

# RECLAIM JUSTICE NETWORK

*There are alternatives to the criminal justice system. Some are already being implemented. You can be involved in creating more.*

## What motivates us?

- We believe that the current use and expansion of the criminal justice system is unsustainable, unethical and ineffective in responding to social problems and harms.
- We recognise that the criminal justice system exacerbates inequality, discrimination and marginalisation at huge social, political and economic cost.
- We intend our work to be informed by and relevant to the experiences of those who are most directly affected by criminal justice systems.
- We work collaboratively, collectively and non-hierarchically.

## Our aims:

- To promote genuine alternatives to criminal justice systems and social inequalities.
- To advocate for social justice solutions rather than punishment as a response to social problems, inequalities and harm.
- To campaign for a radical reduction in the size and scope of criminal justice systems.

## What we do:

- We campaign around the need to radically reduce the size, scope and reach of criminal justice systems.
- We develop and engage people with resources that expose the realities and failures of criminal justice systems.
- We advocate and educate for social justice solutions rather than criminal justice reactions to social problems, inequalities and harms.

**Find out more, register your details and show your support:**

**[www.downsizingcriminaljustice.wordpress.com](http://www.downsizingcriminaljustice.wordpress.com)  
[reclaimjusticenetwork@gmail.com](mailto:reclaimjusticenetwork@gmail.com)**

**The *Reclaim Justice Network* is a collaboration of individuals, groups, campaigners, activists, trade unionists, practitioners, researchers, ex-prisoners and people most directly affected by the criminal justice process.**

**We are building a national movement to engage with, and support, local activists and campaigners to challenging society's excessive reliance upon criminal law. We aim to build effective and socially just alternatives that provide genuine community safety.**

**Our aim is to establish active regional hubs responding to this agenda.**

## **Criminal justice expansion does nothing to improve safety, community or economic welfare**

### **Join us to:**

- *Build a movement that challenges the function and legitimacy of criminal justice expansion.*
- *Advocate for social justice solutions rather than punishment as a response to social inequalities and harm.*
- *Campaign for a radical reduction in the size and scope of criminal justice.*

**We are committed to developing genuine social justice alternatives to current criminal justice policy. We are not focused on criminal justice reform.**

Over the last thirty years our society has been persuaded to use 'criminal justice' as a way of solving social problems. The number of people criminalised as well as the numbers sent to prison have spiralled out of control. Reconviction rates remain high, victims' needs are not met and social inequalities have continued to grow.

Attempts to reform criminal justice have expanded the system and repeatedly result in more of the same.

**Size:** The prison population in England and Wales has doubled in the past twenty years. At the end of 1992, for example, the prison population stood at around 40,600 prisoners, yet by October 2011 the population had surpassed 88,000. Between 1992 and 2012 front line police numbers grew from 125,000 to 150,000. The numbers of police carrying weapons has also increased and surveillance mechanisms, such as CCTV, have rapidly expanded.

**Severity:** In the past fifteen years, more than 3,200 new offences were created meaning people who would not have been criminalised previously are now swept into the criminal justice net. Not only are more people being sentenced: sentences are getting much longer. There is significant evidence that such sentences have negative impacts on individuals and communities, often disproportionately affecting the children and families of those imprisoned.

**Scope:** The criminal justice ethos of 'blame, punish and isolate' is spreading into other domains of social life. We see punishment, exclusion and isolation increasingly used as behaviour management and response tools throughout schools, health and social care, housing, and employment policies. Social problems that could be addressed through health, education or social services, are being channelled into the criminal justice system. The focus on individual blame and criminal justice merely compounds social inequalities.

**Impact:** The expansion of the criminal justice system has deepened inequalities and entrenched discrimination. Class, race, age and gender have huge impact on people's experience of the criminal justice system. People with mental health issues and disabilities are increasingly locked up since the 'Care in the Community' policy drive of the '80s. People from poor economic backgrounds are most likely to end up in prison. Migrant people are increasingly criminalised for seeking a better life. Young people are demonised and blamed as a result of anti-social legislation.

**We believe in more social justice and less criminal justice.**