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## News release

Embargoed until 00:01 hours, Wednesday 7 November

### Major changes needed to tackle reoffending in Scotland

Reoffending is a continuing problem in Scotland. A range of bodies provide many services to reduce reoffending, but there is a mismatch between what is delivered and what is known to work.

An Audit Scotland report published today, *Reducing reoffending in Scotland*, looks at the efficiency and effectiveness of approaches taken to address the problem. Reconviction rates have remained relatively static over the past decade, and 30 per cent of offenders are reconvicted within one year. In 2010/11, 9,500 people convicted (one in five of convicted offenders) had at least ten previous convictions.

The Scottish Prison Service, Community Justice Authorities and Scottish Government spent £419 million in 2010/11 dealing with people convicted in court. Less than a third of this, £128 million, was spent on reducing reoffending.

The report says Community Justice Authorities, established in 2007, have struggled to achieve their role of improving joint working, due to the way they were set up and inflexible funding. It says the Scottish Government should review how offenders are managed in the community to ensure that: those working with offenders have clear and shared goals; there is clear accountability; and arrangements promote what is effective in reducing reoffending.

Auditor General for Scotland, Caroline Gardner, said: "Almost £130 million is spent a year on reducing reoffending and it is important this money is spent effectively. However, access and availability of services vary across the country, and there is a mismatch between what is delivered and what is known to work to reduce reoffending. In particular, there needs to be more support for people serving short term sentences.

"The Scottish Government needs to review how offenders are managed in the community. The government, the Scottish Prison Service, Community Justice Authorities and councils need to improve how they plan, design and deliver services for offenders, and make sure they're based on evidence of what works."

Chair of the Accounts Commission for Scotland, John Baillie, said: "The report highlights the variation in the costs of criminal justice social work activities. Councils should work with Community Justice Authorities to improve their understanding of why costs vary and how they relate to the quality of services. This should in turn inform decisions about how to use resources and where they can be more efficient."

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#### Notes to Editors:

1. Audit Scotland is launching this report at the 'Promoting Integration' conference, organized by No Offence and held at HMP Barlinnie, Glasgow, on 7 November. There will also be speakers from the Scottish Government and Scottish Prison Service. For more details, visit [the No Offence website](#).
2. This audit focused on what happens to adult offenders sentenced in court. Audit Scotland did not look at preventative work designed to stop people offending in the first place or measures to prevent low-level offenders going to court, such as police warnings or fines.
3. In 2010/11, 47,336 adults were convicted in Scotland's courts. Of these, 9,500 (22 per cent) had ten or more previous convictions.
4. More than 1,300 services are provided for offenders in prison and the community across Scotland. Many bodies are involved, including the Scottish Government, Scottish Prison Service, Community Justice Authorities, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, councils, police, NHS boards, professional individuals and voluntary and community organisations.

5. This audit follows our September 2011 report, [An overview of Scotland's criminal justice system](#) (link opens PDF). One aim of carrying out that report was to identify areas where more audit work would be of value.
6. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 can be found on Audit Scotland's website [www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)
7. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. Audit Scotland has prepared this report jointly for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland:
  - The Auditor General is responsible for securing the audit of the Scottish Government and most other public bodies in Scotland, except local authorities. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Executive or the Scottish Parliament.
  - The Accounts Commission looks at whether local authorities, fire and police boards spend public money properly and effectively. It is independent of both central and local government. Commission members are appointed by Scottish ministers.