

Have you got what it takes?

To work in partnership with providers of probation services



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Background

The providers of probation services play a key role in protecting the public, reducing re-offending and providing specialist support for victims, while delivering the orders and sentences of the court.

During the last Parliament, important steps were taken by the Ministry of Justice to improve rehabilitation services in England and Wales, with the implementation of the 'Transforming Rehabilitation' reforms to probation services.

Under these reforms, 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) were established to deliver rehabilitation services for low and medium risk offenders. A new public sector National Probation Service (NPS) was also created to manage those offenders assessed as high risk of serious harm to the public or those released from custody who have committed the most serious offences. On 1 June 2014, transition took place from the former probation structure of 35 Probation Trusts to the NPS and CRCs, with the new providers taking ownership of, and running, the CRCs on 1 February 2015.

In addition to restructuring the probation service, the Ministry of Justice implemented the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014, changing the law so that all offenders released from short prison sentences receive 12 months of supervision in the community, thus providing support for the most prolific group of offenders.

What providers of probation services do

The providers of probation services are responsible for managing offenders serving community orders, as well as many offenders released from prison on licence. Court orders account for approximately three quarters of the national caseload, with the other quarter made up of offenders released from prison on licence.

The National Probation Service (NPS)

The National Probation Service is part of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), which is an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice. The NPS has 7 Divisions. The local delivery units, which were closely aligned with local authorities, have been arranged into clusters. More information about the NPS can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/national-probation-service>.

The NPS supervises high-risk offenders in the community. It works with around 30,000 offenders a year, supporting their rehabilitation while protecting the public. It works in partnership with the CRCs, courts, police and with private and voluntary sector partners in order to manage offenders safely and effectively. Their priority is to protect the public by the effective rehabilitation of high risk offenders, by

tackling the causes of offending and enabling offenders to turn their lives around.

Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs)

The 21 CRCs are run under contract by 8 owners. The contracts are managed by NOMS. A map of the CRC areas can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-rehabilitation-company-england-and-wales-area-map> and more information about the new probation services model is in the Target Operating Model which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rehabilitation-programme-target-operating-model>. CRCs are responsible for managing low and medium risk offenders.

CRCs also provide 'Through the Gate' resettlement services in custody and into the community. These resettlement services were set up on 1 May 2015, with the majority of offenders being given continuous support by one provider from custody into the community. CRCs are required to provide offenders with support to find accommodation and jobs, help with finance and debt, and support for former sex workers and victims of domestic abuse. The implementation of the 'Through the Gate' services was supported by establishing a network of 89 Resettlement Prisons. Most offenders are held in a prison designated to their home area for at least three months before release.

More information

For what reasons can an offender be put on probation?

An offender can be put on probation for one of three reasons:

1. As part of a community sentence

An offender may be given a court sentence to serve in the community, (i.e. a community order or suspended sentence order)

2. If the offender is released from prison on licence

If an offender is serving a determinate sentence and subject to automatic release, they will be released on licence supervision for the remainder of their sentence and, if serving a sentence of less than 2 years, a further period of post-sentence supervision to ensure a period of supervision in the community of at least 12 months.

3. If the offender is released from prison on parole

If the offender is subject to discretionary release by the Parole Board after completing the minimum period of their custodial sentence, he or she is subject to probation supervision during the remaining part of the sentence.

What happens if an offender breaks the terms of his or her probation?

For breaking the rules of his or her probation – for example, by not attending meetings or by committing another crime – the offender may, depending upon the circumstances, receive a warning, or can be taken back to court. The NPS lets the court know if the offender is not complying with the terms of probation.

What happens if an offender is convicted of a violent or sexual crime?

When an offender has been convicted of a violent or sexual crime and is sent to prison, he or she may be subject, on release, to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements. These arrangements bring together the police, probation and prison services to manage the risk posed by the most serious sexual and violent offenders when in the community. Information about MAPPA offenders may be shared with other organisations, including:

- children's services
- adult social care services
- local education services
- health trusts and authorities
- Jobcentre Plus.

How does a Probation Trust interact with stakeholders?

The NPS and CRCs work with each other and their partners to reduce reoffending. The NPS and CRCs also work with a wide range of partners to deliver services, reduce reoffending and protect the public. The providers of probation services commission some specialist services, co-commission others and signpost offenders to mainstream services, including those commissioned by other Government Departments, such as the Department of Health, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, and the Department for Education and, in Wales, those devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government. The providers of probation services also work closely with a wide range of local businesses, local authorities and voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

As well as being a responsible authority in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements and Community Safety Partnerships, the providers of probation services also play a key role in Local Safeguarding Children Boards, Substance Misuse Joint Commissioning Groups, Youth Offending Teams and Local Criminal Justice Boards.