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Here are current issues in criminal justice, Human Rights, prisons and social problems. Follow the links (with control and click) for fuller information.

**1 Children in prison more likely to have special needs** More than 30% of children who entered custody in 2018-19 had special educational needs or disabilities. Recent figures point to the inability of schools and public services to provide properly for such children. It is suggested that the use of prisons for such children compounds their problems. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/children-prison-special-educational-needs-jail-uk-a9034846.html>

**2 Lady Hale questions Bill in Parliament** The President of the Supreme Court has taken an unusual step by questioning a Bill before Parliament in breach of usual UK constitutional procedures. She has questioned financial provisions in the Divorce (Financial Provision) Bill as more threatening to the security of the family than “no – fault divorce. See <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/hale-risks-political-storm-by-questioning-legislation-before-parliament/5070911.article>

**3 Justice Secretary criticises short sentences as ineffective against reoffending** In a final speech before leaving the cabinet as Boris Johnson became Prime Minister, David Gauke MP used new figures about reoffending to call for less use of short sentences without evidence. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jul/18/david-gauke-urges-moj-successor-to-scrap-short-prison-sentences>

**4 Home Office put slavery victims in detention** Charities have accused the Home Office of putting modern slavery victims in locked detention centres rather than “safeguard” them with safe house accommodation and financial support. See <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-modern-slavery-victims-trafficking-immigration-detention-labour-exploitation-advisory-a9019361.html>

**5 Age of Criminal Responsibility. Time to increase?** An interesting Research Paper and Bill are before Parliament on the age a child can be prosecuted. In English Law, the age is 10 years. In 1998, the legal theory of “doli incapax”, requiring the prosecution to prove a child below the age of 14 knew his or her actions were wrong, was removed from English criminal law. The Scottish Parliament proposes an age of 12, more close to the age of 14 in use by most other European countries. The Bill is in the Commons. See <https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7687>

**6 Viewers of child images should be educated before being prosecuted** Judges and police have complained about the number of prosecutions of defendants without previous convictions for viewing unlawful child images. A retired judge has chaired a committee of Justice with a report recommending “education and rehabilitation” before prosecution and so relieving the burden on the criminal justice system. See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48579057>

**7 Legal Aid Act 1949: Celebrating 70 years with 70 cases** The Justice Alliance campaign group has produced a booklet on 70 cases successful only because legal aid was available in the 70 years since the Act. Justice Alliance opposes the cuts to the legal aid budget. See <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/70-years-70-cases-campaigners-pay-tribute-to-legal-aid/5071065.article>

**8 Howard League finds prison overcrowding has clear relationship with violence** The Howard League has analysed the Government's own figures and finds 18,000 prisoners are "cooped up like battery hens in overcrowded cells". The overcrowded prisons are likely to have high violence of violence. Five men's prisons are subject to "urgent notifications" requiring urgent remedial action by Government ministers. See <https://howardleague.org/news/revealed-the-scale-of-prison-overcrowding-in-england-and-wales/>

**9 Home Office will not end indefinite detention of immigrants** Parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights, with much backing from many sources, has called for a 28 day limit on the detention of immigrants. It describes the present detention system as "arbitrary, unfair and breaching Human Rights". The Home Affairs Select Committee had found "serious problems with almost every element of the system" and that a 28 day limit would save £35 million each year. But the Home Office has replied that a 28 day limit would "severely constrain the ability to maintain a balanced and effective immigration system..." See <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/news/home-office-refuses-to-end-indefinite-detention-of-immigrants/5071215.article>

**10 Number of homeless in London rises by 18% in 2018-19** Rough-sleeping in London has risen to new heights in the past year. More than 8,500 people, 5200 new to homelessness, had lived on the streets in the year. More than one third complained of loss of private rented housing. The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, described it as a "national disgrace" and due to welfare reforms and lack of social housing. He said the figure included immigrants whom the Government refused to help. The equivalent figure in 2009-10 was 3,673. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/jun/19/london-rough-sleeping-hits-record-high-with-18-rise-in-2018-19>

**11 "Unsafe and incomplete" evidence used to revoke student visas** The Home Office has been accused of using "confused, misleading, incomplete and unsafe" evidence to revoke tens of thousands of the visas of international students in 2015. The report of the all-party parliamentary group on Tests of English for International Communication says expert advice was ignored and almost 34,000 students were accused of cheating and told to leave the UK. The students were left with no effective remedy short of legal action. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/home-office-english-tests-foreign-students-toeic-scandal-evidence-appg-report-a9008211.html>

**12 New ID verification system under consultation** The Government has issued a consultation calling for ideas on improving identity verification, to replace passports and utility bills. It ends on 15.9.19. See <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/law/whitehall-ponders-new-identity-verification-scheme/5071068.article>

**13 Please Send Your News for PSAP News** Send it with a link to fuller information to [bruce\\_chilton@hotmail.com](mailto:bruce_chilton@hotmail.com)

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