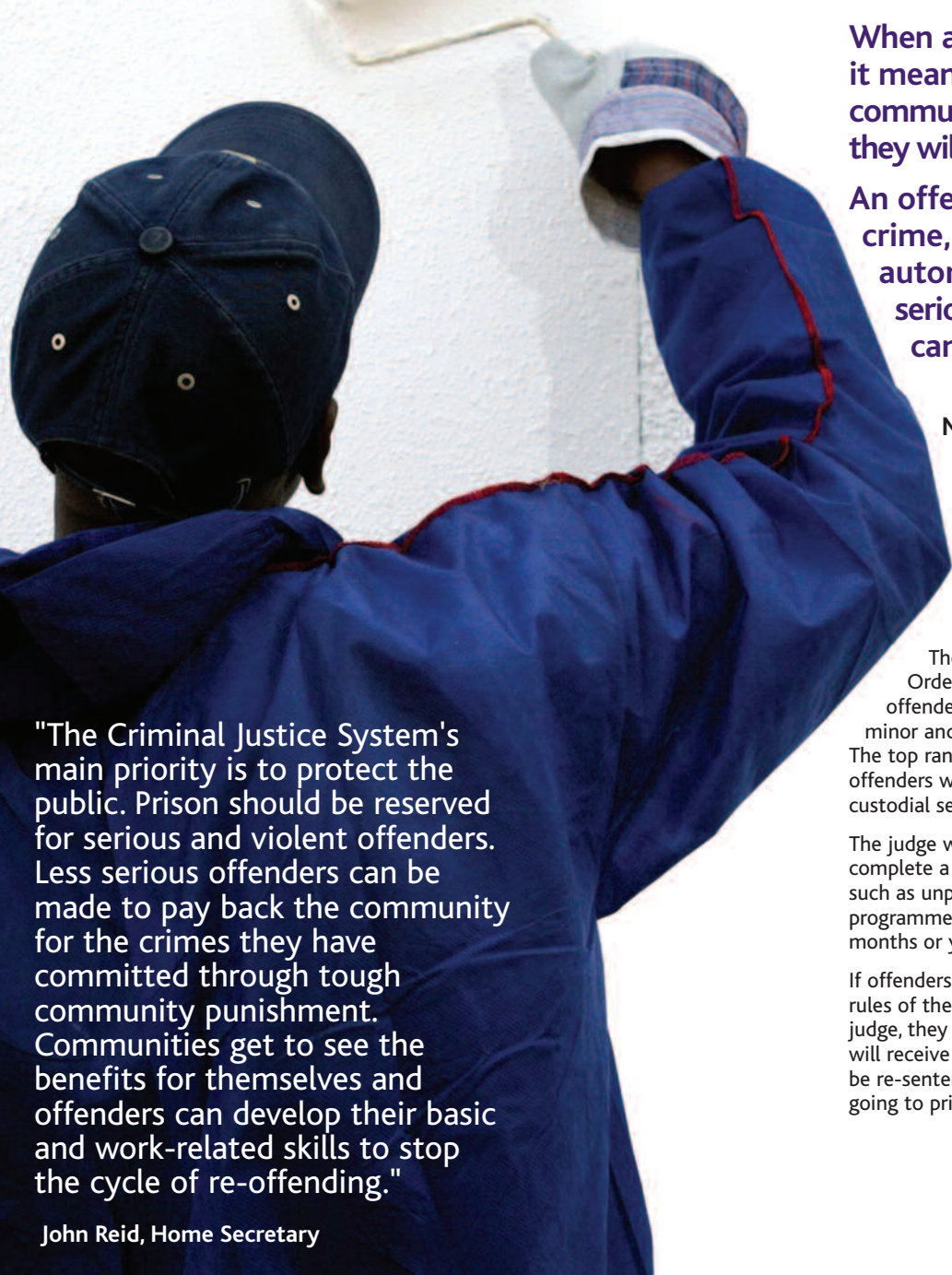


# DELIVERING JUSTICE: LONDON



When a court gives offenders a Community Order, it means they undertake their punishment in the community rather than going to jail. During this time they will be monitored by the probation service.

An offender who commits a violent or serious crime, such as grievous bodily harm or murder, will automatically be sent to jail. However, for less serious, non-violent offenders, a Community Order can often be a more effective option than prison.<sup>1</sup>

## MAKING THE PUNISHMENT FIT

The decision on the nature and severity of a punishment is guided by how serious the offence committed is and the risk of re-offending.

The lowest range of Community Order would be for those offenders whose crime was relatively minor and persistent e.g. shop lifting. The top range would be for those offenders who have just fallen short of a custodial sentence e.g. drug offences.

The judge will order the offender to complete a number of punishments, such as unpaid work or a drug treatment programme, for a number of hours, months or years.

If offenders fail to turn up or break the rules of the Community Order set by the judge, they will be sent back to court, will receive additional penalties and may be re-sentenced, with the possibility of going to prison.

## TOUGH ON CRIME

Community Orders are tough and challenging. Offenders are ordered to complete a number of requirements which are a punishment and a step to understanding why they committed their crime, as well as helping to stop re-offending. Each offender is supervised so their freedom is restricted, and in some cases they have to adhere to curfews. These curtailing of liberties whilst still in the community can mean offenders have to explain their lack of freedom to family and friends causing further embarrassment and shame.

Community Orders have been shown to be more effective at reducing re-offending than a short-term prison sentence.<sup>1</sup> Offenders are taught skills to help them gain employment as well as kick drug and drink addictions. Unpaid work also means the community benefits, with offenders working on projects such as litter clearance and graffiti removal in local neighbourhoods, work which otherwise wouldn't be carried out.

"The Criminal Justice System's main priority is to protect the public. Prison should be reserved for serious and violent offenders. Less serious offenders can be made to pay back the community for the crimes they have committed through tough community punishment. Communities get to see the benefits for themselves and offenders can develop their basic and work-related skills to stop the cycle of re-offending."

John Reid, Home Secretary

**1,058,823 HOURS OF UNPAID WORK UNDERTAKEN BY OFFENDERS IN LONDON, AN INCREASE OF 47% COMPARED TO TWO YEARS AGO<sup>2</sup>**

**£5.7 MILLION 'WORTH' OF UNPAID WORK BENEFITS LONDON EACH YEAR<sup>3</sup>**

**14,332 COMMUNITY ORDERS IMPOSED IN LONDON OVER THE LAST YEAR<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Re-offending of adults: Results from the 2003 cohort. 2006: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate

<sup>2</sup> Probation Statistics 2005-2006: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate

<sup>3</sup> Calculated according to the National Minimum wage of £5.35 per hour

# BENEFITING YOUR COMMUNITY: HOW OFFENDERS ARE PAYING BACK LONDON



## REGENERATION IN HOUNSLOW

Offenders have been working to make Hounslow a better place for residents to live. Manual work has largely focused on making communal areas and pathways cleaner and safer. Litter, fly tipping, graffiti and overgrown vegetation are removed and as much as possible recycled.

In Feltham, on the Westmacott Estate, the probation service has received immensely positive feedback. People are no longer afraid to take shortcuts to the shops; all ages are able to play sports without rubbish underfoot; dog owners and cyclists are grateful for paths free of broken glass.

### **Noveen Phillips, Hounslow Parks Department**

"The response from the estate has been great. The residents really appreciate the work that has been done. Before the groups of offenders came, people were scared of the undergrowth and dark corners, but now they are a lot less wary."

## TOTTENHAM ENGINE HOUSE

Listed Grade II by English Heritage, the Engine House and Beam Pumping Engine at the Markfield Sewage Works in Tottenham were in a severe state of disrepair before offenders became involved.

The old sewage works were overgrown with trees and undergrowth; concrete boulders littered the site, while the pumping house itself was treated as a dumping ground, full of metal machinery and junk.

Offenders were brought in to clear the nearby land of debris and litter, remove undergrowth and restore the pumping house to its original state by scraping and re-painting the walls. As a result, the first school party of 60 local pupils will visit the site at the end of March.

### **Ken Breton, Treasurer of Markfield Sewage Works Museum**

"The site has been completely landscaped thanks to the probation service. The offenders cleared the land and pumping house quickly and efficiently, and as a result, we can now open our doors to the public once again. The whole community can now benefit from the hard work undertaken"

## BARNET HOSPITALS

Every Tuesday, offenders undertake work at Edgware Hospital. This involves landscaping and sweeping patient rest gardens, painting railings, as well as sanding and varnishing garden benches for visitors to enjoy. Offenders have also helped to paint the mental health wards, colour coding the clinic's walls to aid patients' rehabilitation.

### **Paul Mitchell, Barnet Hospital**

"We would never have been able to achieve such a level of cleanliness at the hospital without the work which has been done by the offenders. The efficiency and the effort they have put into the project has been terrific. The work has made a real difference to the hospital's surrounding and most importantly, the patients think it is great. Everyone benefits."

## OFFENDER EXPERIENCES

### **Paul, Hounslow**

"The sudden lack of freedom I had was the biggest shock," says Paul. "This made me sit up and listen and realise just how tough the next year was going to be. Knowing that I couldn't do what I wanted and being under supervision was difficult to accept. Also having to explain to my friends and family that I couldn't do things with them was very hard."

### **Sue, Tooting**

"Having the tag fitted was the toughest part of my punishment. It has such a stigma attached to it and I am so ashamed of what I've done and that it has led to this," Sue says. "Being told to be at a certain place at a certain time is also hard. Always having it at the back of my mind, I am constantly reminded of what I've done and how wrong it was."

### **Derek, Wandsworth**

"Having to talk about my problem and addiction was incredibly tough – it opened up things that I hadn't thought about before," Derek says. "Not only that but I had to go away – I had to move out of home and into a rehab centre. Explaining to my family where I was going was the worst bit – seeing them realise the extent of my problem was so upsetting. It was a very hard period of my life."

## FOR FURTHER INFO

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Home Office

National Probation Service  
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