

Public safety boosted with 1,000 new probation officers

- Thousand new recruits boosting workforce by 29% to improve public protection
- Major three-year plan to improve training and better share workloads for frontline staff will help reduce reoffending
- Part of Government's plan to make the country safer alongside police recruitment and prison building

With 800 new probation officers already in training, the commitment to recruit at least 1,000 more this year alone will see the workforce grow by 29%.

The move is part of the Government's efforts to make the country safer, with the recruitment of 20,000 more police officers and the building of over 10,000 new prison places.

Public protection will also be improved by staff having a more balanced workload when services are brought back under National Probation Service control next June. Under the changes, probation officers will also support less dangerous criminals with underlying issues such as drug and alcohol addiction, as well as continuing to keep the public safe by supervising high-risk offenders.

The [Probation Workforce Strategy](#) published today also sets out plans to improve training and shift administrative work away from frontline staff so they have more time and skills to better monitor and support offenders and help cut crime.

Prisons and Probation Minister Lucy Frazer QC MP said:

Every day we hear about the work police officers do to capture criminals and bring them to court, but whether offenders first go to prison or get a community sentence, it is probation officers working hard behind-the-scenes who help them turn their backs on crime.

This new vision sets out our long-term plan to boost the workforce not just in numbers, but also in terms of experience and skill, so that the Probation Service continues to play its vital role in reducing reoffending, already at a 12-year-low.

The Probation Workforce Strategy also includes plans to:

- Develop new IT systems with greater automation giving staff more time to

focus on working directly with offenders.

- Foster the skills of the most talented officers through new training programmes and career opportunities, helping retain staff and make better use of their experience and knowledge.
- Create a new route for existing junior probation officers to achieve senior roles helping the Probation Service make quicker use of the experienced staff it already has.
- Improve wellbeing schemes and give more emotional support to frontline staff with professional counselling and buddy schemes.

HM Prison and Probation Service will also review how recruitment and training works to attract a more diverse group of jobseekers and respond better, and quicker, to increased demand. This could mean having more regular intakes, introducing apprenticeships or making changes that make probation as attractive to university leavers as other graduate programmes.

There are also plans to increase diversity with targeted recruitment campaigns, new regional Race Ambassadors and inclusivity training for all staff.

The selection process for new recruits has already changed, with a new online behaviour-based assessment at application-stage and role-play activities at interview that allow applicants to show how they would react to real-life scenarios they are likely to face as probation officers. These innovative changes have already proven to be an effective means of increasing the diversity of those appointed.