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INTRODUCTION

The Prison Reform Trust (PRT) was founded in 1981 to inform public debate and improve prison conditions and the treatment of prisoners, amidst concerns about a projected prison population of 48,000 by 1984. With the prison population in England and Wales exceeding 83,000 the charity remains as important to civic society today as it was then.

While often working alongside the Prison Service to effect reform and maintaining close links with departments including the Ministry of Justice, Treasury, Home Office, Cabinet Office, Department of Health and Department for Education, to retain its independence the Prison Reform Trust does not seek or accept government funding. The structure and rigour of programmes are agreed with those trusts and foundations that offer kind support and the work plan is necessarily dependent upon such funding continuing to be available. We have a strong track record of effecting change in policy and practice across the UK.

This document sets out the Prison Reform Trust’s strategic aims and objectives for 2013-2016 and will be reviewed on an annual basis by trustees and staff to ensure the charity is in a position to anticipate and respond promptly to current and future events.

Attached as appendices to this plan are:

- The values and principles that underpin the Prison Reform Trust’s work (Appendix 1)
- Organisational effectiveness (Appendix 2)
- The context within which the Prison Reform Trust expects to operate in 2013-2016 (Appendix 3)

OVERARCHING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Prison Reform Trust is an independent UK charity working to create a just, humane and effective penal system. We do this by inquiring into the workings of the system; informing prisoners, staff and the wider public; and by influencing Parliament, Government and officials towards reform.

The Prison Reform Trust has two overarching aims:

1. Reducing unnecessary imprisonment and promoting community solutions to crime
2. Improving treatment and conditions for prisoners and their families

Programmes of work and objectives are organised under five main headings, reflecting our aims and values. These are:

3. Reducing unnecessary imprisonment
4. Improving treatment and conditions for prisoners and their families
5. Improving resettlement policy and practice
6. Promoting equality and human rights in the justice system
7. Informing the public, Parliament and policy development
1. REDUCING UNNECESSARY IMPRISONMENT

1.1 Reduce women’s imprisonment

The Prison Reform Trust’s production in 2000 of an independent review, chaired by Professor Dorothy Wedderburn, informed Labour’s new strategy on women offenders. Since then we have worked consistently to show how to reduce women’s imprisonment by highlighting the particular needs of young mothers, women who are mentally ill and foreign national women and by challenging any unnecessary use of remand. The Prison Reform Trust acted as an independent member on Baroness Corston’s government commissioned review of vulnerable women in the criminal justice system published in 2007 and since then has worked to secure implementation of the review’s blueprint for reform.

In 2010 we established a high level Women’s Justice Taskforce, chaired by the Equality and Diversity Director at Lloyds Banking Group, to map out the process and structure by which government can drive and monitor reform. The Taskforce published a report of its findings and recommendations to government to inform the justice Green Paper and resulting legislation. The Taskforce also submitted responses to the Sentencing Council’s assault guidelines consultation. Its recommendation to include primary care for children or other dependents as a mitigating factor in sentencing guidelines was adopted by the Council.

In a major programme (2012 – 15), the Prison Reform Trust is working with partners to reduce women’s imprisonment and change national and local government policy and practice in relation to women offenders or those at risk of offending.

PRT will:
- Lead and develop the strategy and work with a single purpose to reduce women’s imprisonment across the UK
- Develop and maintain a compelling alliance of professional groups and voluntary and civic society organisations including the National Council for Women and the Soroptimists International
- Identify the key drivers to women’s imprisonment and the levers for reform
- Work across government departments and high custody local authorities to change policy and practice
- Engage and support practitioners, including police, health and community services, to develop an effective response to women in trouble with the law.

1.2 Sustain reduction in child and youth imprisonment

In the five year Out of Trouble programme which ended in August 2012, the Prison Reform Trust helped to achieve an over 45% reduction in child custody. We identified and used effective levers for change, gathered a powerful alliance of champions, convened an expert advisory group, targeted local authorities with high levels of child custody and increased public, Parliamentary and national and local government knowledge of the overuse of custody for children and young people in the UK. We commissioned applied research to develop the evidence base for the programme, convened training conferences and seminars, built firm relationships with the Youth Justice Board and governmental, judicial, local authority, public and third sector stakeholders, polled opinion to gauge public support for alternatives to custody for non-violent young offenders and took practical steps to effect change.
PRT will:

- Ensure gains from the *Out of Trouble* programme are sustained and that the learning is embedded within the broader organisation and partner organisations beyond the programme’s end
- Building on commissioned research by the National Children’s Bureau, work to reduce the high number of children in care and care leavers in custody
- As part of the Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A), apply the learning from successful work to reduce child custody to help reduce the young adult prison population
- Through membership of the Standing Committee on Youth Justice, contribute to further reductions in child custody and reform of the youth justice system.

1.3 Reduce prison numbers overall

The current coalition government, faced with the need to reduce public spending across all government departments, is taking forward proposals for sentencing reform and a ‘rehabilitation revolution’. In many of these areas the Prison Reform Trust has taken a lead role in advocating reform and has contributed effectively to the reduction of unnecessary use of custodial remand. Arrangements for proper liaison and diversion in police stations and courts, due to be in place by 2014, should help stem the high number of people entering custody with mental health needs and learning disabilities.

PRT will:

- Contribute to government plans and consultations on the future of the prison estate
- Scrutinise and highlight concerns associated with competition and the growth of private sector vested interest in criminal justice
- Gather information on use of breach and recall to inform policy and practice development
- Mount a local drive to focus on high custody areas working with local authorities and police and crime commissioners
- Highlight the impact of imprisonment on vulnerable groups including people with mental health needs and learning disabilities, women, young adults and children
- Monitor reduction in needless use of custodial remand
- Examine the scope for justice reinvestment and community budgets
- Identify drivers to criminality and solutions which impact on unnecessary use of imprisonment.

1.4 Promote improvements to sentencing

In partnership with the Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR), the Prison Reform Trust has played an important role in promoting improvements to the sentencing framework. We supported the establishment of the Sentencing Council and helped to advance recent changes in legislation including the abolition of the indeterminate sentence for public protection (IPP) and improvements to the adult and youth remand framework.

PRT will:

- Monitor and develop recommendations to limit the use of indeterminate sentences, including the mandatory life sentence
- Make recommendations to the Sentencing Council to improve sentencing guidelines by responding to relevant consultations.
- Monitor implementation of new guidance including those on joint enterprise and trafficking and coercion.
1.5 Promote community solutions to crime and restorative justice

The Prison Reform Trust is a member of the Restorative Justice Council. Along with the Criminal Justice Alliance and Victim Support we have supported recent moves to establish a legislative framework for restorative justice. Through regular briefings and polls the Prison Reform Trust has built a profile for restorative justice and community solutions to crime and is committed to restorative justice being offered to victims on a non-coercive basis.

PRT will:
- Promote community solutions to crime and profile effective practice
- Monitor the impact of probation reforms on community provision
- Support legislative changes to provide victims and offenders with increased opportunities for restorative justice.
- Work with the Restorative Justice Council, Victim Support and others to promote the use of restorative justice and the spread of good practice.

2. IMPROVING TREATMENT AND CONDITIONS FOR PRISONERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

2.1 Provide information and advice to prisoners and their families

Our advice and information service responds to more than 5,000 queries a year from prisoners, their friends and families and people working with prisoners. Information received is used in our work to assist individuals, improve conditions and treatment and lever wider policy change. The Prison Reform Trust provides the only general prison information free-phone line for prisoners in England, Wales and Scotland. Information we have produced is available in 27 languages and an easy read version on the Ministry of Justice website.

PRT will:
- Disseminate independent, accurate, up to date advice and information to prisoners and their families
- Produce information for specific groups of prisoners to reflect policy changes
- Use queries/concerns raised with the advice and information service to inform our programmes of work and policy leverage
- Maintain and develop our contact with prisons and prison staff, including regular visits to prisons
- Continue to develop ways of evaluating the service’s effectiveness and recording outcomes.

2.2 Improve responses to the needs of older people

In 2002 the Prison Reform Trust undertook a scoping study Growing Old in Prison to examine research and literature about this rapidly growing part of the prison population. In 2006 we published a response to the Government Green Paper on pensions Prisoners’ Pension Rights. The Prison Reform Trust has worked with Age Concern England to establish a forum to discuss and plan work with older people in prison and has published Doing Time: the experiences and needs of older people in prison. In 2010 the charity published Doing Time: Good practice with older people in prison – the view of prison staff, informing National Child and Adult Services, contributing to staff development and advocacy for social care.
PRT will:
- Ensure that social care responsibilities regarding people in prison are clarified and good practice is developed
- Maintain focus on the well being of older people in prison and work with organisations such as RECOOP and Restore to ensure that treatment and conditions improve for this group
- Identify and promote effective alternatives to custody for older people with disabilities or dementia.

2.3 Improve prison conditions

The Prison Reform Trust has a long tradition of monitoring prison conditions and the treatment of prisoners, highlighting good practice and exposing poor conditions and treatment to wider public attention. This work will contribute to the government's on-going review of regimes and conditions, rehabilitation and resettlement. We maintain good liaison with the National Offender Management service, (NOMS), HM Prison Inspectorate, the Ombudsman's office and Independent Monitoring Boards.

PRT will:
- Monitor the impact of budget constraints on prison regimes and conditions
- Develop a discrete, coherent programme to improve prison regimes and conditions by applying research to practice which will work in partnership with prison staff to support their work through:
  - Drawing on staff experience in for example, developing citizenship and responsibility, violence reduction and respecting diversity
  - Engaging with prisoners and prison staff to develop good practice
  - Focussing on particular aspects of imprisonment such as segregation, time out of cell and safer custody.
  - Producing materials, information and training, review and evaluation.

3. DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE RESSETLEMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE

3.1 Improve resettlement

The Prison Reform Trust is committed to highlighting ways in which people can be better prepared for, and supported on, their release from prison including reducing financial exclusion faced by prisoners, former offenders and their families. We support specific changes in commercial and government policy and practice to improve access to banking, insurance and financial information and services for people who have criminal convictions.

PRT will:
- Draw on findings of the Out for Good research and promote resettlement programmes that engage and encourage prisoners to take responsibility for preparing for the challenges they will face on release and support them throughout the process of resettlement and desistance from crime
- Seek to ensure that those currently serving IPP sentences, particularly those held beyond tariff, are enabled to progress towards release
- Draw on the findings of Time is Money and work with Unlock and allied agencies, to promote the financial inclusion of offenders and their families across government departments
- Promote and support reform of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Drawing on our research, work with prisons and prisoners to improve resettlement practices.
3.2 Improve communication by

a) Achieving digital inclusion for prisoners

The Prison Reform Trust will examine scope for greater access to information and communications technology (ICT) for prisoners and their families building on our partnership with the Prisoners Education Trust (PET)

PRT will:
- Engage with NOMS and key agencies active in the criminal justice sector and prisoners to establish a shared understanding and analysis of the need, potential and benefits of digital inclusion
- Use realistic practical recommendations and strategies to develop secure mechanisms of expanding use of ICT
- Promote increased use of ICT as a supplement to, not a substitute for, good quality face to face work

b) Running writing competitions in prisons across the UK:

The writing competition is open to prisoners, prisoners’ families and friends and former prisoners across the UK. Annually, we invite submission of original work on selected themes and receives more than 500 entries. Involving a panel of high profile judges and co-ordinated by a volunteer, the process provides a sound model for annual competitions.

PRT will:
- Offer creative opportunities to prisoners and their families
- Recognise outstanding contributions from young offenders
- Publish winning entries

4. PROMOTING EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Prison Reform Trust is committed to promoting and encouraging equality and human rights across the criminal justice system. While all our activities seek to reflect this position, certain programmes focus on particular protected characteristics and rights.

4.1 Ensure liaison and diversion services for people with mental health problems or learning disabilities by 2014

In 2012 two important strands of work were brought together within the Care not Custody programme.

In the past decade a Troubled Inside series of reports and seminars drew attention to the unmet mental health needs of people in the justice system. The Prison Reform Trust acted as independent advisor to Lord Bradley’s review and drew on evidence from independent monitoring boards to make a detailed submission to the review, which was published by the government in April 2009. We have since worked closely with the Ministry of Justice and Department of Health to monitor and ensure implementation of particular Bradley report recommendations. The Prison Reform Trust has informed and supported the National Federation of Women’s Institutes as it campaigns to call a halt to the inappropriate imprisonment of people who are mentally ill.
The *No One Knows* programme has had considerable UK-wide impact on policy and practice across the health, social care and criminal justice systems in relation to people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties, including changing the response in 80 prisons to people with learning disabilities.

PRT will:
- Build on the *Care not Custody* programme, which, together with the National Federation of Women’s Institutes’ and the *Care not Custody* coalition, will hold the government to account for its commitment to establish liaison and diversion services nationwide (England) by 2014, and to reduce the use of custody for vulnerable offenders. In particular, the *Care not Custody* programme will:
  - Work with the Magistrates Association, Judicial College, Justices’ Clerks Society and Rethink Mental Illness to produce materials to assist magistrates to recognise and respond appropriately to defendants with mental health problems or learning disabilities.
  - Promote main findings and recommendations of the briefing paper on support for vulnerable defendants and their effective participation in court proceedings (Article 6 ECHR, right to a fair trial).
  - Gather data to inform this programme of work, for example, use of mental health treatment options and effective alternatives to custody.
  - Work on promoting self advocacy, especially amongst people with a learning disability, through the Working for Justice Group, in collaboration with KeyRing Living Support Networks.
  - Inform and engage police and crime commissioners in liaison and diversion services.

### 4.2 Address disproportionality and racial discrimination in the justice system

In 2006 we published a briefing paper *Experiences of Ethnic Minority Employees in Prison*. In 2008 the Prison Reform Trust contributed to the Prison Service’s race review which set the strategy for the next five years. We did this through a study of the process of investigating racist incidents, *A Fair Response*. In 2010 we published *Double Trouble?: Resettlement provision for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Offenders*, a joint report with Clinks, which drew attention to the need for culturally sensitive resettlement support and contributed to the government’s Tackling Race Inequalities programme.

PRT will:
- Work with the Youth Justice Board and other agencies to address the increased disproportionality of black, Asian and minority ethnic offenders in the youth justice system.
- Ensure the issue of racial discrimination in the criminal justice system is on the political, policy and media agenda.

### 4.3 Promote prisoners’ right to vote

The UK’s blanket ban on prisoners voting remains in place despite the European Court ruling it unlawful in March 2004. The law is a relic from the 19th century which dates back to the Forfeiture Act of 1870 and is based on the notion of civic death, a punishment entailing the withdrawal of citizenship rights. The Prison Reform Trust believes that enabling people in prison to exercise their civic responsibility by voting should be a normal part of resettlement and rehabilitation. Since the European Court ruling the Prison Reform Trust has made representations at the national and European level to encourage the UK government to meet its legal obligations.
PRT will:
• Continue to use European and Parliamentary channels, partnerships with allied agencies and the media to ensure implementation of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights and secure the right to vote for sentenced prisoners.

5. INFORMING THE PUBLIC, PARLIAMENT AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Accurate, relevant and up-to-date information about prisons and the people held in them is central to our work in influencing government, Parliament, the media and the general public to effect reform. The charity is constituted to provide public education. We succeed in reaching a wide audience to influence societal attitudes about prison reform.

5.1 Inform Parliament and national and local government

The Prison Reform Trust maintains a prominent role in supporting Parliamentarians, developing their knowledge and understanding of the justice system through different channels, including: providing the secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Penal Affairs Group; holding one off meetings and briefing sessions; publishing briefing papers; and disseminating the findings of our reports, all of which contribute to our aims. Parliamentarians frequently draw on our Bromley Briefing Prison Factfile when holding government to account through justice debates and Parliamentary questions.

PRT will:
• Work through government and Parliamentary channels to influence implementation of relevant bills and Acts of Parliament affecting prisoners and their families
• Provide submissions to relevant consultations
• Through prison visits and other initiatives, work to strengthen relations with key figures in government, Parliament, the media and wider civil society
• Keep Parliamentarians informed by organising regular meetings of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Penal Affairs and joint meetings with other relevant All Party Groups
• Work closely with the Justice and Home Affairs Select Committees to ensure close scrutiny of government reforms.

5.2 Provide education, outreach and professional development

The Prison Reform Trust is leading an ambitious programme of work which aims to reach a wide audience and influence public attitudes about prison reform, support others to take action, and add strength to campaigns and programmes of work. We also value the support of our Friends and recognise the tremendous potential for Friends, individually and collectively, to achieve reform. Through its outreach activities, the Prison Reform Trust aims to extend its reach further across the UK and to a wider demographic supporter base to strengthen our core and programme work.

PRT will:
• Produce and disseminate our flagship publication, the Bromley Briefing Prison Factfile, continually developing it and making use of a variety of formats to maximise its reach and accessibility
• Produce and disseminate information and discussion tools for those outside the justice system, such as U3A, aimed at stimulating informed public debate about prisons and community sentencing
• Make use of a variety of media and formats to maximise our reach, including the web and social media, film and audio material, and events
• Develop and foster partnerships with national civic groups and membership organisations, supporting them to achieve reform to policy and practice through local and national initiatives
• Produce and disseminate in partnership with PACT *What Can I Do?* – our new guide to volunteering in the justice system
• Expand and develop our supporter base, including former offenders, Prison Reform Trust Friends, e-newsletter subscribers, Facebook friends, LinkedIn and Twitter followers, providing opportunities for our supporters to achieve reform to policy and practice through local and national initiatives
• Work with local government, police and crime commissioners, probation services, health services, courts and police and all others who have an influence at local level to achieve reforms to policy and practice
• Develop information and training for colleagues in the criminal justice system, including the judiciary, those working in prisons and probation, and the police.

### 5.3 Work with the media

The Prison Reform Trust maintains a high public profile for prison reform. Independent press monitoring shows that we gain coverage, not only in every national and the major regional newspapers, but also in local papers across the country and specialist publications. Broadcasting is equally comprehensive. We regularly appear on flagship news programmes such as Today, 5Live, BBC Scotland, BBC Wales and BBC Belfast, Sky News, Channel 4 News, Newsnight, the Jeremy Vine Show, ITV Daybreak and BBC Breakfast, Woman’s Hour, the One Show, You and Yours and regional phone-ins and discussion programmes.

PRT will:

• Maintain a high profile for prison reform in print, online and broadcast media and ensure our publications receive widespread coverage
• Extend the ‘seeing is believing’ visits to prisons and community projects to engage tabloid editors and columnists and popular broadcast commentators
• Build on previous success and good practice to develop popular and effective campaigns on prison reform
• Develop contacts with a wide range of journalists, including writers on women’s and children’s issues, to broaden public understanding of the social impact of imprisonment
• Build on our growing social media profile to maximise opportunities for e-campaigning.

### 5.4 Recognise achievement

The Prison Reform Trust administers the Robin Corbett Award for Prisoner Rehabilitation and works in partnership with the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to facilitate a prison reform travel fellowships programme. These awards provide valuable opportunities to recognise the contribution made by organisations and individuals to penal reform and to encourage the spread of national and international best practice.

PRT will:

• Work with the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to facilitate a prison reform travelling fellowship programme and ensure effective dissemination of the best practice learnt from overseas Fellowships
• Organise annually the Robin Corbett Award for Prisoner Rehabilitation which recognises the efforts of small voluntary sector bodies in enabling prisoners to take more responsibility for their lives.
APPENDIX 1 - Values and principles

The values and principles that underpin the Prison Reform Trust’s work are:

- Prison should be reserved for those whose offending is so serious that they cannot serve their sentence in the community
- The Prison Reform Trust believes that the only justification for the sentence of imprisonment is the measured punishment of an individual for an offence; it is not right to use prison as a gateway to services or treatment, or to attempt to use prison in place of effective crime prevention
- Overcrowding in prisons undermines the effectiveness of education, rehabilitation and other programmes aimed at reducing reoffending
- Prisoners and their families should be treated with humanity and respect and have access to clear information and the opportunity to represent themselves and have their views taken into account
- The Prison Reform Trust believes that the Prison Service should provide constructive regimes, accessible to all prisoners, in decent, safe conditions that ensure the well-being of prisoners and prepare them for resettlement in the community
- Prison and probation staff need the support and resources necessary to reduce the risk of reoffending to the lowest possible level and to support ex-prisoners in resettling into employment, family and community life
- All victims of crime should be dealt with fairly and humanely and should have access to restorative justice if they so wish
- The general public, Parliament and those responsible for incarcerating offenders should be fully informed about the state and effectiveness of our criminal justice system
- As the most serious punishment in this country, imprisonment should remain the ultimate responsibility of the state.

APPENDIX 2 – Organisational effectiveness

Effective management, financial stability and an experienced and motivated team are critical to the success of the Prison Reform Trust’s strategic plan. All employees and volunteers should feel valued and supported by the organisation and be engaged in our strategy and values and principles.

The Prison Reform Trust ensures its independent voice is not compromised by neither seeking nor accepting government funding. Consequently, securing long-term funding from both charitable trusts and foundations and individual donors is crucial.

PRT will:

- Ensure high standards of leadership and management capability, motivation and development of all staff
- Promote the health and safety and wellbeing of staff and volunteers
- Ensure long term financial stability by developing and regularly reviewing a comprehensive fundraising strategy
- Develop and implement an environmental policy
- Develop evaluation procedures to monitor progress of programmes of work and to identify and record outcomes
- Employ and/or provide volunteering opportunities to former offenders, serving or former prisoners wherever possible
- Ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
APPENDIX 3 – Context

The Prison Reform Trust must take account of changes in the external environment when formulating its plans. With the Ministry of Justice having to make overall budget cuts of 23% by 2014/15, the coalition government’s plans for justice reform are having a significant impact on the commissioning and delivery of services in the criminal justice sector. Key reforms include:

- **Transforming Rehabilitation Strategy**
  - Extending rehabilitation to offenders released from short custodial sentences;
  - Competing delivery of rehabilitation services for low and medium risk offenders;
  - Public sector probation service reconfigured as a national service focused on managing high risk offenders;
  - Re-organisation of the adult prison estate and re-designation of a number of prisons in each of the 21 contract package area as “resettlement prisons”, to put in place a national ‘through the prison gate’ resettlement service;
- **Paying providers of services according to their results in reducing re-offending.**
- **Review of the women’s prison estate and establishment of an advisory board on women’s justice**
- **Review of the Incentive and Earned Privileges (IEP) scheme for adult male prisoners**
- **Transforming youth custody review of the under 18s secure estate**
- **Ongoing enactment of justice reforms in the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act and the Crime and Courts Act. These include:**
  - Abolition of the IPP sentence
  - Reforms to adult remand
  - Reforms to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act
- **Ongoing health reforms, including the establishment of a National Commissioning Board, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups, formed during in preparation for transferring full responsibility for health (including Offender Health) from April 2013**
- **Continued roll out of national liaison and diversion services for offenders with mental health needs and learning disabilities**
- **Mandating of prisoners eligible for Jobseekers Allowance into the DWP Work Programme**
- **The impact and influence of the Police and Crime Commissioners for England and Wales elected in November 2012.**
- **Further rollout of the Community Budgets and related pooled budgeting approaches across Government**
- **As a UK charity, the Prison Reform Trust is responding to the opportunities and challenges for change presented by justice reform strategies in Scotland and Northern Ireland.**