

# cjm

## update

**Jana Padel on recent developments in criminal justice.**

### **Guns and knives**

Crime featured prominently in the Queen's speech in May at the start of the new session of Parliament. One of the earliest bills to be published, the Violent Crime Reduction Bill, includes powers to:

Make it illegal to manufacture or sell imitation firearms that could be mistaken for real firearms.

Introduce higher sentences for carrying imitation firearms.

Create tougher manufacturing standards to ensure that imitation firearms can't be converted to fire real ammunition.

Increase the age limit for buying or firing an air weapon without supervision from 17 to 18.

Increase the age limit for purchasing a knife from 16 to 18.

Introduce powers for head teachers and other members of staff to search pupils for knives.

Introduce Alcohol Disorder Zones (ADZs) which will require licensed premises to contribute to the cost of alcohol-related disorder in specific areas where it has been identified as a problem.

Exclude individuals responsible for alcohol-related disorder from certain areas and licensed premises by imposing 'Drinking Banning Orders' which could run for up to two years.

Provide police with the power to exclude individuals at risk of carrying out alcohol related disorder from a specific area for up to 48 hours.

### **Drunk and disorderly**

4% of young adults (18 to 24 years) can be identified as binge drinkers according to findings from the 2003 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey on alcohol-related crime and disorder published recently by the Home Office. The survey, which defined binge drinking as 'drinking to get drunk' and a binge drinker as someone who feels very drunk at least once a month, found that binge drinkers are more likely to offend than other regular drinkers. Young binge drinkers seem to commit a disproportionate amount of crime. 18 to 24 year old binge drinkers accounted for only 6% of the total adult sample surveyed, but committed 30% of all crimes reported by adults in the past 12 months and 24% of all violent incidents.

Criminal and disorderly behaviour during or after drinking was also more prevalent among young adult binge drinkers –

63% of all young adult binge drinkers admitted to such behaviour during or after drinking compared with 34% of other young regular drinkers.

### **Drug use among vulnerable young people**

The 2003 Crime and Justice Survey also revealed disturbing information about levels of drug use among vulnerable young people (defined here as those who have ever been in care, those who have ever been homeless, truants, those excluded from school, and serious or frequent offenders).

Although those in these vulnerable groups represented less than a third of the young people in the sample, they accounted for more than half (61%) of Class A drug users in the last year. Only 5% of those who were not vulnerable used drugs frequently in the last year, while 24% of those in the vulnerable group were frequent drug users in the same period. Young people who were members of more than one vulnerable group had significantly higher levels of drug use than those who were members of just one vulnerable group. Frequent drug use among those in more than one vulnerable group was 39% compared with 18% in just one vulnerable group. Comparing the vulnerable groups those who had been in care or homeless had the lowest levels of drug use, while serious or frequent offenders and truant had the highest drug use levels.

### **The Centre for Crime and Justice Studies is seeking to fill two new posts:**

#### **Deputy Director**

£34989 – £38206 incl. LW depending on experience + 5% pension contribution

We are looking for a dynamic and committed individual able to play a major role both externally, raising CCJS's profile on issues including policing, the courts and sentencing, and internally in assisting with the management of the excellent staff team and work at CCJS. You will have a good knowledge of the major issues relating to crime and criminal justice and experience of managing staff.

#### **Community Sentences Project Officer**

£32686 incl. LW + 5% pension

This three year project is designed to monitor implementation of the new Community Order, providing objective information on general trends and looking in more detail at specific impacts. You will have excellent operational knowledge of the criminal justice system, good networking skills and the ability to analyse information and communicate clearly.

*Both posts will be based at the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, King's College London, 26-29 Drury Lane, London WC2B 5RL*

*For further details and an application pack (no CVs) visit [www.kcl.ac.uk/ccjs](http://www.kcl.ac.uk/ccjs) or ring 020 7848 1688*

**Closing date for both posts:  
26th August 2005**