

# Statement to Parliament: Prisons and probation

A new executive agency of the Ministry of Justice, called Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, will replace the National Offender Management Service from 1 April 2017.

The Service will be responsible for the roll out of the government's programme to improve the way we reform offenders to protect the public and tackle the unacceptable levels of reoffending. Michael Spurr will become the Chief Executive of the new HM Prison and Probation Service from 1 April 2017.

HM Prison and Probation Service will have full responsibility for all operations across prison and probation. The Ministry of Justice will take charge of commissioning services, future policy development and be accountable for setting standards and scrutinising prison and probation performance.

The creation of HM Prison and Probation Service will build a world-leading, specialist agency, dedicated to professionalising the prison and probation workforce, backed by an additional £100m a year and 2,500 additional prison officers.

The Service will be a place that staff are proud to work, attracting the brightest and best talent to deliver modernised offender reform, strengthened security, counter-terrorism and intelligence capability.

In recognition of the vital work carried out by prison and probation staff, new schemes to improve promotion opportunities have been launched, including; enhanced professional qualifications for probation officers, a new leadership programme, an apprenticeship scheme to launch in April and higher pay and recognition for specialist skilled officers dealing with complex issues such as counter-terrorism, suicide and self-harm support and assessment.

This forms part of our far-reaching organisational reforms to the system, which will make services more accountable to Ministers for delivery and performance. This will be further supported by measures within the Prison and Courts Bill, which will create a new framework and clear system of accountability for prisons. Probation services will also offer improved training and learning opportunities for offenders to ensure they do not return to a life of crime, working hand in glove with prisons to ensure a more integrated approach. We will set out more details later this spring.

A key priority of HM Prison and Probation Service will be to focus on the particular needs of offenders. To meet the needs of women offenders across the whole system, for the first time there will be a Board Director responsible for women across custody and community. Sonia Crozier, Director of Probation, will take on this responsibility (reporting directly to the CEO) from 1 April 2017.

We set out also in December 2016 the government's plans for the youth justice system, putting education and training at the heart of youth custody.

We are working closely with the Youth Justice Board to review existing governance arrangements and will set out changes in due course.

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## **Jonathan Ashworth MP, Shadow Secretary of Health, has today written to the Prime Minister to ask for...**

**Jonathan Ashworth MP, Shadow Secretary of Health, has today written to the Prime Minister to ask for clarity regarding funding arrangements for social care at Surrey County Council.**

The full text of the letter is below.

The Prime Minister

10 Downing Street

London SW1A 2AA

Prime Minister,

I am writing to you in light of today's revelations about text messages sent by the leader of Surrey County Council which suggest that the Government has agreed to funding arrangements for social care that allow the cancellation of a proposed referendum on a council tax increase in this Council.

Given your failure to provide clarity on the issue when asked in the Chamber today, and bearing in mind the great importance of this issue given the crisis faced by social care in our country, I am hereby requesting for the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to make an urgent statement to the House tomorrow.

This news has caused considerable embarrassment to the Government, in particular the Secretary of State for Health and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To rule out any suggestions of wrongdoing, the Government now needs to confirm that no special deal has been offered or granted to Surrey County Council.

I believe that the British public deserve full transparency on the issue. In the public interest, I therefore ask you to publish immediately and without delay;

1. The memorandum of understanding referenced in the text messages sent by the leader of Surrey County Council;
2. All text message correspondence between Surrey County Council and Government officials in the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Treasury regarding social care funding and/or the proposed referendum;
3. All written or electronic correspondence between Surrey County Council and Government officials in the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Treasury regarding social care funding and/or the proposed referendum;
4. Details and minutes of all meetings held between Surrey County Council and Government officials in the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department of Health, and the Treasury regarding social care funding and/or the proposed referendum.

Additionally, as the Prime Minister knows the Ministerial Code requires holders of public office to “act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner” and that “information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so”. I am therefore asking you to confirm that any misconduct by Ministers related to this matter will be investigated and treated as a breach of the Ministerial Code.

Given the questions these news raise about proper conduct and transparency of Government policy-making, I am sending a copy of this letter to the Director General of the Propriety and Ethics Team. I will also be publishing this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Ashworth MP

cc. Sue Gray, Director General, Propriety and Ethics Team  
and Head of Private Offices Group

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**Four SRUC Oatridge Campus students**

## **shortlisted for the prestigious Lantra awards**

Four students from the Oatridge Campus of SRUC have been shortlisted for the prestigious Lantra awards in the categories of Higher Education, Engineering, Conservation and Equine Studies.

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## **Policy paper: UK statement on sustainable palm oil: final progress report**

How organisations in the UK are meeting their various commitments to source sustainable palm oil and reporting key developments within their sectors.

This is the final update to commitments made in the [sustainable production of palm oil: UK statement](#).

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