

A new approach to crime

This week the government made more announcements about dealing with crime. They tell us that the Prime Minister has ordered an urgent review into the prison sentences of violent and sexual offenders to ensure the public are properly protected from the most dangerous criminals. The review, beginning immediately, will focus on violent and sexual offenders, assessing if their sentences truly reflect the severity of their crimes. It will look at whether we need to change the law so they cannot be let out if they have not served their full time. Finally, it will examine how we can break the vicious cycle of prolific, repeat offenders.

This review is part of wider attack on crime, recruiting 20,000 new police officers, creating 10,000 new prison places and increasing stop and search powers. The aim is to keep dangerous criminals off the streets.

The new prison places will come from building new modern, efficient prisons which will provide better opportunities to reform criminals, meaning less re-offending and a lower burden on the taxpayer. Offering strengthened stop and search powers will give the police full support in combatting serious violence and keeping people safe.

The government will also publish draft guidance on measures in the Offensive Weapons Act, paving the way for new criminal offences that will help to stop knives and dangerous acids making their way into criminal use.

Are there other features you would like to see in an effective counter crime strategy? Clearly strong policing of our borders to keep out international criminals would be welcome. I also favour more work on rehabilitation and non custodial sentences for lesser crimes where there is no violence involved and where there is good chance of avoiding re offending.