



## Q&A for National Probation Service staff

### 1. What has been announced now and why?

The government has set out its plans for the future of probation. This follows careful consideration of the results of the consultation '**Strengthening Probation, Building Confidence**' held in summer 2018 which received over 450 written responses and captured the views of more than 1,000 delegates from over 39 events.

The key proposals are:

- a) The National Probation Service will have responsibility for all offender management
- b) The private and voluntary sector will still play a vital role providing interventions
- c) Support for the probation profession - to improve professional development and raise the status of the profession.

### 2. When are you implementing these changes?

In England, we have put in place arrangements to allow us to extend CRC contracts to ensure we have the necessary time to get the transition to the new system right. We intend to use these arrangements to end contracts in Spring 2021. This will ensure a smooth transition, focussing on the seamless continuity of public protection and rehabilitation in the community.

We intend to integrate offender management in Wales on a quicker timescale, by the end of 2019.

We will now begin a period of further engagement with a broad range of stakeholders to refine the design of future services, and with staff to inform our planning for the transition to these timescales.

We will seek to launch competitive procurement processes later this year for the delivery of interventions such as Unpaid Work, Accredited Programmes and rehabilitative interventions.

We have set up a separate programme to take forward the delivery of the professional recognition proposals over the next couple of years

### 3. This isn't what you proposed in the consultation – why have you changed your mind?

We have listened closely to feedback from the consultation, reflected on reports from HM Inspectorate of Probation and others, and tested the options with our partners and stakeholders to make sure we got this important decision right.

We have also taken account of the continuing challenges faced by CRCs and the need for future arrangements to deliver a more stable operating environment.

The proposals laid out in the consultation for Wales remain unchanged. On balance, we believe this new model for England – based on these arrangements we consulted on in Wales – offers the most sustainable approach for probation and is the best option to build on the positive changes made under Transforming Rehabilitation.

#### **4. Why are the government not continuing with the Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) model?**

Transforming Rehabilitation brought about some important changes that will be strengthened under this revised model.

TR opened up probation to a diverse range of providers and extended support and supervision to an additional 40,000 offenders leaving prison.

But we accept that there have been challenges resulting from the complexities of contractualising offender management and splitting functions between the NPS and CRCs. That is why we are making changes to allow each sector to play to its strengths.

#### **5. Will you still outsource elements of probation?**

Yes. Private and not-for-profit organisations have demonstrated their strength in delivering interventions. We will retain and build on this success by sourcing key services, such as Unpaid Work, Accredited Programmes, and other resettlement and rehabilitative interventions from the private and voluntary sector markets. We intend to do this through competitions for suppliers for Unpaid Work and Accredited Programmes, and through creation of a dynamic framework for resettlement and rehabilitative interventions.

#### **6. Will the model be the same in England and Wales?**

The new model builds on existing proposals for Wales which we believe will create a structure that is better able to adapt to meet local needs. There is similarity in that all Offender Management will become the responsibility of the National Probation Services while certain interventions will be undertaken by other providers.

There are however some distinctions between how services operate in England and Wales which reflect the requirements of both nations. These will continue under the new model.

The existing structure of HMPPS Wales is different to that in England. In HMPPS in Wales, the structure combines prison and probation services under the same management line. Also in the existing model in Wales, the CRC is already co-terminus with the existing NPS Wales Division.

The justice devolution settlement allows us to make distinct arrangements for probation that meet the needs of Wales. In Wales, the probation system is part of a wider system of governance which operate with a number of devolved responsibilities. For example, education and health and local authorities are governed by the Welsh government e.g. health in prisons. This mean there is a responsibility to discuss cross-cutting issues with the Welsh government. In addition, there are a number of legislative papers the agency must adhere to such as the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

## **7. How are you expanding the role of the voluntary sector?**

We want to see a clearer role for a wide range of voluntary sector providers in probation delivery, including local and specialist services.

We will be developing a commercial framework to allow the National Probation Service to directly commission services on a scale that encourages the participation of smaller suppliers and is responsive to the needs of local areas.

This will support the involvement of specialist voluntary and community organisations, such as those supporting offenders with complex needs, which are key to reducing reoffending and reintegrating offenders back into society.

## **8. How much will all this cost? Will there be more funding for probation?**

We are determined to ensure probation has sufficient resource to deliver a good level of service and to support a reduction in reoffending and short prison sentences. This is subject the usual cross-Government approvals process and affordability considerations.

## **Professional recognition**

## **9. What are your plans to better support probation officers?**

Probation is a vocational profession. Our changes will recognise the specialism and value of probation work, while supporting staff to develop the right skills and expertise.

We will look to bring forward a statutory professional framework with ethical and training standards for different roles, to put probation on a par with teaching or social work.

We are working with our Trade Union colleagues to introduce a new Competency Based Pay Progression Framework for NPS staff which takes into account the full range of attributes, skills and experience required to deliver a quality service.

## **10. Why are we implementing a professional register for staff?**

As well as the structural and contractual elements, the plan outlines the desire to make improvements to the services offenders receive in a number of areas, and to better recognise the skills, experience, and professionalism of our dedicated workforce. Therefore, we want to create further opportunities for professional development. We also want to

ensure we can safeguard the quality of probation work by ensuring all staff are suitably trained and supported.

## **Impact on NPS and its staff**

### **11. What does this mean for the current structure for NPS?**

There will be structural change to create **11 probation areas across England and Wales**.

**In England**, each of the areas will be overseen by an NPS Regional Probation Director who will provide strategic leadership and be responsible for the overall delivery and commissioning of probation services.

**In Wales**, the Executive Director for HMPPS in Wales already has responsibility for all probation services and prisons in Wales and this will remain unchanged.

**We will strengthen local partnerships**. Our new regional structures will allow the probation service to work closer with other statutory bodies, including Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), to focus on joint aims and co-commissioning

### **12. How will the extra work for NPS staff be managed? How will this impact on my workload?**

One of our priorities will be to look at how we can make workloads more manageable and to prevent overloading on any one part of the organisation. We now have more information to base future projections on, and plan to design future delivery arrangements to be more resilient to fluctuations in caseload volume.

As offender management services transfer from CRCs to the NPS, staff assigned to delivering those services will also transfer. CRCs will be identifying their in-scope staff in due course.

### **13. What are you doing to improve staff workloads and recruitment shortages?**

In the year to 31st December 2018, 707 probation services officers were appointed, some of whom will be training to become qualified probation officers.

We know that the shift in demand for probation services has placed pressures on the NPS and staff have been carrying high caseloads. In response to this, the NPS has run several recruitment campaigns in the last 12 months and will continue to recruit Trainee Probation Officers Nationally in 2019/20.

Staff are the probation system's greatest asset, and we need to do all we can to make sure they are properly equipped to do their jobs and given the opportunities to enhance their professional skills and develop rewarding careers.

### **14. How will you protect staff and services during the transition?**

These changes are about improving probation services, and ensuring there are sufficient staff to deliver a good quality service. The majority of staff who responded to the consultation were supportive of this delivery model.

Maintaining business continuity during these changes is of paramount importance. We will continue to work closely with Trade Unions, CRCs and staff to support the transition to the future model and minimise disruption.

#### **15. Will staff be made redundant in the NPS?**

We do not envisage that this will be necessary but we need to do more work before we can be clear either way. We need to carefully review the current and future delivery models and consider where system and process change affects peoples' roles with a view to minimise the impacts. If staff are displaced, we would seek to work with them and exhaust all redeployment options. Retaining skilled staff is a key priority for the department.

#### **16. Will the changes affect staff pay or terms and conditions in NPS?**

There are no plans to change any of these conditions and staff will be fully consulted throughout the process.

#### **17. What about my pension?**

For existing NPS staff, there will be no changes to your current pension arrangements.

#### **18. Will I need to reapply for my job?**

We appreciate the concerns staff will have about any future changes and one of our priorities will be to minimise the impact of this. It is too early to say what changes are required to deliver the outcomes of the consultation and new delivery model and we won't undertake any restructure until we have a clear understanding of what the future delivery arrangements will be. We will keep staff informed as our plans develop, and we will consult them at the right time on any changes that may affect them.

#### **19. Will I move workplace?**

All HMPPS staff are contracted to work from locations that are suited to their work however we do not expect there to be any immediate requirements for staff to change workplace although future delivery arrangements could require some adjustments.

We will aim to minimise these impacts as far as possible and will continue to consult with staff throughout the process.

#### **20. Will there be opportunities for voluntary early departure?**

There are no current plans to run a centralised voluntary exit scheme at this time.

## **21. Will there be any changes in process to the way I work now?**

The aim of this programme is to continue to improve delivery of probation services so we will be looking for ideas on how to improve or change processes but we do not expect there to be immediate changes to the way staff currently work.

### **Keeping you informed**

## **22. How will probation staff be kept informed throughout the process?**

Senior Leaders will continue to update staff as we progress and all communication channels will be used to ensure staff are involved and have opportunities to share feedback and ask questions.

There will be separate consultation in regard to the transfer of staff – this will happen first in Wales.

All available information [will be published on the Probation Changes pages on the intranet](#). We will continue to provide information to CRC staff.

Staff can get in touch with questions via email at [strengthening.probation@justice.gov.uk](mailto:strengthening.probation@justice.gov.uk)

## **23. How can I get involved?**

A series of workshops will be run across England and Wales to share further details regarding future design, change and transition processes. Staff can also get in touch with the programme directly via the email [strengthening.probation@justice.gov.uk](mailto:strengthening.probation@justice.gov.uk).

Consultation will also continue to take place through Trade Unions. Further staff engagement events will be advertised.