

Probation Alliance Initial Position Statement on Principles for a Future Model for Probation

The following have been agreed as initial principles which should inform urgent discussions about a future model for the structure of probation services in England and Wales.

1. Current Position

- Management of, and decision making in relation to the current position is creating serious risks to the public, to the confidence of sentencers, to the morale of the profession and to service users. These risks were set out in our original and follow-up letters to the Secretary of State. They have been clearly highlighted by the NAO report.
- We will continue to press for a pause in the process and the transfer of Community Rehabilitation Companies to the original 21 companies wholly owned by the Secretary of State set up in public ownership in 2014 to facilitate this.
- We have additional significant concerns about the speedy roll-out of the Offender Management In Custody programme. This is transforming the Probation landscape, creating new “facts on the ground” which may cut off options that could emerge from the current review which affords opportunities for new thinking.

2. Principles for Future Models

- The recreation of an independent professional leadership for Probation, for example, the re-establishment of Chief Probation Officer roles.
- The reunification of Probation
- A publically owned service with directly employed staff
- Governance of Probation should ensure both national and active local engagement.
- Dedicated funding must remain the responsibility of central government and where devolved must be ring-fenced
- A future model must integrate provision of case management and the delivery of core interventions, like unpaid work and accredited programmes, under public ownership whilst encouraging the provision of rehabilitative service from other providers, particularly the voluntary sector.
- A future model should ensure that generic services that are fundamental to rehabilitation – health, housing, education, social care - are co-ordinated across central and local government.
- Evidence of best practice should inform future structures. This should involve looking at jurisdictions beyond England and Wales, including Scotland, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and the USA. The case for looking more widely is strengthened when the future model of Probation is considered in the light of the Secretary of State’s ambition to abolish the use of short sentences.
- A future model must ensure that use of technology both as a tool for assisting community supervision and as a recording/case management system must be fully aligned with probation values and best practice and should support rather than supersede or impede face to face engagement.
- A future model must ensure that Probation practitioners and leaders are appropriately trained. Professional development, qualifications and ethical standards should be overseen by an independent body.

3. Possible Models

- We agree that we should continue discussion on further aspects of a future model.
- There is broad agreement that in any future model, publicly owned and run Probation services should be part of a local joint commissioning structures.
- The role of Police and Crime Commissioners and particularly Metropolitan Mayors should be recognised but there must be the same operational independence for chief probation officers as there is currently for chief constables and a clear separation between Police and those involved in the delivery of sentences.
- Future models should address the interface with Youth Justice particularly around transition to adulthood.

Probation Institute

Napo

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BASW Criminal Justice England