



# Justice Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon David Gauke MP  
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
102 Petty France  
London SW1H 9AJ

13th September 2018

## Transforming Rehabilitation

Thank you for your letter of 27 July regarding the future of probation. As you will know, this is an issue of great interest to our Committee, given the many serious and large-scale problems which have arisen due to the major structural reforms to the probation system introduced in 2014 and 2015.

We were encouraged that you agree with us that there have been significant challenges, particularly with CRC contracts. We welcome a number of points in your consultation on the future of the probation system, including the introduction of clearer minimum standards and increasing opportunities for the involvement of voluntary sector organisations. We are particularly pleased that the consultation specifically aims to strengthen confidence in community sentences, since this is a key concern for our Committee.

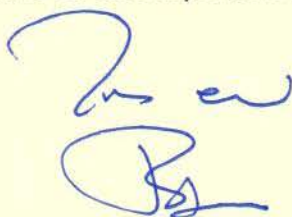
However, we are disappointed that the consultation does not go far enough. We concluded earlier this year in our report *Transforming Rehabilitation: Ninth report of session 2017-19* that we were unconvinced that the current model can ever deliver an effective or viable probation service. We recommended that the Ministry of Justice initiate a review into the long-term future and sustainability of delivering probation services under the models introduced by the TR reforms, including how performance under the TR system might compare to an alternative system for delivering probation. In our view the scope of the current consultation therefore represents a missed opportunity.

In particular, we are unconvinced that splitting offenders by risk was the right way to deliver the probation system. Therefore we are also particularly interested in your response to our call on the Government to ask HMI Probation to conduct a review of how offenders should be distributed between the NPS and CRCs, to investigate the impact of changing offender risk and how the NPS and CRCs manage this matter.

We note that you intend to procure new CRC contracts from 2020. Our committee will also want to pay special attention to the new contractual arrangements, given the past failures to

tackle under-performance. In 2017-18, HMPPS wrote off an abandoned claim of nearly £6 million for recoveries from CRCs; this raises serious concerns about commercial capability within the department. It is vitally important that previous failures in the contracting model are not repeated.

We note that you will not provide a formal response to the recommendations in our June 2018 report until October, and look forward to receiving that response and to continued engagement with you and your officials on this important matter.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bob Neill', is positioned above the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Bob Neill MP  
Chair  
Justice Committee