

Abuse
OF
Justice



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Dear Sir / Madam,

I note with interest Maria Eagle's responses, as reported in Hansard on December 15th, to two written questions recently tabled by David Howarth MP. The report in Hansard reads as follows:

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice how many prisoners currently serving sentences in Her Majesty's prisons are beyond their original or adjusted tariff; and of these, how many are maintaining innocence of the crime for which they were convicted. [241545]

Maria Eagle: On 8 December 2008, there were 3,867 indeterminate sentenced prisoners in custody recorded as being beyond their original or adjusted tariff.

This figure is taken from the Public Protection Unit Database (PPUD) within the National Offender Management Service. As with any large scale recording system, it is subject to possible errors arising from either data entry or processing.

No central recording of prisoners maintaining innocence is maintained. To establish how many prisoners are beyond their original and adjusted tariff and maintaining their innocence would require a manual checking of individual records, which could be carried out only at disproportionate cost.

With regards to Maria Eagle's first response, I would like to ask for two further breakdowns of this figure as follows:

1. By number of years over current tariff (e.g. less than one year, more than 1 year, more than 2 years etc.)
2. By length of current tariff (e.g. 0 – 5 years, 5 – 10 years, 10 – 15 years etc.)

With regards to her second response, I appreciate that the stance adopted by NOMS to prisoners maintaining innocence (which I understand though do not accept) probably explains the absence of any

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such central record. However, I feel sure that a record must exist concerning the appellant status of prisoners and so would like to ask how many of these 3,867 prisoners are appellants?

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature reads "Andrew Hinchliffe" in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

Andrew Hinchliffe