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## **Continued reliance on prison hinders progress in tackling reoffending**

Recorded crime in Scotland is at its lowest level for 30 years and the number of recorded convictions is falling. Although this would suggest we are heading in the right direction, the continued reliance on imprisonment is still hindering real progress in tackling reoffending.

Recent government crime figures show Scotland is putting more people in jail for longer yet **two-thirds** of those given a custodial sentence for their most recent offence had been in jail at least once in the past ten years – and 13% over **ten** times. For most prisoners, custody is far from being a deterrent and does nothing to prevent them offending again. This is particularly the case with those given sentences of less than six months where reoffending figures can be as high as 75% within just two years.

It is more important than ever that government presses ahead with its plans to use Community Payback Orders over short prison sentences. Imprisonment simply does not adequately address the root causes of offending such as alcohol/drug misuse, mental health problems or lack of training/employment opportunities.

One in 16 of all 18-year-old males in Scotland were convicted of at least one offence in the past year. Unless we properly address the root causes of offending behaviour, we face the very real possibility that these young men will continue on a cycle of offending and imprisonment for the rest of their lives.

ENDS

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