

Speech: Probation reform: open letter from the Secretary of State for Justice

Successful offender reform depends on so many people. Among the most vital are probation staff, who seek to improve the lives of those they work with and, by extension, society as a whole. They are key to disrupting the cycle of reoffending.

At present, half of all crime is committed by those who have broken the law before, often more than once: there is no doubt that society is owed a probation service in which judges and magistrates have confidence and which consistently and effectively enforces sentences handed down in our courts.

Since becoming Justice Secretary I have been privileged to see probation in action, helping bridge the gulf between life in prison and life on release. Each day the service must assess the risk that an offender poses to their family and the public and decide about how best to support their fresh start. As importantly, probation staff support victims of violent and sexual crime.

While there is no such thing as a typical offender, all of them must overcome similar hurdles if they are to build a better future. A job, a home, decent mental health, and a determination not to abuse alcohol or drugs: these are the common goals. In pursuit of this, probation services are assisted by an invaluable band of charities and volunteers as well as staff from local authorities, police and the NHS among others.

They have all worked hard through the recent period of fundamental change in probation, driven by significant government reforms to this very complex public service. Over the past year my department has been reviewing the progress of these reforms, and I will myself take a close and careful look at overall performance in the coming months.

The structural reforms saw the caseload divided between the National Probation Service (NPS) – which took on higher-risk offenders – and 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs,) set up to supervise those judged to be low- and medium-risk. Here, the system has encountered unforeseen challenges. Demand has been stronger for the NPS caseload and this has created different financial and operational pressures for both CRCs and the NPS.

We are putting in place balancing policies aimed at addressing these challenges. To date, we have adjusted the CRCs' contracts to reflect more accurately the cost of providing critical frontline services: given this, we are calling on them to provide better support as they help offenders build more positive lives.

It is also clear that 'through-the-gate' arrangements – which support

prisoners as they leave jail and re-join society – are falling short of our vision for a high-quality service that both reforms offenders and commands the confidence of courts. In this, I recognise the problems identified by the Probation Inspectorate and am looking at how to address them most effectively in the context of the wider probation picture.

With mental health and treatment services in such high demand among offenders, it's also my priority to improve their access to and engagement with them. We are developing a joint protocol with the Department of Health and other bodies to bring the work of probation, health and treatment services closer together. And since transparency is key to effective public service reform, probation providers will come under keener scrutiny. Taxpayers should know how money is spent on their behalf to improve lives. To that end, we are giving more funds to the Inspectorate to carry out annual performance reviews and publish individual ratings.

In coming weeks, our conversations with staff, judges, magistrates and other key partners and stakeholders will continue. Reform is as much evolution as revolution and we will never stop seeking to improve the public services on which we depend.

I remain firmly committed to cutting reoffending with the support of an effective and stable probation service.

The wider vision for offender rehabilitation is the same: to push ahead with prison reform, harness our probation skills to achieve the best possible outcomes for offenders – and create a safer society for all.

Press release: Local councils to receive £15 million in extra funding

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (19 July 2017) announced grants totalling £15 million to local councils to help ease the pressures on local services such as housing, schooling and health services resulting from recent migration.

These grants are the first allocations from the [Controlling Migration Fund \(CMF\)](#).

Launched in November 2016, the fund allows local authorities in England to bid for funding totalling £100 million over 4 years from 2016 to 2017, to 2019 to 2020. This funding will supplement local authorities' budgets of £200 billion across the 4 year period up to 2020.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Migration brings great benefits to this country but, in some places, significant population changes in a short space of time have put pressures on public services.

This new funding will help councils rise to the challenge of reducing the impact of migration on local communities in a variety of ways – whether that’s tackling the small minority of rogue landlords who damage neighbourhoods with overcrowded properties, providing English language classes to ensure effective integration rather than reliance on translation services, or boosting the number of teaching assistants in schools to ensure all children get excellent teaching.

The government recognises that local authorities understand their local communities best and can identify specific pressures on services that can result from high or concentrated migration. Councils receiving these grants have developed specific plans to ease local pressures arising from migration and at the same time deliver overall benefits to their wider communities.

Lord Bourne, Minister for Faith said:

Local councils have clearly drawn on their knowledge of their areas to submit strong proposals. This funding will help provide practical solutions for local communities so that councils can improve services for everyone. We will keep a keen eye on progress and make sure other councils can learn from their experiences to see what works best.

The projects announced today are as diverse as the communities they will help. Multiple local authorities have plans to deliver additional English language learning for school children who use English as a second language.

This targeted extra support will mean teachers and teaching assistants can concentrate on the needs of all students equally to raise overall academic attainment levels.

Many authorities also plan to launch or expand English language classes for adults including teaching or instruction on British culture and traditions as well as providing practical advice on how local services work.

The Leader of Harrow Council, Sachin Shah said:

We’re going to fund a teacher to provide English lessons, which will help families integrate and increase their ability to contribute economically. That not only reduces their reliance on the council, but allows us to tap into the skills we need in the borough.

Tackling the small number of rogue landlords is a priority for local authorities. Councils have highlighted areas where landlords take advantage of migrants, housing them in unsafe properties which degrades neighbourhoods.

Authorities will seek to clamp down on these rogue landlords to improve the overall quality of local housing, to improve the local environment and to reduce the impact of illegal migration, often in partnership with Immigration Enforcement.

Manchester City council has received £280,000 for a project to target rogue landlords throughout the city, through joint working of a number of services.

Councillor Bernard Priest, Deputy Leader of Manchester City council said:

We welcome this funding as it will allow us to continue our targeted approach to rogue landlords operating in the private rented sector – in particular flats located above shops – and help improve safety, living conditions, and in turn the wider community.

A number of local councils have also been awarded funding to carry out research into the impact of migration in their area.

Recognising that current and future migration is likely to have impacts on their provision of services, the data gathered will enable them to tailor future service provision for the benefit of all local residents.

The London Borough of Hounslow, for example, has received funding to support a project to identify local services coming under pressures from migration. These services will then in turn receive funding to alleviate pressure for the benefit of the entire local community.

Councillor Steve Curran, Leader of Hounslow council said:

This innovative project will delve deeper into data on local migration pressures; to understand the impact and challenges, and empower our communities to create innovative solutions to ensure Hounslow remains a cohesive and welcoming borough.

The [Controlling Migration Fund](#) is designed to support local areas facing pressures linked to recent immigration. See further details in the [Controlling Migration Fund: allocations table](#) (PDF, 57.7KB, 8 pages) .

The Fund is available over the 4 years from 2016 to 2017, to 2019 to 2020, and is in 2 parts:

- ‘local service impacts’ totalling £100 million, led by DCLG, to help local authorities in England and their communities experiencing high and unexpected volumes of immigration to ease pressures on local services

- enforcement, led by Immigration Enforcement, worth £40 million to direct enforcement action against people in the UK here illegally in order to reduce pressures on local areas.

There is no closing date and bids are assessed on a rolling basis. Funding for services like education and health reflects population changes so the CMF will not duplicate mainstream funding. It may provide additional resources to areas suffering from acute pressures as a result of recent migration.

[Press release: A27 Worthing and Lancing bypass plans go on show today](#)

Road users, business and local people are being encouraged to have their say on the proposals in an eight week public consultation, which runs until 12 September.

The proposals for Worthing and Lancing form part of the Government's investment along the A27 to increase capacity, reduce congestion and fully renew some of the busiest sections of the vital south coast road, which also includes schemes for Arundel and East of Lewes.

An overview of the A27 Worthing and Lancing improvements scheme

Highways England project manager Tom Beasley said:

The plans we're announcing today aim to increase capacity at key junctions in Worthing and Lancing to help reduce journey times and improve safety. We want to make sure the improvements we take forward are the right ones, delivering the most overall benefit and value for drivers, and people living and working in the area.

I urge anyone interested in the proposals to come along to one of the eight public information events that we're holding and to have their say on the proposals by completing the consultation survey online or by post, by Tuesday 12 September.

Highways England has considered a number of options for improving the A27 through Worthing and Lancing from junction improvements to dual carriageway schemes with flyovers. The improvements being consulted on are the ones which best meet the scheme objectives while offering value for money within the scheme's budget. The improvement being proposed by Highways England would upgrade six key junctions along the route in Worthing and Lancing.

The junctions are:

1. Durrington Hill/Salvington Hill:

The existing priority junctions will be converted to a traffic signalled cross road junction.

2. Offington Corner Junction roundabout:

The existing roundabout will be converted to a traffic signalled cross road junction. All approaches and some exits to be widened to accommodate extra slip roads and lanes.

3. Grove Lodge junction:

The approaches would be widened to accommodate two lanes of traffic through the junction.

4. Lyons Farm Retail Park junctions:

The existing junctions would be widened to accommodate more lanes, and creation of new turning arrangements at both junctions.

5. Busticle Lane/Halewick Lane junction:

Provide a new junction to the west of the existing junction with access to and from Halewick Lane.

6. Grinstead Lane/Manor Road junction:

Widen the existing junction approaches and convert the existing roundabout to a new traffic signal controlled junction for traffic turning from Manor Road onto the A27.

Together, these junction upgrades would provide significant extra capacity and reduce delays. Each junction would also have protected pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities, helping to link communities wither side of the road.

Highways England will be holding eight information exhibitions at venues in Worthing and Lancing so that the public can examine the proposals and speak to the project team to find out more and give their feedback.

All responses will be carefully considered before an announcement is made on a preferred route later this year. Subject to a successful outcome to the consultation, people will have another opportunity to have their say once the final plans have been announced, and construction could start as early as 2020 and take around two years to complete.

Details on the proposals and feedback forms will be available online from today until 19 July to 11:45pm on 12 September 2017 at www.highways.gov.uk/a27Worthing-and-Lancing as well as at public information events as follows:

Public information events dates and locations:

Wednesday 19 July Worthing Assembly Hall, Worthing 4pm to 8pm
Tuesday 25 July Harriet Johnson Centre, Sompting 1pm to 8pm
Saturday 29 July Impulse Leisure, Lancing 10am to 2pm
Saturday 12 August Impulse Leisure, Lancing 10am to 2pm
Tuesday 15 August Worthing Assembly Hall, Worthing 1pm to 8pm
Wednesday 16 August Harriet Johnson Centre, Sompting 1pm to 8pm
Saturday 2 September Worthing Assembly Hall, Worthing 10am to 2pm
Wednesday 6 September Manor House, The Boulevard, Worthing 2pm to 8pm

You can also find copies of the brochure and the questionnaire at the following locations throughout the consultation period (19 July to 12 September 2017), during their normal hours of opening:

- Broadwater Library, Dominion Road, Broadwater, Worthing, BN14 8JL
- Broadwater Parish Rooms 117 Broadwater Road, Worthing, BN14 8HT
- Durrington Library Salvington Road, Worthing, BN13 2JD
- Ferring Library The Street, Ferring, BN12 5HL
- Findon Valley Library Lime Tree Avenue, Findon Valley, Worthing, BN14 0DH
- Fishersgate Community Centre West Road, Portslade, BN41 1QH
- Goring Library Mulberry Lane, Goring-by-Sea, Worthing, BN12 4JL
- Harriet Johnson Centre Old School House, Loose Lane, Sompting, BN15 0BG
- Lancing Library Penstone Park, Lancing, BN15 9DL
- Shoreham Library St Mary's Road, Shoreham, BN43 5ZA
- Southwick Community Association 24 Southwick Street, Southwick, BN42 4TE
- The Shoreham Centre 2 Pond Road, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 5WU
- Worthing Library Richmond Road, Worthing, BN11 1HD

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Childcare service opens for parents with children under five](#)

Parents with a child under five years old can now apply for a 30 hours free

childcare place for September 2017.

The new 30 hours free childcare offer for working parents of three and four-year-olds in England doubles the current 15 hours of free childcare currently available to all parents, offering a total saving for eligible working families of up to £5,000 a year.

For parents across the UK, Tax-Free Childcare will cut childcare costs by up to £2,000 per year for each child under 12 years old, or £4,000 per year for disabled children under 17 years old. Parents with a child born on or after 1 April 2013 can now apply for Tax-Free Childcare. All eligible parents will be able to apply for Tax-Free Childcare by the end of 2017.

The government's total childcare offer is backed by a record investment of more than £6 billion per year by 2020, supporting working families and those on low incomes.

Eligible parents can apply for both 30 hours free childcare and Tax-Free Childcare via the government's online childcare service. They can apply for all of their children once their youngest child qualifies, avoiding the need to provide the same information twice and saving them valuable time.

The service initially opened to parents with children under the age of four, and disabled children under 17, in April 2017 and more than 140,000 parents have already successfully applied through the service.

Parents can access the Childcare Choices website, www.childcarechoices.gov.uk, to see what childcare offers they could be eligible for. The Childcare Choices website includes a [Childcare Calculator](#) for parents to compare all the government's childcare offers and check what works best for their families.

The site also enables parents to pre-register for email alerts that will notify them when they can apply, as well as providing details of existing government childcare offers.

[News story: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon visits Ghana](#)

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Foreign Office Minister for the Commonwealth and the United Nations travelled to Ghana for the first time in his new role to reaffirm the importance of Ghanaian-UK relations, and reenergise the Commonwealth, ahead of the Commonwealth Summit meeting in April. This follows the Foreign Secretary's visit to the country in March.

While there, Lord Ahmad met President Akufo-Addo to discuss Ghana's place as

a beacon of democracy and stability in the region and its role in strengthening Commonwealth values such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Lord Ahmad discussed boosting Commonwealth trade links with the Minister of Trade. Trade between Commonwealth states is estimated to currently be over \$680 billion and is forecast to grow to \$1 trillion by 2020.

These figures show the scale of what is happening within the Commonwealth today in terms of trade, investment and the jobs.

The Minister also met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Security, and the Minister of Gender.

Young people's hearts and minds are vital to the future of the Commonwealth. Of the nearly 2.4 billion people that live in Commonwealth countries, 60 per cent are under 30. Lord Ahmad reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring that all Commonwealth citizens have a voice in shaping the future and direction of the institution by meeting Chevening Scholars and recipients of the Queens Leadership and International Leaders award.

Lord Ahmad also paid a visit to the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, where he set out the UK's vision for the future of peacekeeping and UN reform. The Minister also met with victims of child trafficking and heard from NGOs that are tackling this abhorrent practice.

After the visit, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

I was delighted to meet President Akufo-Addo, some of his key Ministers and Ghanaians from all walks of life to discuss how we can strengthen the Commonwealth's focus on promoting democratic values, development, security and prosperity.

Ghana is our historic ally, being the first African member-state to join the Commonwealth family in 1957 after its independence. And most importantly, we see Ghana as one of our closest partners who can help us renew the Commonwealth for this and for future generations.

The Commonwealth Summit next year presents a unique opportunity to re-energise and re-shape the Commonwealth to ensure that it remains more relevant than ever in the 21st century.

Background

The Commonwealth is home to a third of the world's population, many of its fastest growing economies, and half of the globe's top 20 emerging cities; intra-Commonwealth trade is projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2020; and it provides us with a unique network of common language and laws.

The Commonwealth Summit will be hosted the week of 16th April 2018,

immediately following the closing of the Commonwealth Games in Queensland, with venues including: St James's Palace, Lancaster House, Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle.

Further information