

# COUNCIL OF MEMBERS Briefing

**SKILLS for JUSTICE**  
Developing skills for safer communities



## Issue 5

December 2010

### Christmas Bumper Edition

Just like we are after Christmas dinner, this month's briefing is stuffed full and bursting at the seams. Tuck in...



### This month

Green Papers galore & much, much more!

- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill
- Localism
- Breaking the Cycle

Tuition Fees - Pass or fail?  
Legal Aid Reform



### Countries -

Wales  
Scotland  
Northern Ireland

### Plus -

Skills for Justice news



### Council News

Coming up...

Council of Members meeting -  
**NEW DATE!!**

January Working Group

Your views - Tell us what you think



For more information please contact Colette

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## Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill was introduced to the House of Commons on 30 November 2010. It builds on the proposals made in the Review 'Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting Police and the People' which will have an impact on forces and the wider criminal justice system across England.

The key aims are to reduce central bureaucracy, increase democratic accountability and empower local communities by making the police service more accountable to local people.

The bill includes the following provisions:

- Replacing police authorities with directly elected police and crime commissioners to be introduced from May 2012
- An overhaul of the Licensing Act, more power to police and local authorities to tackle premises that are causing problems and permitting local authorities to charge more for late-night licences to contribute towards the cost of policing the late-night economy
- Temporary bans for new psychoactive substances, so-called 'legal highs', to be introduced until the health issues are considered by independent experts. This aims to ensure that the legislative process can respond quickly to emerging harmful substances
- Restoring the right to non-violent protest around Parliament, repealing sections 132-138 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act (SOCPA) 2005 to ensure that Parliament Square remains accessible to all and prohibiting encampments and other disruptive activity on Parliament Square.



Concerns that the elected police commissioners will politicise the police and cuts will affect fraud, IT crime, organised crime and child protection units have been raised by commentators.

Police Minister Nick Herbert has defended the measures, claiming that there is "no simple link" between police numbers and crime rates, and what "really matters" is how officers are deployed. Home Secretary Theresa May confirmed that £650m will be spent over four years on a national cyber-security programme.

The [Police Grant](#) has now been announced.

To view the latest version of the bill go to the [Parliament website](#).

## Localism

On Monday 13 December 2010, Eric Pickles announced new reforms for local authorities across England, intended to shift power from central Whitehall departments back to local communities by giving them more freedoms and flexibilities to act in the best interests of their area.

The plans include:

- Putting local communities in charge of the look and feel of their locality through a new system of neighbourhood planning
- Freezing council tax for 2011-12
- Giving local groups new rights to protect their local shops, pubs, libraries and leisure centres through a Community Right to Buy.

The Government have said that the Bill will make provision about:

- the functions and procedures of local and certain other authorities
- the functions of the Local Commission for Administration in England
- enabling the recovery of financial sanctions imposed by the Court of Justice of the European Union on the United Kingdom from local and public authorities
- local government finance
- town and country planning, the Community Infrastructure Levy and the authorisation of nationally significant infrastructure projects
- social and other housing
- regeneration in London.

To discuss your thoughts on localism with other Members please go to the discussion page on the [Council of Members](#) website.

To read the bill follow this [link](#)

## Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders

"I believe that serious criminals should be in prison. I have never met a sane person who wishes to disturb that. Prisons also should be places of hard work and industry and community sentences must be credible and robust. Criminals must also be reformed so that when they finish their sentences they do not simply return to crime, creating more misery for victims."

**Right Honourable Ken Clarke MP**

This wide ranging Green Paper was published on 7 December 2010, with specific impacts on the criminal justice system in England.

The proposals include:

- making offenders work hard through the discipline of regular working hours in prison, more demanding tasks in the community, and greater use of tough curfew requirements
- increasing reparation to victims through greater use of restorative justice, implementing the Prisoners' Earnings Act and reform to make offenders directly compensate victims of crime
- rehabilitating offenders by getting them off drugs and benefits and into honest work
- introducing payment-by-results so that independent providers will be rewarded for reducing reoffending – this will be paid for by the savings that this will generate within the criminal justice system
- simplifying the sentencing framework to make it more comprehensible to the public, enhancing judicial discretion and reforming the indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP)
- improving youth justice to prevent and tackle offending by young people and stop them becoming the career criminals of tomorrow
- working with communities to reduce crime, with local people playing a more central role in criminal justice – moving the focus from the centre to local areas; creating more opportunities for other providers to deliver services and increasing transparency so that local communities are better able to hold services to account.

At least six new projects with voluntary and other groups, paid by results, will establish principles that will be applied across the country by the end of the parliament.

We will be compiling a response to this green paper in the coming months. Get involved and tell us what you think via the Council website.

## Controversial Tuition Fees Vote - Results in...

Students, parents, and school-leavers took to the streets this month in protest. So what's it all about?

The previous Labour government commissioned a review (The Browne Review) into the funding of higher education in England. The review was completed in October 2010 and recommended, amongst other things, that the cap on tuition fees be removed.

After careful deliberation, the Coalition government in England decided that the recommendations should largely be implemented. They did not however, completely remove the cap on tuition fees, opting to cap instead at £9,000 per year. They added a concession that any university charging above £6,000 will have to demonstrate that they are exceptionally successful in their methods of widening access to disadvantaged students.

The proposal sparked anger, not least in people who voted for the Liberal Democrats in the general election. Liberal Democrat MPs signed a pledge promising to vote against any rise in tuition fees. Many had voted for the Lib Dems on this issue alone.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills Vince Cable spent the weeks leading up to the vote convincing the public and MPs that the reforms were the best option for a sustainable higher education system. They advocated that the reforms would be progressive and would improve the quality of higher education provision, focussing on the following points to substantiate their assertions:

- no fees would be paid up front
- repayments would not begin until the graduate is earning £21,000
- repayments would be significantly lower than they are currently.

On 9 December MPs were given 5 hours to debate the proposed increase in fees before voting. The vote provoked protests which culminated in large scale demonstrations in Parliament Square. Although it would seem that the majority of the organised protests were peaceful, the demonstration against the cuts and rise in tuition fees were undermined by the more aggressive contingent.

Police said 12 officers and 43 protesters were injured, while at least 26 arrests were made. The vote was won, but with a margin of only 20, made even more significant by the 21 Liberal Democrats that abstained.

There have already been discussions about the longer term impact of the fees increase on the higher education market, and on the now varied offer within the UK nations (see over for more details).

## Across the UK

### Wales

Education Minister Leighton Andrews has outlined Welsh Assembly Government response to the decision by the UK Government to increase tuition fees in higher education institutions in England.

Welsh domiciled students will not have to pay extra fees for attending University in England by a non-refundable tuition fee grant, as the cost will be met by the Welsh Assembly Government.

In Wales, basic tuition fees will rise to £6,000 per annum from 2012 for all other students. HE institutions will be able to charge fees up to £9,000, providing they can demonstrate a commitment to widening access and other strategic objectives. For more details visit the [Council of Members website](#).

About tuition fees in Wales:

- The income repayment threshold for student loans will increase from £15,000 to £21,000
- There will be a variable progressive rate of interest charged depending on income
- Part-time students will be able to access a tuition fee loan depending on the level of intensity of their course
- Any increases in tuition fees will not apply to continuing students already in university
- The new arrangements will apply to new students starting in the academic year 2012/2013
- Any increase in fees for Welsh domiciled students, will be paid by the Welsh Assembly Government.

This means for example, if a student who was born and lives in Wales is going to University elsewhere in the UK they will only pay £3290 a year in fees (plus any inflationary uplift in fee levels) – the same as this year. The Welsh Assembly Government will provide a tuition fee grant or waiver to cover the difference in the fees to the HEI. The student does not have to repay this grant.

Students will also be able to access subsidised loans to help with the cost of going to university which won't need to be paid back until they are earning £21,000. If eligible, a means tested Assembly Learning Grant of up to £5000 will be available to help pay for studies.

### Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Assembly has just agreed a budget for 2011-12 and there will be more on the details of this in the January briefing.



In relation to the changes in University fee levels across the UK, it is by no means certain that Northern Ireland will follow the same course of action. This decision will be made in early 2011.

### Scotland

The Scottish Government has refreshed its [Skills Strategy](#), aiming to simplify the skills system, empower individuals and employers to access help and support more effectively, and better meet the needs of the key economic sectors and industries of the future.

Building on the 2007 Skills Strategy, it takes into account the changed economic climate and the new challenges facing businesses looking to support sustainable employment. The strategy has a renewed focus around the skills required to accelerate economic recovery and to sustain a growing, successful country. The strategy is structured around four key priority themes:

- **empowering people** to ensure they have the opportunity to access the right advice and support to get the skills to both contribute to and benefit from future economic success
- **supporting employers** by better understanding and assessing the skills they need for future success, and ensuring that the supply of skills, training and qualifications can be responsive to this
- **simplifying the skills system** to ensure that it is more coherent and easy to understand for individuals and employers
- **strengthening partnerships** and collective responsibility between public, private and third sectors to help improve skills and the contribution they make towards achieving Scotland's social and economic aspirations.

Collectively these commitments are aimed at improving the skills and employability of individuals and creating high skill, high productivity and healthy workplaces. The strategy establishes high-level targets for the National Training Programmes in 2010-11: for 15,000 Modern Apprenticeship starts; 14,500 training places to support the unemployed; and 5,000 new flexible training opportunities. New European Social Funding provision has been secured for an additional 5,000 all-age Modern Apprenticeships and 800 targeted pathway places for 16 and 17 year olds.

The current economic and fiscal climate and the increasing need to focus on the impact and value for money of training commitments will be central to the Review of Post 16 Education and Vocational Training Provision in Scotland.



## Legal Aid

The Ministry of Justice has published a green paper on reform of legal aid, starting a 12-week consultation period on their proposals due to 14 February 2011. They amount to cutting the legal aid budget (at present around two billion pounds per year) by about £350m annually.

Areas of law that will be affected include:

- private family law
- social welfare law, particularly legal advice;
- benefit law
- employment law
- education law
- debt advice
- housing law.



Additionally 68 per cent of civil legal help is to be cut. This is a service that gives initial help and advice on legal problems. This has been criticised by Lord Bach who asserts that the evidence shows that the service prevents many cases developing into more complex and expensive legal proceedings.

## Skills for Justice - Annual Review

We have launched our corporate Annual Review for 2009-10. The online publication contains information about the work we have done to help our employers develop the skills of their workforce over the past year. It also mentions plans for 2010-11, many of which are already well underway.

If you would like to read the review please visit the [Skills for Justice website](#).

We are in the process of having the review translated into Welsh and a version should be available before the Christmas break.

## Sustainable Futures: Balancing Employer Demand and Student Ambition

We are hosting a FREE half day event on 10 March 2011 which will look at addressing the challenges of a sustainable future for adult skills in England. It aims to gather employer and stakeholder views on how we can best work together to meet the challenges ahead.

Key policy developments like the Browne Review and recent consultations on the future of Further Education put this topic at the forefront of Government policy. We want to work with employers and learning providers to seek real solutions to delivering high quality, fit for purpose learning that delivers benefit to employers, individuals, learning providers and to society as a whole.

The Sustainable Futures event will enable employers, policy makers and learning providers to share information, ideas and opinions in an open, informal environment. It will address key issues of choice, information, quality and demand. We aim to produce a set of clear actions and messages that will be relayed back to Government to inform their plans across the skills system in England. We are also looking at hosting similar events specifically for colleagues in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland, so watch this space.



**For more information please contact Colette**

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## Your Views

### Employer Skills Survey

We are currently conducting a survey of Justice and Community Safety employers in order to address the key skills and workforce issues that have been raised within our sector.

The research aims to dig deep into skills priorities and drivers enabling us to provide intelligence which can help prioritise actions and financial decision making.

If you have received a survey and not yet responded, please could you endeavour to do so as soon as possible. Equally, if colleagues within your organisation have been asked to complete the survey please do encourage them to respond at their earliest opportunity.

If you would like to know more about the survey, please contact me.

### Paying for Training?

We have undertaken a piece of work designed to address the need to find affordable training provision at a time when money is tight. We would like to pick your brains so over the coming months I will be sending out some VERY short questionnaires (just 3 or 4 questions). Firstly, focussing on 'non-accredited courses', we would like you to identify your top 5 training needs; the skills that you feel your organisation urgently needs in order to cope with the changes you will be facing over the next 2-3 years. There is a paper on the [Council of Members website](#) which will help you to understand further the work being considered but feel free to contact me for more information.

### 'Breaking the Cycle'

We will be submitting a response to the Green Paper, 'Breaking the Cycle'. As Council members we would welcome your input so please feel free to send me any comments you feel would add value to our response.

**The 2010 drug strategy, 'Reducing demand, restricting supply, building recovery: supporting people to live a drug-free life'** was released on 8 December.

View the strategy [on the Home Office website](#).

We will be discussing the skills implications with employers and welcome your input. Please use the discussion forum on the [Council of Members website](#) or contact me directly.

## Council of Members

**New Meeting Date:**

**8 February 2011**

**Time: 14:00-16:00**

**Venue:**

**Skills for Justice HQ,  
Centre Court, Atlas  
Way, Sheffield  
S4 7QQ**



### Agenda

The agenda for the Council of Members meeting will not change as the items for discussion will still be relevant. Plus, I'm sure you had all read the papers in preparation and were very excited to share your ideas with other members on the topics. Snow may stop the trains in their tracks but it won't stop the Council being heard!

### Working Groups

**Common Standards and Training**

**25 January 2011**

**Skills for Justice, Centre Court, Atlas  
Way, Sheffield S4 7QQ**

### Final thought:

"A university should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning."  
Benjamin Disraeli

### Next Month

**Who cares? It's Christmas - go play  
in the snow! I'll be in touch in 2011**

**Seasons Greetings and best wishes for  
the New Year**

