I am writing in response to a question you raised during the debate on the management and treatment of offenders, on 3 October 2019. This is recorded in Hansard, Volume 799, Column 1831.

You asked if the Government could clarify its position on reducing the use of short-term sentences.

As part of the urgent review of the sentencing and release framework announced by the Prime Minister in August, we considered changes to sentencing for the most prolific offenders which could help break the cycle of reoffending. We know that these offenders generally have multiple and complex needs which are linked to their offending behaviour, in particular drugs, alcohol and mental health needs. If we are to break the cycle of reoffending, particularly for prolific offenders who cause significant public concern and harm to society, solutions will often lie in community sentences.

Based on the findings of the review, we have announced our intention to bring forward a comprehensive package of legislative reform. This will include reforms to community penalties that offer an appropriate level of punishment, while tackling the underlying drivers of offending. In taking this forward, we recognise that it is essential that the public and judiciary have confidence in effective community orders, including those which address offenders’ behaviour, answer their mental health and alcohol or drug misuse needs, or provide reparation for the benefit of the wider community.

I am copying to all noble lords who spoke in the debate and I will place a copy of this letter in the library.
EARL OF COURTOWN

Baroness Healy of Primrose Hill
House of Lords