

Let's fix

# PROBATION MUDAI ION

BACK PUBLIC — BACK LOCAL

The probation service in England and Wales plays an essential role in protecting communities and supporting rehabilitation. UNISON is proud to represent probation staff in a range of jobs, including approved premises residential workers, community payback supervisors, case administrators, victim liaison officers, probation services officers, probation officers – and many others.

When probation is working it often goes unnoticed – when it's done well, it can be invisible. But when probation doesn't work – when it's weakened or broken up – it becomes a problem for everyone.

## Broken by the government

In 2014 the government decided to implement a programme called 'Transforming Rehabilitation' (TR) which split the probation service in two and introduced competition and private sector involvement.

Prior to that probation was a single service delivered locally by 35 probation trusts in England and Wales. These award-winning trusts were high performing and worked well with

other local statutory partners including police, local government and charities.

Then everything changed, with half the workforce going into the centralised National Probation Service (NPS) to deal with the most serious offenders and half to private companies running the 21 new Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs).

At the time UNISON argued that this split between the NPS and the CRCs would damage effective probation practice. And we warned that privatising services would lead to hidden costs and suck public money into private profits – with the real price being paid by staff, service users and local communities. And we were right.

## A crisis in probation

The results of this dangerous experiment have been all too predictable. A series of reports by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation have highlighted deteriorating services, rising risks to public safety and unmanageable workloads and stress for staff. In June 2018 the House of Commons Justice Select Committee concluded that it was '...unconvinced that Transforming Rehabilitation can ever deliver an effective or viable probation service.'

This crisis goes far beyond badly drawn contracts, or privatisation. UNISON believes that TR failed because:

- it broke the local links which previously sustained the service
- the NPS developed a monolithic, one-size fits all, centralised command and control model which trampled on local innovation and responsiveness
- it introduced commercial incentives into a people-centred service.

UNISON strongly believes that neither the CRC contracts, nor the centralised command and control approach of the NPS, have been a success and that both need to change.

## UNISON's vision

Rehabilitation, communities and probation staff are all being put at risk by the systemic failure of the government's probation reforms. This can't go on.

As a union that represents the whole range of probation staff, UNISON is well placed to see at first hand the problems and to understand what needs to be done to fix probation.

We believe that the probation service needs to be reunited as a publicly owned and locally run service. We want an end to the artificial and damaging split in the service, an end to the failing private CRC contracts and the return of probation to local democratic control.

These changes are the best way to, once again, deliver an effective service that works for clients, local communities and staff. UNISON is determined to make that happen.

**You can be part of our campaign. Go to [unison.org.uk/fixprobation](http://unison.org.uk/fixprobation) to find out more about how you can get involved.**

**Work in probation and not in UNISON? Join today at [joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org) call us on 0800 171 2193 or ask a UNISON rep for an application form.**

**Let's fix probation. Back public — Back local**