

Sir Richard Heaton KCB
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Justice
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20th August 2019

Sir Richard,

I am writing to request further details of the proposed review of sentencing policy which was announced by the Prime Minister on Sunday 11 August. According to reports in the media, the review will consider sentencing for the most serious violent and sexual offenders; the rules governing when and how these offenders are released; and sentencing of the most prolific offenders.

It would be helpful to know:

- Who will lead the review, and with what resources by way of secretariat and analytical support
- The terms of reference for the review
- The timetable
- The process for consultation

The review seems certain to have important implications for judicial, public and victim confidence in the sentencing process; the rights and liberties of individuals in custody; and the capacity and resources of the prison and parole systems. Given that any significant recommendations are likely to require primary legislation, it would be helpful to know if there is an intention to follow the normal convention of publishing both a green and a white paper before presenting a bill to parliament on a matter of this importance.

Separately, we have written to the Justice Secretary Robert Buckland regarding the Prime Minister's commitment to build an additional 10,000 prison places, and to Jo Farrar about the promised £100m investment in prison security measures. For information, copies of these letters are enclosed.

Because of the public interest created by the Prime Minister's various announcements regarding prisons, and the scope for confusion left by the fact that they were made during a parliamentary recess without the opportunity for debate, we are publishing our letters on our website and will do the same with the responses we look forward to receiving.

*With best wishes,
Peter*

Peter Dawson
Director