

Sub

23 March 1982

I enclose a copy of a letter the Prime Minister has received from Mr. G. Bevis of the Conference of Chief Probation Officers.

I would be grateful if you could let me have a suitable draft reply which the Prime Minister might send to Mr. Bevis. It would be helpful if this could reach us by Tuesday, 30 March.

W. F. S. RICKETT

A.P. Jackson, Esq.,
Home Office.

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23 March 1982

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 22 March.

I will place this before her at once and a reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

L. W. F. S. RICKETT

G. Bevis, Esq.

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

Please reply to:

G BEVIS, ESQ.
CHAIRMAN OF CONFERENCE OF CPOs
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER
CHESHIRE PROBATION & AFTER CARE SERVICE
121/123 LONG LANE
UPTON
CHESTER CH2 1JF

THE RT. HON. MRS MARGARET THATCHER MP
THE PRIME MINISTER
10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON

22 MARCH 1982

Dear Mrs Thatcher

RE: LAW & ORDER DEBATE : HOUSE OF COMMONS 25 MARCH

This Association represents all 56 Chief Probation Officers in England and Wales. At our national meeting in London last week it was a unanimous view that I should write to you before the Law and Order Debate to be held in the House of Commons this Thursday.

The principal reason for writing is to express to you our support, as the managers of this Service, for the current overall strategy on law and order. This has been pursued consistently by the Government and, in particular, by Mr Whitelaw, the Home Secretary. Over almost three years he has given careful and vigorous attention to the Police, the Courts, the Prison system and the Probation Service, in an attempt to achieve a balanced and reasoned strategic response to crime. His frequent public statements reflect an important balance between the need for society to be protected and the need for proper resources to contain and prevent crime.

Chief Probation Officers value highly Mr Whitelaw's consistent interest and support for both constructive and effective measures in Criminal Justice. At a time when these policies are under attack we wish to place on record our appreciation of and support for this overall strategy.

Last week Mr Timothy Raison, the Minister of State at the Home Office, commenting on the recently published crime figures, said - "These things do not call for a hysterical panicky response, or sensational gestures. They do call for wisdom and steady determination to put things right - plus the necessary resources." Chief Probation Officers fully endorse this view as the necessary and constructive approach to counter the crime phenomenon which is being thrown up in our troubled society at present. We hope this represents the line to be pursued by the Government in the Debate on Thursday.

Factors which are pointers for the way ahead, and which could be at risk of being overlooked in a time of suddenly heightened concern, include -

Please reply to :

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More people are being effectively supervised on probation than there are in prison.

Almost half as many again are working satisfactorily in the community under Community Service Orders.

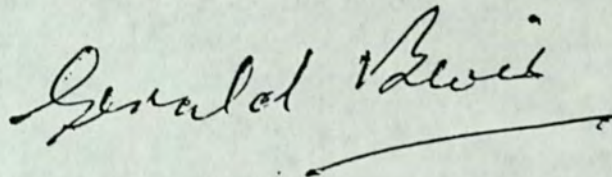
Most offenders in both these categories have records which could have led to their being sent to prison; but .

Courts have found, particularly over the past two years, that these measures can be used on a considerably increasing scale without added risk to the public.

These and other measures rely on the active involvement of the public, and on a patient approach drawing on the healthy concept of the unitary nature of society which, whenever possible, must resolve within itself the problems which it generates. Retention of this idea is vital, especially at a time when so many forces - including some voices in the crime debate - tend to be divisive and set sections of society against each other.

In view of the intensity of public interest in this subject at the present time we are publicising this letter to Members of Parliament and to the media.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald Lewis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE
OF CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS