

# Bigger, better Probation Service to cut crime

- Lord Chancellor vows to tackle reoffending with extra investment
- newly-unified Probation Service plans record recruitment drive
- offenders face closer supervision and home visits to better protect children and partners

More than £300 million worth of extra funding has been pumped into the service since July 2019.

The funding is helping to more than double the recruitment of probation officers, from the usual annual intake of 600 trainee probation officers to [1,000 last year](#) with plans to recruit a record 1,500 this financial year. This will mean staff can keep a closer eye on the most dangerous offenders and ensure many more take up the opportunity to reform their criminal ways.

Unifying the service will ensure there is better and more consistent supervision of offenders and closer working with the police, NHS and local authorities. The service will work in 12 regions across England and Wales and a new, specialist National Security Division will be specifically tasked with the enhanced monitoring of terrorists, serious organised criminals and very high-risk offenders.

A refresh of the national standards for probation will ensure staff meet face-to-face with all the offenders they supervise at least once a month, with more frequent meetings for higher-risk offenders. For the first time, the standards also set an expectation that probation staff will visit offenders' homes to protect children, partners and other family members from domestic and sexual abuse. In some cases, such safeguarding visits will be joint with police and social services.

Combined with its increasing use of electronic monitoring, [including GPS and sobriety tags](#), the Probation Service will be even more focused on keeping people safe.

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Robert Buckland MP QC, said:

The work probation does to protect the public from harm and rehabilitate offenders is too often overlooked but it is vitally important given 80% of crime is reoffending.

The government is backing the new Probation Service with more money and more staff so that the public is better protected, crime is cut and fewer people become victims.

The Probation Service will continue its important work in helping victims to explain the impact of crime on them at parole hearings and to ask for licence conditions to prevent offenders from contacting or going near them. Eligible victims will now be automatically referred to the Victim Contact Scheme under recent changes to the [Victims' Code](#), and there are plans to extend the Scheme to victims of stalkers and harassers serving less than 12 months in prison.

There will also be extra investment in tackling the drivers of crime and getting offenders to ditch it for good. [Charities and companies have been awarded nearly £200 million](#) to provide and signpost vital support services that help reduce reoffending, such as employment, mental healthcare and housing advice. With reoffending accounting for 80% of all recorded crime, these services will help to prevent thousands of people becoming victims each year and save some of the £18 billion annual cost of repeat offending.

It comes on top of the [£220 million package announced earlier this year to tackle crime](#), including the largest extra investment in drug treatment in 15 years. Every prisoner will be able to continue drug recovery on release and the funding will expand the availability of treatment for those serving community sentences. With offenders around 50 per cent more likely to break the law again if released without somewhere to stay, the funding will also be used to temporarily house around 3,000 otherwise homeless prison leavers in basic hostels this year.

The changes to probation will also give the government greater levers over community sentences, including the delivery of unpaid work which Ministers want to make more visible to the public and used more frequently to clean up the country's streets, parks and waterways.

## **Notes to editors**

- The supervision of low- and medium-risk offenders and delivery of unpaid work and behavioural change programmes will now be carried out by the public sector Probation Service, alongside the supervision of high-risk offenders which was already the responsibility of the public sector.
- More than 7,000 staff from private sector Community Rehabilitation Companies will come together with 3,500 probation officers already in the public sector in the new Probation Service.