



TRANSFORMING REHABILITATION – A REVOLUTION IN THE WAY WE MANAGE OFFENDERS

PREAMBLE

- Probation welcomes the continued commitment to and emphasis on the rehabilitation of offenders. We welcome a sensible balance between punishment and rehabilitation.
- We welcome the extension of management, support and accountability to offenders sentenced to less than 12 months imprisonment.

This is long overdue, not least as we know the substantial reconviction rates for those sentenced to under 12 months.

- Probation is not arguing that it is the only agency that can reduce reoffending. On the contrary, our developing understanding of the factors which disproportionately impact on reoffending, demonstrates the need for a more collaborative partnership approach to this complex and challenging issue.

CONTEXT

- It has been less than three years since the last major reform of Probation. Creation of Probation Trusts has been a significant success. National performance against Government set targets is strong. Significant financial efficiencies have been achieved.
- Your local Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust is amongst the best performing and most efficient Trusts nationally. Reconviction rates, for those offenders we are statutorily responsible for through our Contract with the Secretary of State, are improving.
- While we welcome the focus on offenders sentenced to less than twelve months, we are left wondering why this is being achieved via the “privatisation, with exceptions” of the Probation Service.

CRITICAL POINTS

1. We believe those proposals, if implemented as set out, will make the public less safe. These proposals dismantle and make more complex the lines of accountability for the management of sentenced offenders. They establish a model of offender management wherein no single individual or organisation will be responsible and accountable for the ‘management of the case’. We believe Public Sector Probation must be responsible and accountable for the management of all cases in order to protect the public.

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2. Probation's local leadership and continued involvement in commissioning is essential in reducing reoffending. These proposals do not reflect Probation's local grounding. They are unclear about how any slimmed down, public Probation Public Protection arrangements will be configured, how proposed national commissioning will fit with local need and how these will impact on the duties and accountabilities of our local partners.
 3. Payment by Results (PBR) has some potential to incentivise improvements in reoffending rates. However, these proposals are silent on the evidence for a major extension of PBR in a sector as complex as the Criminal Justice System where so many and different factors impact on offending and reoffending.
 4. We believe a professionally qualified workforce must continue to manage all offenders. If this professionalism is not nurtured and developed, significant risks to public protection will inevitably emerge.
 5. Timescales are very tight. To change both the structure of the system required to manage and supervise offenders and the business model within which this will be undertaken, may represent a risk to the practice and performance of existing arrangements.