

13 January 2005

Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill strengthens correctional services and puts sense into sentencing

Proposed new legislation aimed at bringing about further reductions in crime and improving protection for the public was today unveiled by the Government.

The Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill builds on reforms already underway through the establishment of the National Offender Management Service and changes to the sentencing framework. The Bill will:

- Establish the aims of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the core offender management function;
- Give the Home Secretary greater powers to direct how probation boards can contract with the private or voluntary sector;
- Extend the use of electronic monitoring for offenders on community sentences and bail; and polygraph tests for sex offenders on licence;
- Introduce a new day fine scheme to help restore confidence in the use of the fine as a credible and effective punishment;
- Extend the remit of the Sentencing Guidelines Council to include consideration of the capacity of the correctional services;
- Fulfil a long-standing Government commitment to place the Ombudsman for NOMS on a statutory footing.
- Give directors and prison custody officers in contracted-out prisons some powers already possessed by those in public sector establishments, such as holding adjudications and authorising the use of segregation.

Paul Goggins, the Minister for Correctional Services said;

“Reducing crime and protecting the public remain the Government’s top priorities. This Bill, which establishes both the aims of NOMS and the core function of offender management, will help achieve these goals. We will also ensure that we are getting the best services from the best providers by placing contestability at the heart of NOMS.

“The greater use of new technology and other sentencing reforms will put us in a better position to ensure offenders receive effective punishments whilst ensuring that prison is reserved for the most dangerous and persistent offenders.”

Baroness Scotland, Minister for Criminal Justice, said:

“We refocused the Criminal Justice system so it better addressed the needs of the victim through the Criminal Justice Act 2003. Now the Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill allows us to build on these reforms. The measures in the Bill will ensure that sentences are managed with a consistency and rigour that will really challenge the individual offender to change their ways and lead a law abiding life on the conclusion of that sentence.”

Notes to editors

1. The Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill was introduced to the House of Lords on 12 January 2005 and published today (13 January)
2. The Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill and explanatory notes are available online at www.parliament.uk or from the Home Office press office on 020 7273 4545
3. The Home Office published the Carter Report on Correctional Services and its response, *Reducing Crime; Changing Lives* in January 2004 (Home Office press notice **04)