

Press release: Justice Secretary launches new prison and probation service to reform offenders

- Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to replace National Offender Management Service (NOMS)
- new service will be responsible for rolling out government's reform programme to reduce reoffending and protect the public
- the service will launch new leadership programme and new promotion opportunities for staff
- changes backed by additional £100 million to boost frontline by an extra 2,500 staff

HMPPS will have full responsibility for the operational management of offenders in custody and the community, including strengthening security in prisons, tackling extremism and building intelligence about criminal gangs.

Supported by work to recruit an extra 2,500 officers, the new service will launch leadership and promotion programmes for prison and probation officers to further professionalise and build pride in the service.

The new operationally focused service will be supported by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) taking on responsibility for overall future policy direction, setting standards, scrutinising prison performance and commissioning services.

Justice Secretary Liz Truss said:

This new and operationally focused frontline service will implement the reforms we have announced to make our prisons safe and cut reoffending.

Our prison and probation officers do a vital job and they deserve to work in a world-class organisation which supports them in reforming offenders and keeping the public safe.

Creating HMPPS will bring clarity to managing our prisons and probation services while further professionalising staff and building pride in their work.

The move follows the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper which outlined an overhaul of the prisons estate with the forthcoming Prison and Courts Bill due to make reforming offenders a key duty of prisons for the first time.

For the first time, there will also be a Board Director with specific responsibility for women across the whole system, reporting into HMPPS Chief Executive, Michael Spurr.

Michael Spurr said:

The launch of HMPPS provides a great opportunity to focus on and improve operational performance in prisons and probation.

There is a great deal to do but I am confident that with the additional resources the government are providing, we can transform the system and deliver the high quality of service the public deserve.

The service will be dedicated to professionalising the prison and probation workforce. New schemes to improve promotion opportunities have been launched, including:

- enhanced qualifications for probation officers
- a new leadership programme
- an apprenticeship scheme (to launch in April 2017)
- higher pay and recognition for specialist skilled officers dealing with complex issues such as counter-terrorism, suicide and self-harm support

This wholesale, organisational reform will be supported by measures within the Prisons and Courts Bill, which will set out a new framework and clear system of accountability for prisons, building on the wide-ranging reforms set out in the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper.

Notes to editors

Progress on recruitment and retention:

- we have made 389 job offers to new recruits wanting to join the Prison Service which puts the government on track to recruit the first 400 of the extra 2,500 frontline officers committed to be in place by the end of March 2017
- boosting pay for hard-working staff by up to £4,000 at some of the most difficult-to-recruit prisons and those with high levels of staff-turnover, including HMP High Down, HMP Downview and HMP Coldingley
- appointing 75 mentors for new starter prison officers to help them in their first few months in the job which we know can be a difficult time
- providing retention payments at sites with the greatest levels of staff turnover. For example at Feltham which is close to Heathrow we provide a £3000 retention payment;
- starting targeted local recruitment initiatives at 30 sites so that governors can more easily recruit the people they need
- launching a new Prison Officer apprenticeship scheme next year for over 1000 new officers that will help increase diversity and make it easier to join the Prison Service
- developing a new graduate scheme that will encourage people from a broader range of backgrounds to join the Service
- we have launched a Troops to Officers scheme that will support people to join the prison service after leaving the military