

# Criminal Justice

## Sheet B (Justice System)

### **(1) How much does your upbringing from early childhood influence your life and likelihood of criminal involvement?**

Implicit in prevention

How do we define crime?

Links between poverty and crime.

Hearing things when young that make sense later on.

Link between illiteracy, learning difficulties and crime statistics / people in prisons unable to read.

There are many sorts of crime, some which (some) affluent people consider acceptable eg tax evasion.

Early mores of the family 's attitude to behaviour and crime affects a child greatly, as does poverty.

Does life with violence / addiction / strict code of behaviour eg teetotal or pacifist provide a role model or a deterrent?

John Carnachan re early intervention.

- Impact of adults behaviour on respect
- Attitudes to authority – get what you need
- Early impressions – lasting effect
- Early criticisms – lasting effect

### **(2) How do we prevent crime from being the only route to wealth for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds?**

Time interest opportunity

Connectivity humanity – recognition of that in the other CARE NURTURE

What is value? What is wealth?

What is wealth, how is it perceived? Education, self-respect and respect.

Jobs!

Living simply – being an example.

Change the sense of need for more.

Challenging the consumer society.

Someone or something to love + be loved by.

Community beyond immediate family.

What is it to be a “successful” person -of models upheld, aspirations?

Engage with and model engagement with people for themselves from a young age – like them, respect them, listen to them.

Employment is a big help to provide people from disadvantaged backgrounds, but wealth is subjective.

Desperation to belong to either a family of gang comes from poor first years.

It also influences their perception of need and therefore wealth.

With drugs you either deal and steal or have to be very rich.

Showing by example that we can do things differently.

In whose interest is laws – property owner.

Offer alternatives:

- Meaningful work
- Aspirational values

- Imaginative education
- 'real' opportunities - mediated through inspirational individuals

**(3) Is the problem with the criminal justice system purely one of under-funding?**

To date what is wealth?

Wealth is not the only end game. Less privileged consumer society .

Barristers. Judges.

No. Badly financially balanced. Some lawyers / barristers top heavy salaries.

Prevention essential – sentencing.

Greed – barristers.

No, not only contributing factor.

Motivation / experience before working as a P.O. Business ethic is for profit therefore side-lining of safety / risk.

No – overextending.

**(4) Which is our priority, the under-privileged families which give rise to criminals or the prison system which traps them in that mould?**

Both.

- a) No
- b) Hope not!
- c) What to do about it?

Top end enormous salaries. Lower end minimal. Comes in too late – prevention neglected.

Sentencing illogical: Higher end (tax evasion, fraud etc). Shorter sentences than eg drugs, theft etc (smaller but more frequent offences by those with little money/life choices etc).

Its not just the prison system byt SOCIETY & inequality & justice which come before the prison.

Flavour of the month stuff.

b) devalued dehumanised

Sheet D – Justice System

**(1) How can you find a way out from the “bottom of the barrel” in the prison system?**

Rehab, rather than punitive.

How possible is it to help yourself – vulnerability, bullying

Education? Counselling psychology

Confronting your own demons – a window of insight opportunity vision – this may come from all sorts of sources eg restorative justice

Positive things, redemption. These things might happen with long sentences, less likely with short sentences which can only make things worse. These are more useless.

Gangs? A problem inside prisons. Territorial groups from different areas.

Prisoners fear opening up eg to psychologists / psychiatrists. Confidentiality issues.

“Old me” + “new me” ie prisoners can become a different kind of person with the right kind of support etc.

‘Revolving door’

Men to escape homelessness etc? Both men and women despair / self-loathing /hopelessness /can't function in straight world.  
Different people committing the same crime come from vastly different backgrounds and respond to restorative justice a variety of ways.  
RR has amended draft for one of the sentences on p.5:

## Question 2

### **(2) How can we influence public opinion into supporting rehabilitation in prison in the current climate?**

Challenging myths about prison.  
Influencing public opinion is SO difficult – political influence – social influence- media influence. Sentencing can create 'poor' attitudes.  
So much is subject to political whim.  
Changing scapegoating mind-set at present v difficult 'reactionary' 'entrenched'.  
Abolish prison for short sentences? Radical alternatives \_ people already been offered chances.  
Having 'good' stories, talking up the positives.  
Creating confidence in system.  
Need hope, contact with the outside. Broken family relationship.  
Good news stories do not make it to the newspapers and other media.  
With what messages can we respond to 'black and white' opinion? When is it worth responding?  
Why not a proper cost – benefit analysis! ie Rehabilitation saves money.

## Question 3

### **(3) What can you do to put something positive into the prison system?**

Be aware of prisons and prisoners!  
Bringing it into the light, acknowledge it!  
Campaign against short sentences, which often break up families.  
Maybe a project to support families with very young children where one parent is in prison and losing contact with the children.  
Concern over indefinite detention of 'failed asylum seekers'.  
Good news stories, employers willing to employ ex prisoners e.g. Timpsons.  
Just how can a Quaker get into a prison? i.e. as a volunteer of some kind, as part of an organisation that already exists e.g. REMEDI. Phoenix Trust (yoga).  
Get in there and befriend, confidential, genuine change has ripple effect on other prisoners.  
Nb we need to recognise that prisoners feel unsafe in the prison environment.  
Not everyone can go into prisons or would want to.  
Quakers need to be better informed on ways in which we can be accepted in prisons as a volunteer, or just to worship. We could get into prison under other auspices with different (non-Quaker) groups.  
Quakers can apply pressure politically re the criminal system as well as spiritually in prison visits, Circles of support and as Quaker chaplains.  
Be yourself with prisoners.  
What is going on? Disproportionate number of Muslims in British prisons.