

Written evidence from a serving prisoner

Please find enclosed my submission to the select committee inquiries into mental health within the justice system. I also include a statement entitled 'The purpose of imprisonment'.

I would be delighted to answer any specific questions you have and can be contacted with regret at one of the prison addresses above.

ENC 1) The mental health in prison/community

2) The mental health provisions in prison

3) The purpose of imprisonment

The mental health in prison/community

The police are not in the slightest bit empathic to those who have been a victim of crimes. I have been a victim of sexual abuse, bullying, threats, discrimination and was told in no uncertain terms by West Mercia Police.

"As you are offender, if you wanted to report something, firstly we would not believe you and then would do nothing about it"

Therefore my issues have never been officially reported to the police. I have reported it to the IICSA.

Ironically the alleged victims who are responsible for the false allegations for which I am in prison for now have criminal records for threats to kill, drugs and dishonesty.

Therefore my emotional well-being has been very much affected and there is zero support or counselling available. I have never had any kind of mental health condition before.

The mental health provisions in prison

- If you have a drug habit then the prison mental health team give those people 100% attention on a very regular basis
- If you need counselling for any kind of bereavement or loss there is zero.
- I have significant experience of dealing with those who come to prison for the first time and those who have self-harmed
- In general those come to prison for the first time have a misconception there will be support or counselling of which there is nothing, support comes from fellow inmates
- Those who self-harm are largely ignored and told by staff to get on with it and grow up. Again support given to these people comes from fellow inmates, very little from staff

The purpose of imprisonment

So to what extent does imprisonment meet its purpose?

One could say 100% it does, but you need to establish what that purpose is!

Doing what you have always done will give you the same result you have always got – so to lock up people for weeks, months or years will give you that same result – Angry, homeless, jobless People who have lost hope and in many cases the potential to be the person they deserve or have the ability to be.

Before coming to prison I had never hear of Mamba, spice, self-harm or the dark webb but have now come into contact with countless people who are professional at all of these aforementioned activities.

So is the purpose of prison to educate people in dangerous and detrimental ways? I think not, so why do we keep sending people to prison.

The MP and former Justice Minister Ken Clarke said that “prisons should not have revolving doors”, so how do we now stop that revolving door revolving.

Firstly the courts need to see prison as a very last resort. By sending people to prison you actually create more victims – by removing parents from children, carers from those who they look after, and burdening the benefit system as a result.

To keep someone locked up costs thousands of pounds, money that would be better spent on education, training and housing.

The system also needs to treat people as people and not just a number or someone filling a space on a wing.

So does imprisonment meet its purpose, short answer **NO**.

8 June 2021

Further written evidence

Please find enclosed one small addition to my previous submission to the Justice Select Committee’s questions on Mental Health provisions.

Mental Health Prison to Community Pathway

The mental health provisions in prisons is poor unless you have a drug issue. There is no counselling for life issues, abuse or bereavement, so many people come to prison and leave having had no support to resolve their issues. There is no signposting to external agencies and that help on the outside costs significant amounts of money – between £40 and £100 an hour – money someone just released from prison does not have!

Therefore the rate of recidivism is high and a clear plan of help and or support would without doubt reduce that recidivism.

Someone who has been a victim themselves does not always go on to create victims but that trauma the person endured does have an effect on their thinking and behaviour. Being believed and supported would go some way to breaking that cycle.

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