



PRESS RELEASE

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Press statement re sentencing statistics

The Magistrates' Association welcomed figures published this week that reveal a 12% fall in the numbers of offenders sent to custody by sentencers in magistrates' courts during the final quarter of 2008. New sentencing guidelines were introduced in August last year and as a result magistrates are now better advised as to when to send cases to the Crown Court and when an immediate custodial sentence is appropriate.

The Magistrates' Association sees no justification for the more draconian approach to sentencing presently being advocated by the government in the Coroners and Justice Bill presently before Parliament and welcomes the amendments put down in the House of Lords to continue the present arrangements that have stopped the rise in the prison population.

It must be noted that sadly these figures may reflect a low point in those sent to custody if burglaries and other serious crimes increase during the present economic downturn.

2 July 2009

END

For further information please contact:

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The Magistrates' Association was established in 1920 and is the voice of the magistracy, supporting magistrates in their essential work, representing their views and interests, providing information and advice and contributing to their training.

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