



Looking at punishments for people who commit crime

Ideas for change



The report is an easy read version of a longer report called the Independent Sentencing Review.

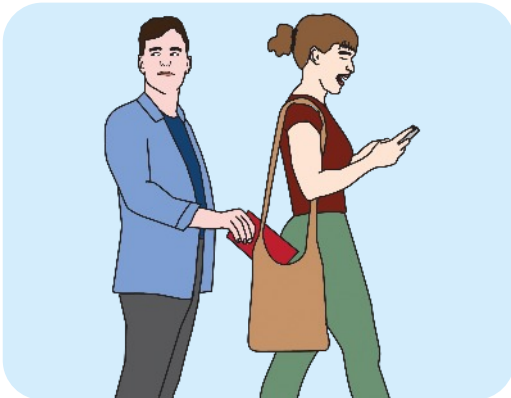
What this report is about



This report is about **sentencing** people who have committed a crime.



Sentencing means the punishment for breaking the law.



Breaking the law means committing a crime like stealing or hurting someone.



This report is from David Gauke who used to be a Minister at the Ministry of Justice. It is also from a group of 6 people who work on things to do with sentencing, crime and victims.

The problems with sentencing



Prisons

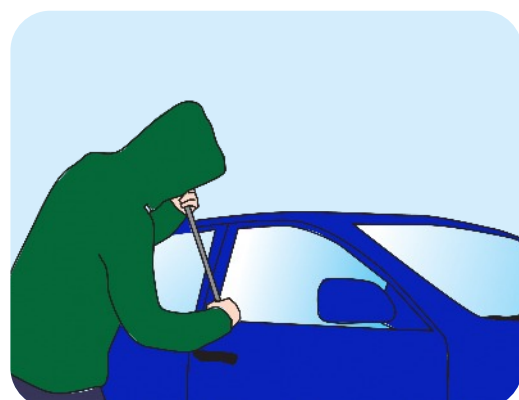
People who carry out a serious crime are sent to prison.



At the moment, prisons have too many people in them. This is called **overcrowding**.



When there is overcrowding, many prisons find it difficult to support prisoners with activities or learning skills. This does not help prisoners get ready to leave prison.



Many people leave prison and commit more crime. What they need is the right support to not commit any more crimes.



Prisons cost a lot of money. They cost even more money when there are lots of people in them.



Community sentences

We need more **community sentences**. These are punishments that happen in a person's local area. They include:



- doing unpaid work



- treatment for mental health, drug and alcohol problems



- having to meet with a **probation officer**

A **probation officer** is someone who supports people who have committed a crime by helping them to follow rules, checking to see how they are doing and helping them to stay out of trouble.



- having to stay in the house at certain times



Community sentences can help people sort out their problems and help stop them from committing crimes.



At the moment, community sentences are not used enough.

The 9 ideas to make sentencing better



The information below talks about ideas from David Gauke and the group of 6 people who work on things to do with sentencing, crime and victims.



We have 9 new ideas for making changes to sentencing. Speaking to lots of people helped us to find these 9 ideas, and these people include:



- **victims**

A **victim** is someone who has been hurt by a crime



- **prisoners**



- ex-prisoners



- staff



- the public



These 9 ideas will mean less people go to prison, but the most dangerous people will still go to prison.



Idea 1: Use sentencing to help cut crime

We should give more help to victims of crime.



We should make sure our punishments stop people from committing a crime again.



This is important because if there are less crimes, there will be less victims and people being hurt.



People who commit serious crimes, like violence, will still go to prison.

Idea 2: Make community sentences better

Courts should use more community sentences.



Some community sentences are better at supporting and punishing people than others. If the right types of community sentences are given to the right people, this could mean there is less crime.



There should be good support for people with drug and alcohol problems and mental health issues. This could help to stop them committing a crime.



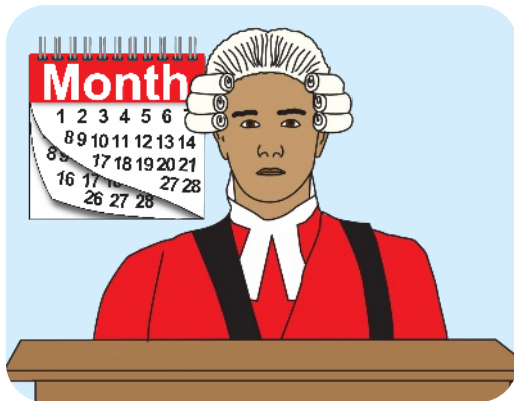
Probation officers should be allowed to support each person in the right way, to help them stop committing crimes.



Idea 3: Use prison as the last choice



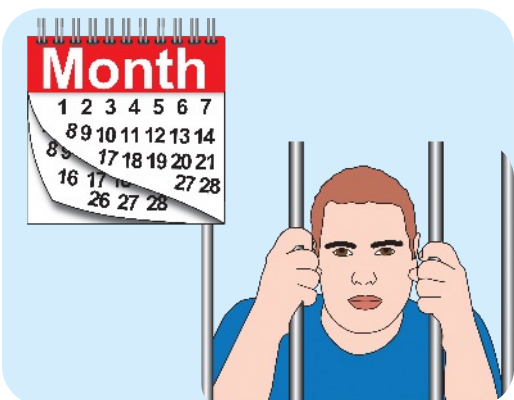
Some people who could go to prison for a short time should get a community sentence instead. This could help them get the right support.



Use more **deferred sentencing** for some people. This means the judge waits before giving the final sentence.



Deferred sentencing gives people time to get help and stay out of trouble.



If they do well, they could get a shorter sentence.

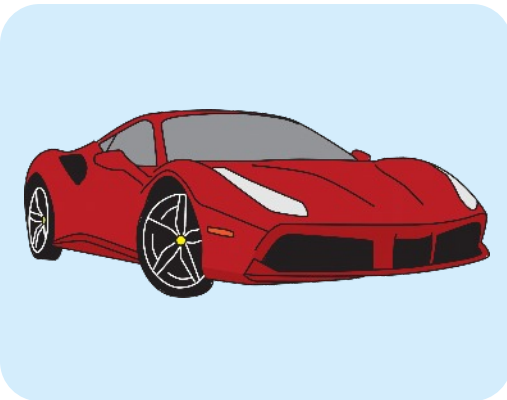


People who commit crime can make lots of money and buy property.

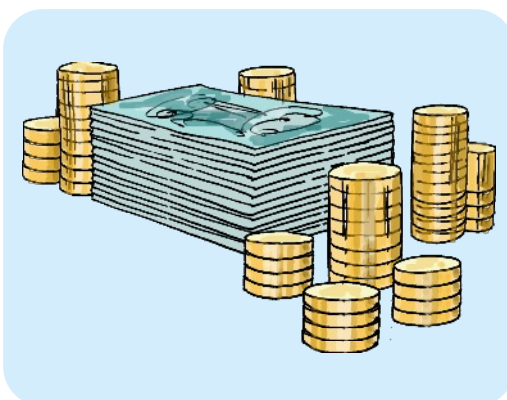


We should take more money and property from people who get rich from crime. This could mean taking away:

- houses



- cars



- money.



Idea 4: Help people move safely from prison to the community

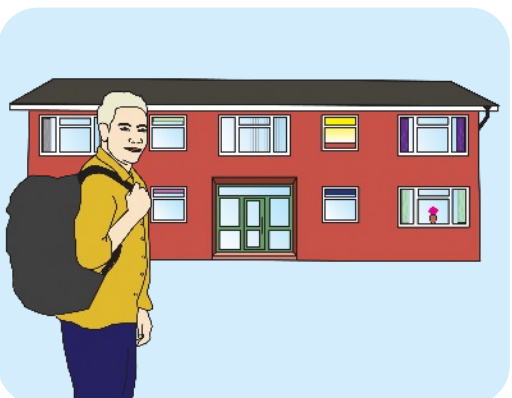
People in prison should be able to leave earlier if they behave well.



Prisoners who leave early must follow rules. They can go back to prison if they break the rules.



We should use open prisons more for some people. These are prisons where people can leave for work or training. They are for prisoners who are not a risk to people.



Give people somewhere to stay after prison. This could help stop people from committing crime.

Idea 5: Make sure victims get support

Many victims find court and sentencing difficult to understand.



Victims should get the support they need more easily.



Clear information about sentencing should be shared with everyone.



People should know how long the person who hurt them stays in prison.





There should be more support for women and girls who face abuse. This means violence and being touched in places they don't want to be touched.



Victims of serious crimes should get written information about what the judge said in court. This helps them understand what happened and why the sentence was given.



Abusers should be watched closely in the community. They must follow rules to help keep people safe.



We need more special courts to deal with **domestic abuse**.

Domestic abuse means hurting a partner or family member.



A special court will know how to support victims of this abuse properly.



Judges and probation officers should get more training about violence against women. This could help judges give people the right punishment and help probation officers manage people properly.

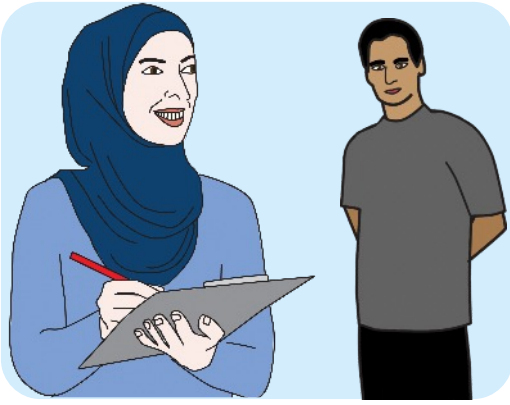


The **Probation Service** should get more support to do their work.

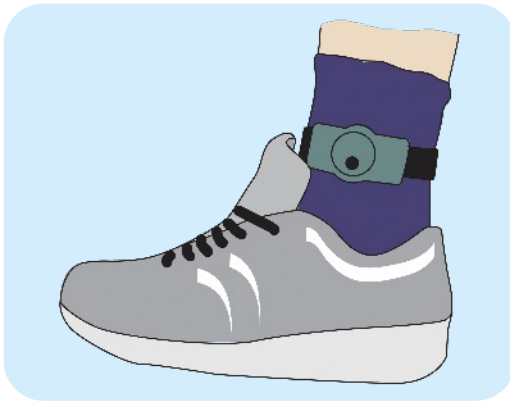
The **Probation Service** supports and watches people after prison or a community sentence.



They check that people follow the rules and help them stay out of trouble.



They must watch abusers, including those who harm women sexually to make sure people are kept safe.

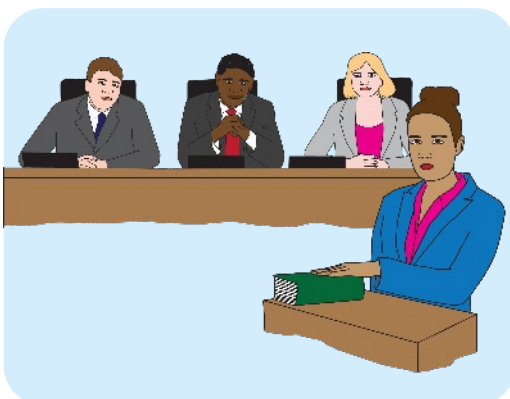


They can use electronic tags to track people. They should have the support they need to do this.

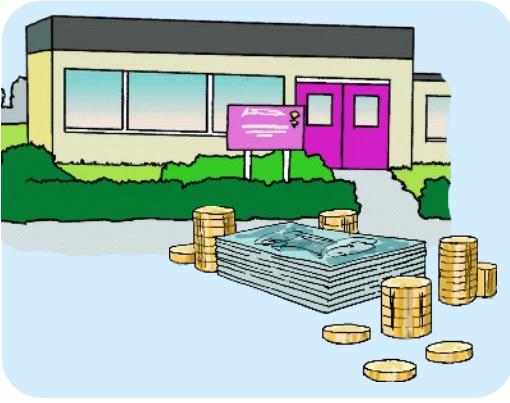


Idea 6: Give the right help to different people

Different people need different help to stop breaking the law.



Special courts should be used more for people who keep breaking the law. They can work with people in the best ways to help people change.



Women's centres should get money to keep helping people.



Women with mental health problems and addiction to drug and alcohol should get support with their health.



Make sure older prisoners get proper health care in prison.



Let older prisoners out early if it is safe for people.



Prisoners from different countries should be sent home faster.



Some sex offenders might get medicine which could help them to not carry out more crimes.



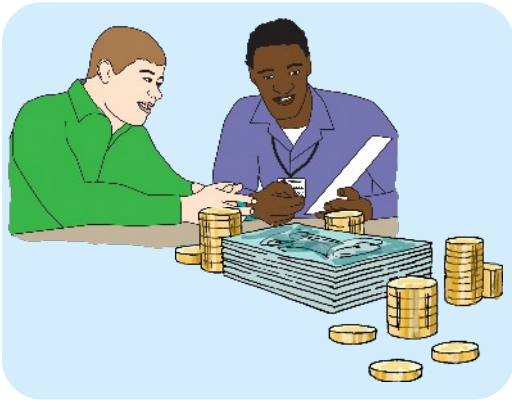
They would also need to have meetings with a probation officer and could go on a **programme**.

A **programme** is made up of activities and support to help someone stop carrying out crime.



People with addictions to alcohol and drugs could get new medicines to help them get better.

Idea 7: Make the Probation Service stronger

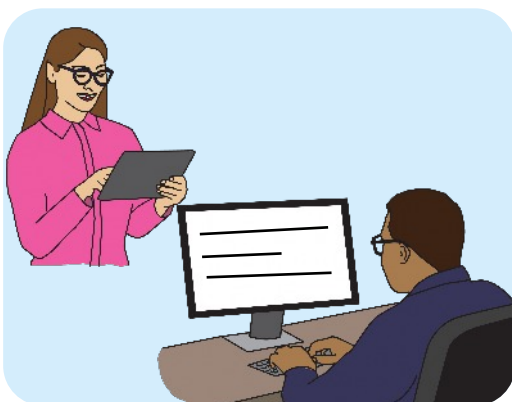


The Probation Service should get more money to help staff support people who have committed a crime.



Probation staff will work with charities to support people on community placements.

Charities need more money to support people on these placements.



We should use more technology like computers and **apps** to make office work quicker. This gives staff more time to support people.

Apps are programmes that work on mobile phones or tablets that help you do certain things.

Idea 8: Use technology in a smarter way



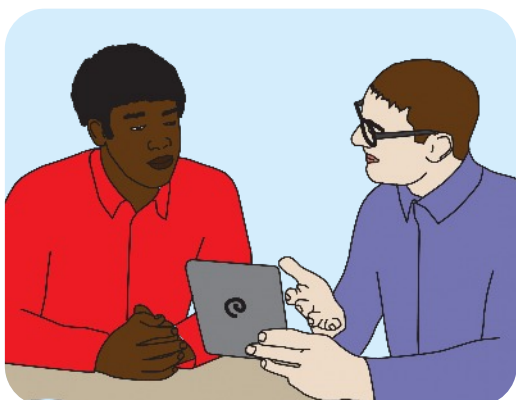
Technology means things like computers, apps, and machines that help people.



We should use technology to keep people safe and help them stay out of trouble. This includes tags to track people and apps to remind them about appointments.



Different services like the police and Probation Service should improve how they share information about people. This will help them work together to keep people safe.



Computer experts should use **Artificial Intelligence** to make work easier for probation officers. We call **Artificial Intelligence 'AI'**.



AI is a type of computer program. Some AI can learn from data and help with tasks. For example, AI can help probation officers by doing paperwork or finding useful information.

Idea 9: Plan for the long term



Set up a group of **experts** to help with ideas about sentencing.

Experts are people that know a lot about things.



The group should be independent. This means they are not told what to say by the Government.



The Government must say if new laws will change the number of people in prison.

What the words mean

Apps - programmes that work on mobile phones or tablets they help you do certain things.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) - is a type of computer program that can learn from data. It helps people solve problems in smart ways.

Breaking the law – carrying out a crime like stealing or hurting someone.

Community sentences - punishments that happen in a person's local area.

Deferred sentencing - the judge waits before giving the final sentence

Domestic abuse - hurting a partner or family member.

Experts - people that know a lot about things.

Overcrowding - when there are too many people in prison.

Probation Service - supports and watches people after they leave prison or during a community sentence.

Probation officer - someone who supports people who have committed a crime by helping them to follow rules, checking to see how they are doing, and helping them to stay out of trouble.

Programme - activities and support to help someone stop carrying out crime.

Sentencing - punishment for breaking the law. Things like stealing or hurting someone.

Tag - an electronic box used to track a person. It is worn on their ankle.

Victim - someone who has been hurt by a crime.

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