

Research criticizes young offenders' institution for gang-related violence

November 28 2012

A youth offending facility in the East Midlands has been criticised in a new report for taking criminals from rival gangs in Leicester and Nottingham.

The research, led by an academic at Nottingham University Business School, said that the policy by Glen Parva Young Offenders Institution to take criminals from both cities was a recipe for trouble and has led to an increase in violence and gang warfare.

In the report Dr Richard Simper, an associate professor in [financial economics](#), says that rival young offenders should be separated in a bid to decrease the incidence of inter-[gang violence](#) and called for a new facility to be built in the region.

He added that the problem is not only confined to the East Midlands—similar problems have also been experienced with violence among rival London [gang members](#) at YOIs in the South East.

Dr Simper, an adviser to the Home Office and a consultant to a number of police forces, said: "During our sample period there were major problems at Glen Parva, which were widely written about in the press, based on an inspection report.

"Our results agree with the inspection report's main findings that overcrowding was an issue and that inmate assaults were too high, due to mixing young offenders from different areas, mainly Leicester versus

Nottingham.

"If you look at the map of prisons, there are no other local YOIs for males in the East Midlands. I believe, given the size of Glen Parva, it could be an ideal time to build a new YOI in the East Midlands to reduce the assaults due to males in-fighting."

The findings have appeared in a study called the Economic Efficiency of Rehabilitative Management in Young Offenders Institutions in England and Wales which has been published in the journal *Socio-Economic Planning Services*.

The research, which also involved academics at Loughborough University, Kent University and Hunan University in China, backs the findings of The Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) which studied Glen Parva between 2008 and November 2009 and said the level of violence was too high.

Professor Maximilian Hall, Professor of Banking and Financial Regulation at Loughborough University, added: "The problem with Glen Parva is the inmate mix. If you throw criminals together from different parts of the locality you enhance gang warfare. That's what we suggest is what has happened.

"The justification for it was that you make them less unruly the nearer they are to home. You can understand why they don't want to move them too far away from their locality, because they can get visits from friends and family.

"But throwing together offenders from Nottingham and Leicester—football hooligans if you like—is probably not a wise decision."

The report dismissed plans proposed in 2008.09 to increase the size of Glen Parva, the fourth largest YOI in England and Wales, from 800 inmates to 1,160.

It found that the 'smallest YOIs were the most efficient in the management of rehabilitation of [young offenders](#).'

Dr Simper said the creation of so-called 'Titan prisons' which could hold 2,500 inmates was unlikely to deliver the cost saving envisaged.

Successive governments had considered this policy but Dr Simper said: "We find that there are no advantages to building Titan prisons, so this calls into question the necessity to spend resources on these types of YOIs.

"Indeed, many studies have shown that smaller—especially YOIs—prisons can offer better chances of reducing re-offending when the prisoners finish their sentence. In terms of YOIs that Glen Parva should be following in all aspects of prison rehabilitation, the results suggest that its reference YOI is Deerbolt in the North East of England."

More information: The paper Economic Efficiency of Rehabilitative Management in Young Offenders Institutions in England and Wales is available online at [www.sciencedirect.com/science/ ...
ii/S0038012112000560](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/.../S0038012112000560)

Provided by University of Nottingham

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