

One thousand probation officers recruited to protect the public

- Probation Service recruits record 1,000 trainees in past year
- staffing boost will improve supervision of offenders and help cut crime
- further 1,500 to be recruited this year as services are unified

The 1,007 new recruits, a record number for a single year in the history of probation, will allow staff to keep an even closer eye on offenders, including the most dangerous, and prevent more people from becoming victims. That record is set to be smashed again this year, with a further 1,500 by March next year, thanks to an extra £310 million invested in the service over the last 2 years.

Probation officers supervise offenders leaving prison on licence and those serving community sentences. They protect the public by meeting regularly with offenders and ensuring they are complying with the conditions of their release from prison or sentence and not committing crime. The use of location-tracking GPS tags and close work with the police helps them to do this. They also ensure offenders access services that reduce the risk of them committing more crime, including drug or alcohol treatment, accommodation and education.

Where offenders have been released from prison and breach their conditions or commit further offences, probation officers have the power to recall them back to prison, helping to cut crime and protect the public.

Increased staffing in the Probation Service means probation officers will be able to supervise fewer offenders, and be better able to use their professional skills and legal powers to help stop offenders from committing more crime.

Prisons and Probation Minister Alex Chalk said:

Probation officers are unsung crime fighters, sending offenders back to prison if they breach their licence conditions, and helping others turn their lives around so that they don't commit more crime.

These new recruits are a key part of our plan to make the country safer, alongside 20,000 more police officers, tougher sentences and the building of 18,000 new prison places.

Public safety will be boosted further later this month when the supervision of low and medium risk offenders comes back under public sector control, meaning that probation officers will be able to devote more time to the most high-risk offenders.

With reoffending accounting for around 80% of all recorded crime, these improvements to the service are designed to prevent thousands of people becoming victims each year and save some of the £18 billion annual cost of repeat offending.

As well as increasing the total number of probation officers in training, nearly 1 in 5 new recruits are from an ethnic minority, demonstrating that a crime-fighting career in the probation service is open and welcoming to all.

The Probation Service is working closely with experts in the charity sector who provide specialist services aimed at cutting crime. Last month it was announced that almost £200 million will be provided to charities and organisations across the country to deliver important services to help offenders turn their backs on crime.

If you are interested in finding out more about being a Probation Officer visit www.traintobeaprobationofficer.com