



PRESS RELEASE

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Dealing with the rioting cases in court

Magistrates are carefully trained unpaid members of the public who follow a structured decision-making process at all times in order to deliver fair and effective community justice. Any case begins with the Police and Crown Prosecution Service deciding on the appropriate charge which can affect whether the case is heard in the magistrates' court or – for the more serious cases - the Crown Court. Magistrates do not pluck a sentence out of thin air, as the Sentencing Council provides sentencing guidelines which enable us to identify the factors which make the case more serious such as group action, harm to victims, damage to property and other relevant ones. At these difficult times magistrates will work within the law as it stands and follow procedures and guidelines as we do day in and day out in our courts.

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Notes for Editors

2011 is the 650 anniversary of the institution of the office of Justice of the Peace (JP) and a senior judge recently stated that *its members have served the justice system with distinction ever since*. Currently just over 27,000 men and women - known as JPs or magistrates - deal with 95% of all criminal cases brought before courts and a significant number of civil matters including family work. Magistrates are not paid for attending court, receiving only modest expenses, subsistence and small recompense for any loss of earnings. They have to attend training, are mentored and regularly appraised and work within guidelines.

PATRON: Her Majesty the Queen
PRESIDENT: The Lord Chief Justice

CHAIRMAN: John Thornhill JP

DEPUTY CHAIRMEN: John Fassenfelt JP & Malcolm Richardson JP

HONORARY TREASURER: Mike Dodden JP

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & ASSOCIATION SECRETARY: Patrick Cracroft-Brennan
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