

We will:

- ♦ Prioritise prison for dangerous offenders and those who commit the most serious offences with increased use of tough non-custodial punishments including weekend or evening custody, curfews, unpaid work in the community and GPS tagging. This will enable us to introduce a presumption against short-term sentences that will help reduce the prison population and cut crime.
- ♦ Promote Community Justice Panels and other local schemes designed to stop problems from escalating.
- ♦ Extend the role of the Youth Justice Board to all offenders aged under 21, give them the power to commission mental health services and devolve youth custody budgets to Local Authorities.
- ♦ Create a Women's Justice Board, modelled on the Youth Justice Board, to improve rehabilitation of female offenders.
- ♦ Reform prisons so they become places of work, rehabilitation and learning, with offenders receiving an education and skills assessment within one week, starting a relevant course and programme of support within one month and able to complete courses on release.
- ♦ Improve prison governance and accountability with a new value added measure to assess progress in reducing reoffending, providing education and tackling addiction and mental health issues, enabling good prisons to earn greater autonomy. We will strengthen the independence of the Chief Inspectors of Prisons and Probation.
- ♦ Provide experts in courts and police stations to identify where mental health or a drug problem is behind an offender's behaviour so they can be dealt with in a way that is appropriate. We will pilot US-style drug and alcohol courts.
- ♦ Strengthen the 'realistic prospect of custody' test to reduce the use of remand for suspected offenders who can be safely monitored in the community and are unlikely to receive a prison sentence if found guilty.

Liberal Democrats will adopt the default position that – unless there are strong reasons to the contrary in specific cases – public servants rather than commercial organisations should provide detention, prison, immigration enforcement and secure units.