

COMMUNITY JUSTICE FILES 31

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The following provides details of key government papers on ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’, government papers on rehabilitation more generally which sit alongside the ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ reforms, and position statements and responses to ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ by other bodies including non-governmental organisations.

Proposals for ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ were published initially by the Ministry of Justice in ***Transforming Rehabilitation: A Revolution in the Way we Manage Offenders, 2013***. This set out how the Government intends to fund rehabilitation in the community through a new system of ‘payments by results’, and to reconfigure the way probation services are commissioned and delivered in the future. The document asked for views on the proposals, including on the detailed specifications and operational design of the new system. The consultation was completed on 22 February 2013 and the Government responses to the consultation, ***Transforming Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Reform*** and ***Transforming Rehabilitation: Summary of responses*** were published three months later in May 2013. *Transforming Rehabilitation: A revolution in the way we manage offenders, 2013*; *Transforming Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Reform*; and *Transforming Rehabilitation: Summary of responses* can all be found at:

<https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/transforming-rehabilitation>

The call for organisations to bid for rehabilitation services, as set out in the Government’s Transforming Rehabilitation Strategy, was made in September, 2013. Potential providers were asked either to bid directly with the Ministry of Justice to deliver services (Tier 1 providers) or to sub-contract with Tier I providers including through grant funding arrangements (Tier II and Tier III providers). The deadline to register bids was 14 November, 2013, and it is intended that all contracts will be awarded and mobilised by 2015. To facilitate finding the 21 new Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) who will deliver rehabilitation services currently undertaken by the Probation Service, the Government has published a series of documents on the competitive tendering process. These include the following:

- A formal notification of the launch of the competition: A ***Contract Notice***;
- A ***Principles of Competition Document***;
- Details of ***The Tier II and Tier III Registration Process***;
- A ***Target Operating Model – Rehabilitation Programme***;

- Details of the new funding arrangements: **Payment Mechanism – Straw Man**;
- A refinement and updating of the funding arrangements in the light of feedback received in response to the proposals: **Payment Mechanism – Market Feedback and Development Considerations**;
- Modelled data for 2005 to 2010 showing the number of offenders in each Payment by Results cohort and the 1-year re-offending rates among those offenders in each of the 21 new Contract Package Areas (CPAs) - **Modelled management information on offender cohorts and re-offending in the 21 planned Transforming Rehabilitation Programme Contract Package Areas**.

All of these documents can be found at:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/transforming-rehabilitation/competition>

Transforming Rehabilitation: A Summary of Evidence on Reducing Reoffending, 2013

In order to “support the work of policy makers, practitioners and other partners involved in offender management and related service provision”, the Ministry of Justice has published an “overview of key evidence relating to reducing the reoffending of adult offenders”. Assessing a range of factors including drug misuse, attitudes to offending, accommodation and employment problems; as well as factors associated with desistance from offending such as motivation, hope and the strength of social relationships, the report concludes that “good quality supervision, case management and holistic, tailored approaches can support and enable rehabilitation and reintegration”. *Transforming Rehabilitation: A Summary of Evidence on Reducing Reoffending, 2013* can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243718/evidence-reduce-reoffending.pdf

Rapid evidence assessments on intermediate outcomes and reoffending

The Ministry of Justice has published a series of papers which assess the literature on intermediate outcomes relating to various interventions with offenders including: arts projects, family and intimate relationships, mentoring, and peer relationships. Links to the reports can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rapid-evidence-assessments-on-intermediate-outcomes-and-reoffending>

Reforms for female offenders will improve family ties and employment links

On 25 October 2013, the Government announced proposals to improve family ties and employment links for female offenders. In re-rolling all women’s prisons as ‘resettlement prisons’, the new model aims to imprison female offenders as close to their homes as possible, and to forge links with local employers, thereby providing practical training relevant to work opportunities in local labour markets. The announcement coincided with

the publication of three reports highlighting the distinctive needs of female offenders compared to males. These are:

- **Government Response to the Justice Committee’s Second Report of Session 2013-14: Female Offenders**
- **Stocktake of Women’s Services for Offenders in the Community**
- **Women’s Custodial Estate Review**

The press release of the announcement, including links to the above reports can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reforms-for-female-offenders-will-improve-family-ties-and-employment-links>

Clinks: Transforming Rehabilitation

Clinks, the representative organization for the voluntary and community sector working with offenders, has developed a live webpage to keep organizations updated as new information on ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ becomes available. The website includes: competition updates, information on timescales and funding, a list of organizations that have registered an interest in providing rehabilitation services, and training and events. Clinks has also published a discussion paper *Rehabilitation: What Does Good Look Like?* which provides an overview of ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’, summarizes key relevant research, aims to stimulate debate on key issues affecting the voluntary and community sector, and explores the need for a clearer vision of what ‘good’ looks like in the rehabilitation of offenders. The Clinks website can be found at:

<http://www.clinks.org/criminal-justice/transforming-rehabilitation>

Rehabilitation: What Does Good Look Like? can be found at:

<http://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/What%20does%20good%20rehabilitation%20look%20like.pdf>

Probation Chief’s Association: Evidence to the Justice Select Committee on Transforming Rehabilitation

The Probation Chief’s Association (PCA) has raised concerns with the Justice Select Committee that the proposed operating model for ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ “could increase risks to public safety through fragmenting offender management, ongoing risk assessment, service delivery, and enforcement functions across the National Probation Service and contracted providers of CRCs.” Doubts were also raised about the time available for proper testing of the new model “especially as much of the detail over roles and functions have yet to be defined”. The PCA has also published its views on ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’ in a Parliamentary Briefing, *The views of the Probation Chiefs Association (PCA) on the Transforming Rehabilitation programme*. This concludes:

There are flaws in the business case and rationale behind the Transforming Rehabilitation programme: Probation Trusts are high performing public

service organisations, yet they are to be replaced by an untested model. It is also not clear that the reforms would achieve any substantial public savings, or whether an inclusive and competitive market would actually emerge and so not obvious that a key reform – to enable through-the-gate services for supervision for offenders released from short periods of custody – could in fact be funded as a result.

A summary of the evidence provided to the Justice Select Committee as well as a link to a video of the session can be found at:

<http://probationchiefs.org/2013/11/13/pca-give-evidence-to-the-justice-select-committee-on-transforming-rehabilitation/>

The Parliamentary Briefing, The views of the Probation Chiefs Association (PCA) on the Transforming Rehabilitation programme can be found at:

<http://probationchiefs.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/PCA-briefings-on-Transforming-Rehabilitation.pdf>

User Voice: Only Offenders Can Stop Offending

The organisation, User Voice, has published feedback gathered during a series of service user led focus groups undertaken to record reactions to ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’.

The report, *Invisible Input: What Service Users think about ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’*, 2013 makes a number of recommendations including:

- Sufficient transparency must be in place to ensure that the results-based incentive system is not detrimental to the needs of marginalised or hard to reach individuals.
- Care must be taken when establishing and then assessing performance targets as over reliance on misleading, or false, targets can often have a negative impact on the services available to those in need.
- Each service user should be given a personalised assessment. This should take into account what steps that specific individual needs to take in order to stop offending. Particular attention should be given to housing, addiction, employment, BME groups, female offenders and mental health issues.

Invisible Input: What Service Users think about ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’, 2013 can be found at:

<http://www.uservoice.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/User-Voice-Invisible-input-What-service-users-think-about-%E2%80%98transforming-rehabilitation%E2%80%99.pdf>

Re-imagining Futures: Exploring Arts Interventions and the Process of Desistance

A research report into the role of arts in offender rehabilitation has been published by the Arts Alliance. Carried out by Northumbria University and Bath Spa University, *Re-imagining Futures: Exploring Arts Interventions and the Process of Desistance* highlights how the arts can support positive changes linked to desistance from criminal behaviour. *Inter alia*, the report found that:

- Participation in arts activities enables individuals to begin to redefine themselves, an important factor in desistance from crime.
- Arts projects facilitate high levels of engagement.
- Arts projects can have a positive impact on how people manage themselves during their sentence, particularly on their ability to cooperate with others.

Re-imagining Futures: Exploring Arts Interventions and the Process of Desistance can be found at:

[http://www.artsalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/Reimagining Futures Research Report_Final.pdf](http://www.artsalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/Reimagining_Futures_Research_Report_Final.pdf)

Through the Gateway: How Computers Can Transform Rehabilitation

The Prison Reform Trust and the Prisoners Education Trust have published a report on the role of computers in prisoner rehabilitation. *Through the Gateway: How Computers Can Transform Rehabilitation* 2013 argues that “the digital divide between people in prison and in the community is rapidly widening and will make resettlement more difficult if these skills have not been developed”. It finds that “the main barriers for prisons using ICT to improve rehabilitation are concerns about security, financial constraints, lack of a co-ordinated strategy for using ICT to improve rehabilitation, licencing issues and insufficient central resources”. To overcome these barriers it recommends that “there should be a clear national strategy and Prison Service Order defining the requirement for prisoners to have access to interactive, updated and secure web content”.

Through the Gateway: How Computers Can Transform Rehabilitation can be found at:

<http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Through%20the%20gateway.pdf>

The growing influence of social media

For the first time, a major change in Probation has been conducted through the interactive lens of social media: Twitter, blogs, YouTube and online discussion groups. The availability of comment on what has been happening has been immediate, informed and eclectic in content. Press releases, newspaper articles, Ministry of Justice papers, journal articles, Parliamentary debates, conference outputs and many more random pieces of comment and information have emerged quickly, almost instantly at times, contributing to a debate which has largely been open, transparent and comprehensive, at least on the cyber airwaves if not intended or encouraged by official government sources. So, despite attempts by government to impose a 'corporate silencing' by exerting pressure on senior probation staff not to discuss ideas which were in opposition to Transforming Rehabilitation, TR has been the subject of much discussion, much of which has been questioning in content. It was certainly noted that Twitter went silent for a few weeks in the early days of this gagging mechanism but gradually voices re-emerged, sometimes

cloaked in a degree of anonymity, but unwilling to allow such a major transformation of the probation world to pass without comment.

Twitter is a great mechanism for signposting readers to most of the leading blogs in this area. However if you're not a Twitter user you can bookmark some of the major blogs on your computer and go direct to see the latest news. Blogs tend to have their own niche market and I would highlight four which have offered a reasonably comprehensive view of TR developments, though each with distinctive audiences and ideas.

The first is by Jim Brown and the blog is called **On Probation**. It can be found at <http://probationmatters.blogspot.co.uk>. He introduces his blog in this way:

Welcome to the wonderful world of probation! These are the personal thoughts of an ordinary probation officer struggling to come to terms with constant change, whilst trying to do a useful job for society. Sadly, change is so often obviously not progress. I am fully aware that my views do not represent official policy of government, my Service or possibly anyone else - but hey - it's my blog!

Providing news on an almost daily basis, this blog reports and pulls together information from a variety of sources. It is the one blog that also has an active discussion following each successive release so not only do you get the benefit from the blog itself but you see some of the debate and discussion unfold. This blogger has worked tirelessly to bring every item of news to the attention of the reader on what he dubs this 'omnishambles'! The blog frequently quotes from other sources thus making it a useful check on whether you have picked up information from a sometimes bewildering array of useful locations - a priceless and tireless contribution.

The second blog to highlight is written by Joe Kuipers, a probation trust chair and his, sometimes literary, blog is **Fruit - probation review: a new look**. This can be found at <http://joekuipers49.blogspot.co.uk>. This blogger writes from the position of responding to government demands on Trusts to support the transforming rehabilitation process. It gives an original insight into the dilemmas and difficulties facing Trusts in advising and supporting their staff. It has been an important and unique source of many of the official documents which have been sent to the Trusts. Though careful not to breach confidentiality the blogger has provided a nuanced insight into managing an organisation at the point of its own dismantling.

The third blogger to highlight is **Russell Webster**. This blogger has offered two distinct, if overlapping contributions to the debate. Firstly he has blogged on many of the issues arising from TR as well as on many other criminal justice issues with a particular insight into PbR. This can be found at <http://www.russellwebster.com/blog/>. One testimonial states:

Russell's blog is an eclectic mix of topics that broaden my horizons and helps me to see the bigger picture. An essential requirement in the ever changing multi-agency hodge podge the Criminal Justice System sometimes is!

Secondly, he offers links to key publications, comments and indeed any contribution to the debate as owner of a Scoop-it site <http://www.scoop.it/t/probation-review>. Russell has comprehensively pulled together in one place every written piece, without prejudice to its content, so that those wishing to catch up on the huge variety of inputs in the public domain can just go to the Scoop-it site and search.

The fourth blogger to highlight is produced via the infrastructural organisation, **Clinks**, that represents the not-for-profit sector at <http://www.clinks.org/community/blog-posts>. This produces blogs to inform and influence the voluntary sector perspective as it makes decisions about its participation in TR. It states its purpose as:

Welcome to Clinks Blogs. Here you'll find blogs from Clinks staff, and invited others, on matters of interest to the Voluntary and Community Sector working within the Criminal Justice System.

There are many other bloggers that make a periodic contribution to this debate. They only differ from the above examples in terms of frequency and tend to focus on particular issues which excite their interest from time to time. In order to give you a flavour of these blogs I have highlighted the following contributors though they are, by no means, the only ones that have made comments on the TR debate, but they do represent comments from a variety of perspectives.

1. @Probation Officer is available at <http://poofficer.blogspot.co.uk>, described by the blogger himself:

I'm a Probation Officer working in the UK. I've created this blog as a continuation of my tweets, hoping to show the public what we do in Probation and hopefully share my knowledge with some of my colleagues and gain a little bit too!

A more occasional blogger, though prolific tweeter, @Probation Officer's blog has offered a great perspective from a fieldworker and has produced some poignant comments on the impact of the TR changes.

2. The Napo general secretary's blog (<http://www.napo.org.uk/about/napolog.cfm>) by Ian Lawrence has been an important contribution, offering up-to date reflections at the heart of the campaign by Napo against the TR changes. In addition, the Napo Discussion forum, <http://www.napo2.org.uk/phpBB3/index.php> is always worth a visit.

3. Rob Allen blogging at <http://reformingprisons.blogspot.co.uk> on a range of issues, which befits his status as an astute penal commentator and reformer, has also focused from time to time on TR and always offers insightful comments.

4. Academics are making more and more use of blogging as a means of engaging in debate and the dissemination of ideas. There are few examples of exclusive attention to TR although frequent tweeters such as Fergus McNeill, Mike Teague and Paul Senior,

(<http://yorkhull.wordpress.com/category/criminal-justice-musings/>) all offer insights from time to time.

5. In the wider penal reform field, Frances Crook from the Howard League is a trenchant critic of the privatisation of both prisons and probation and tweets regularly as well as blogging on a range of penal reform issues including TR, (for this blog see <http://www.howardleague.org/francescrookblog>). Richard Garside of the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies has also contributed to the debate, and other commentators are invited to blog in a separate section of the blog called simply **Comment**, at <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/comment>. No Offence! has a regular guest blog which has focused in TR from time to time. Their blogs can be found at <http://www.no-offence.org/content.php/190-Guest-Blog>.

6. Less frequently seen are blogs from a supportive position on the TR reforms. Very little emerges from the private sector though there are a few notable tweeters. Right-wing think-tanks do publish, often reflecting their funders as much as any independent position. Most notably the Policy Exchange has spoken most frequently on TR and crime and justice matters at <http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/crime-and-justice>, Max Chambers, its head of Crime and Justice, being a frequent tweeter and commentator.

7. Before I leave this section I must highlight one of the risks associated with using social media. There are examples of contributions certainly on Twitter, and occasionally in blogs, where the veracity of what is being said might be questioned. Always treat contributions with some care if they have no clear history or pedigree. One such blog site announced itself as the Centre for Probation Reform (and can be found at <http://centreforprobationreform.blogspot.co.uk/p/blog-page.html>). It produced a series of blogs in May but there is no trace of this 'organisation' anywhere and despite requests it remains a somewhat coy group given its pretensions to represent certain voices of reform. It was questioned vigorously on Twitter and on blogs, (see <http://yorkhull.wordpress.com/2013/05/06/beware-probation-reform-messages-softly-delivered/>). Following this critique of this group it soon after ceased to publish blogs, though remains on Twitter.

There are many more commentators, tweeters, bloggers and commentators which cannot be included in this short piece, but I hope it has given you some insight into what can be sourced now within social media. I end with the usual qualification at the end of most blogs and open sourced material: all the information is my view only and does not represent the views of any organisation. The debate is out there for you to see, take part now!

Paul Senior, Hallam Centre for Community Justice, Sheffield Hallam University