the health and wellbeing of young people. 76% of young people who participated in a Trust programme during 2005/6 report higher life satisfaction than one year ago. Comparable rates amongst unemployed 16-24 year olds in the general population are 34%<sup>4</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> British Household Panel Survey 2004

### 3. The case for non-custodial sentencing

- 65% of offenders and ex-offenders The Prince's Trust supported in 2005/6 went on to employment, training or education.
- 67% of people released from prison go on to re-offend within two years.<sup>5</sup>

We use a young people centred-approach, seeing the potential in the young person and working with them on confidence, motivation and tolerance to improve their lives and communities. We help young people to take responsibility for their actions and enable them to give back to society through community projects.

The Trust believes that, for young people, custody should be used as a last resort or where the offender is a danger to themselves and the public.

The Trust believes that non-custodial sentencing can work combined with positive activities, e.g. The Trust's 12 week personal development programme 'Team'. We are running a pilot with the Youth Justice Board supporting non-custodial sentencing by referring young offenders (e.g. those on Intensive Supervision & Surveillance Programme) onto Trust programmes. The benefits of our programmes, as seen by young people, are outlined in the bullet points below.

Diversory measures in the community are also crucial and more work can be done to increase the success of them in reducing a young person's offending behaviour. The Trust is taking part in a Crown Prosecution Service pilot (March 2007) in Merseyside and Lancashire around conditional cautions. In this pilot the young person selects (from a choice of options) to participate in a Trust programme as part of their conditional caution.

Young people with a criminal background tell us<sup>6</sup> that support programmes, including those run by The Prince's Trust and its partners made a real difference because:

- They help to increase self-esteem and build confidence
- They provide valuable life skills such as patience, anger management, listening and understanding consequences
- They combine personal development with practical life skills such as budgeting, health and cooking
- One to one support from a skilled key worker makes a real difference
- Residential courses enable young people to make new friends, including those going through similar life experiences, and take stock of their life away from their normal environment
- They offer work experience, which is an important first step towards employment
- They link to practical help with issues such as housing, drugs and benefits
- The chance to give back to their local communities through volunteering
- Second and third chances are crucial, for example being able to re-try programmes which haven't been completed
- The chance to take on responsibility or help run a project developed confidence and skills - an important stepping stone to employment

---

<sup>5</sup> Prison Reform Trust (2006) Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile

<sup>6</sup> 'Breaking the Cycle of Offending' February 2007

- The chance to develop youth work skills by helping to run a programme
- The ability to learn in an informal environment

Statistics show that little is achieved in sending people to prison, in particular by sending more than 50,000 people to prison each year for less than six months. The Carter report states: 'There is no convincing evidence that further increases in the use of custody would significantly reduce crime'. In addition 61% of victims of crime do not think that the use of prison stops re-offending for petty crime, such as shoplifting, stealing cars and vandalism<sup>7</sup>. Finally, when he was Home Secretary, Charles Clarke said "Prison does not work in stopping re-offending"<sup>8</sup>. In November 2006 the prison population in England and Wales stood at 79,829, a rise of 2,077 on the year before. The number of prisoners in England and Wales has increased by almost 25,000 in the last ten years.<sup>9</sup>

The Social Exclusion Unit stated that re-offending by ex-prisoners costs society at least £11 billion per year. It costs an average of £40,992 to keep a person in prison<sup>10</sup>. The costs go beyond the financial with many hard-to-quantify costs for example the impact on the family unit – each year it is estimated that more than 17,700 children are separated from their mother by imprisonment and 150,000 children have a parent in prison.<sup>11</sup>

It costs £3,120 to send a young person on our 12 week personal development programme 'Team' and 71% of unemployed participants find work or enter full time education or training after completing Team.

#### **4. Reducing offending and re-offending:**

The Trust believes that to reduce offending and anti-social behaviour young people need support and positive things to do as they make the transition to adulthood. Prince's Trust research<sup>12</sup> has shown that 92 per cent of 14 – 25 year olds believe there are significant gaps in the provision of basic services they need in their local community. This lack of advice leaves more than one in five socially excluded young people failing to turn to anyone for help and support. The Trust aims to address this issue by providing positive activities for young people through a range of programmes.

Research shows that employment reduces the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half.<sup>13</sup> As part of the learning and skills sector, all Trust programmes aim to improve the skills and employability of young people. We help young people with work experience, job prospects and self-employment. The Trust feels that more funding should be made available for community-based alternatives to custody that develop young peoples' employability skills through working with corporate employers.

Trust activities are not exclusively for offenders, but all have the potential to assist young people to break their offending cycle and fulfil their aspirations. We help to reduce the number of young people who are at risk of offending or re-offending:

---

<sup>7</sup> National Statistics (2005) Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2004

<sup>8</sup> Prison Reform Trust (2006) Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile

<sup>9</sup> Prison Reform Trust (2006) Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile

<sup>10</sup> Prison Reform Trust (2006) Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile

<sup>11</sup> Prison Reform Trust (2006) Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile

<sup>12</sup> The Prince's Trust, Reaching the Hardest to Reach. 2004

<sup>13</sup> Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners. Report by the Social Exclusion Unit 2002

- 77% of (ex)offenders who took part in a Prince's Trust programme felt more satisfied with life compared to the same time a year ago and 89% attributed this change to the work of The Prince's Trust
- We help young people gain practical skills, confidence and motivation. Over 70% of (ex)offenders improved their skills as a result of a Prince's Trust programme
- 86% of (ex)offenders claimed that their Prince's Trust experience had been beneficial to their future career prospects
- 96% of (ex)offenders would recommend The Prince's Trust to others

We also contribute to tackling offending behaviour by:

- Supporting young people in and leaving custody, offering them positive choices for after their release, such as taking part in a community based project, gaining nationally recognised qualifications or setting up a business
- Helping to keep young people in school, tackling truancy and school exclusion
- Providing opportunities for young people to get involved in their communities and contribute to community regeneration
- Offering mentoring support to young people, including ex and current offenders
- Helping young people to become economically independent, including supporting them into self-employment

#### **Case Study:**

Seven years ago Mark was living on the streets of London begging for money to fuel his drug and alcohol addiction.

Today, Mark has beaten his demons and set up his own successful tree surgery business, "Treewise".

Mark spent fifteen years in a vicious cycle of drugs, alcohol and crime, finally hitting rock bottom when he became homeless.

A friend of Mark's managed to help him on to a recovery plan, and months later, clean from drugs, but severely lacking in confidence and direction, he began to think about his life.

He had some previous experience as a tree surgeon and after several meetings with The Prince's Trust, they put a business plan together and gave him the confidence to start his own company.

Mark received a £1,500 loan and £1,000 grant from The Trust in 2001, and built his business up from there.

He said: "If it wasn't for The Prince's Trust I really wouldn't be here today. The funding they gave me, and more importantly the support and advice, and the faith they put in me when no one else would, was literally a life saver."

Keen to help others who have suffered, Mark employs people who have faced difficulties in their own lives.

### **5. Improving the chances of young people in custody**

Where a young person does go into custody more needs to be done to make the experience more positive, for example education programmes and incentives to take part.

The Trust runs custody-based activities in some institutions, such as our two week pre-release course at YOI Stoke Heath. This encourages young people in custody to build

self-confidence, skills and motivation in order to take advantage, post release, of opportunities provided by The Prince's Trust and others that will contribute to their personal success and a reduction in their re-offending. Of the 77 young people who have taken part to date, almost 60% were referred onto The Trust's Team programme on release from custody.

The Trust also offers Big Boost Awards to young people both in and out of custody which benefit the local community. A group of inmates at Wormwood Scrubs received an award to redecorate the visiting area, making it more welcoming and suitable for visiting children. The project enabled the young people to learn new skills such as decorating, work as a team and gave them a sense of achievement and responsibility.

A number of young people each year take part in Prince's Trust programmes whilst on release on temporary licence (ROTL) as part of their resettlement programme. In partnership with HMP YOI Glen Parva many young people on ROTL take part in The Trust's 12 week Team programme, with 80% achieving positive outcomes three months after completing the programme. We believe more young people should benefit from 'Release on Temporary Licence' to enable them to take part in community based activity as part of their resettlement.

The Trust is also working with HMP YOI Styal and the local football club, Crewe Alexandra FC, where young female prisoners take part in a week-long 'Get Off the Bench' course which uses football to motivate the young people through developing fitness and gaining key workplace skills such as literacy, leadership and communication. (Other examples of in-custody work are available on request).

The Trust works in a number of institutions with resettlement programmes, educating young people in the benefits of Trust programmes on release and helping them prepare for the transition to the community. We believe more can and should be done in bridging the gap between custody and community to help break the cycle of crime.

Young people often label prison "a university of crime"<sup>14</sup>. They cite a lack of consistency in support during both their sentence and rehabilitation and many want advice and support from people who have been through the same experiences.

In response to young peoples' views, The Trust aims to pilot a new mentoring service for offenders. A new taskforce is also due to be established for involving offenders and ex-offenders in the development and delivery of services to reduce offending. The group will be led by Clinks.

---

<sup>14</sup> 'Breaking the Cycle of Offending' February 2007

## **6. Recommendations to Committee for inclusion in its report:**

- a.** Custody for young people should be used as a last resort or where the offender is a danger to themselves and the public.
- b.** Non-custodial sentences should be a viable alternative to short-term sentences of less than six to twelve months which prove ineffectual and simply push up the prison population.
- c.** The Government needs to work with the private and voluntary sectors to deliver innovative solutions for effective community-based sentencing and diversionary activities (e.g.: Prince's Trust pilot with the Crown Prosecution Service in Merseyside/Lancashire)
- d.** More funding should be made available for existing successful initiatives, like The Trust's Team programme, which improve the futures of countless offenders and ex-offenders and supports them into education, training or employment.
- e.** More funding should be made available for community-based alternatives to custody that develop young peoples' employability skills through working with corporate employers.
- f.** The Government should listen to the experiences of offenders to help shape policies that help them stop re-offending (e.g. through Clinks taskforce)
- g.** The Government needs to take a holistic approach to dealing with offenders, assessing mental health problems, drug misuse and other issues.
- h.** More can and should be done in bridging the gap between custody and community and work. Young people need to be met immediately on release to help break their cycle of offending and a positive and meaningful activity (like a Trust programme) should be engaged with as soon as possible.
- i.** Where a young person has to go into custody, this should be as close to their home as possible to aid the resettlement process.
- j.** More young people should benefit from 'Release on Temporary Licence' to enable them to take part in community based activity as part of their resettlement.

More information is available at: [www.princes-trust.org.uk](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk)