



A UK Centre for Justice Innovation?

In recent years, reformers in England and Wales have attempted to re-shape the criminal justice system, launching an array of new initiatives designed to reduce crime and bolster public confidence in justice. While this is encouraging, systemic reform within an institution as complex and tradition-bound as the criminal justice system doesn't happen overnight. It requires careful tending and a long-term commitment to change. Recognizing this, the Center for Court Innovation and the Young Foundation have come together to explore the feasibility of a new institution that would be devoted exclusively to criminal justice innovation.

Concept: The basic idea behind the Centre for Justice Innovation would be to create a permanent, non-partisan and distinctive voice for justice innovation in the United Kingdom that extends past any individual political cycle. The Centre for Justice Innovation would seek to combine research and practice. In the process, it would attempt to combine the best of two worlds: the hands-on experience and impact on the ground of a direct service organization and the analytical capacity and commitment to new ideas of a think tank.

The Centre for Justice Innovation would have five principal areas of business:

- **Demonstration Projects.** The Centre would seek to launch innovative projects designed to push the frontier of problem-solving justice. It would work on a relatively small number of projects, designing them in such a way that they could potentially be replicated broadly. Possible topics of interest include problem-solving courts, community payback, resettlement, technology solutions, youth offending and risk assessment instruments.
- **Research/Evaluation.** The Centre would look to produce original research on topics of criminal justice innovation. In addition, the Centre would use an action research approach, providing regular feedback to its own demonstration projects so that they can make mid-course adjustments to maximize program effectiveness. The goal is to build a credible knowledge base in England and Wales that can help guide practice.
- **Leadership Training.** The Centre would organize an annual fellowship program designed to build a community of mutual support among innovators in a variety of fields (e.g. lay magistrates, probation officials, police officers).

- **Policy Analysis.** The Centre would work to promote a more active dialogue about criminal justice reform, organizing roundtables, inviting innovators from around the world to make public presentations, and publishing a biannual journal on justice innovations that would highlight new developments and emerging issues in England and Wales.
- **Technical Assistance.** The Centre would provide consulting services to existing criminal justice reform efforts in England and Wales, educating practitioners about best practices in the field and helping to brainstorm solutions to emerging problems.

With support from the Hadley Trust, the Young Foundation and the Center for Court Innovation are spending 2010 soliciting feedback about this concept and analyzing whether there is in fact a market for this concept in the United Kingdom. For more information, contact [Aubrey Fox](#).

*The Young Foundation
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