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**Make Justice Work Statement Re: Government Consultation Launch Into Reform Of Probation Service.**

**Make Justice Work Urges Caution Regarding Government Proposals To Radically Reform The Probation Service**

On Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2013 the Secretary of State for Justice – Chris Grayling MP - announced the Government had published its proposals for the reform of the Probation Service and the introduction of a Payment by Results (PbR) system. The proposals are set out in 'Transforming Rehabilitation - a revolution in the way we manage offenders.'

Under the proposals the majority of Probation Services in England and Wales would be subject to competition with contracts awarded to private sector providers, working in partnership with the voluntary and community sectors. They would also introduce a PbR model with payments made on the basis of reducing rates of reoffending. Certain key functions would remain within the public sector such as the direct management of offenders who pose the highest risk of serious harm.

Roma Hooper, Founder and Director of Make Justice Work said, "Our report, Just Results, revealed a number of serious concerns about the use of PbR in community sentences and the haste with which the government is moving. The use of PbR in this area is as yet unproven and failure to get it right would be a serious setback leading to more people in prison, higher levels of reoffending, more victims and considerably more expense.

"Ministers clearly have high level of expectations in PbR but it is still in its infancy and largely untested. With the private, public and voluntary sectors all vying for business, it is critical that the focus on payment and profit does not detract from the real aim – fewer crimes. The record of the Work Programme in helping to reduce the numbers of people in long term employment highlights just some of the challenges of using a PbR model effectively.

"This is a period of great uncertainty for the future of the Probation Service with the private and voluntary sectors having to act at great speed. However there is a risk they may lose some of the experience and knowledge already embedded in Probation's work. There is also a risk that good practice in community sentences could be lost just at the time when we need to ensure that good practice becomes common practice. The Government must ensure that any new payment system reflects the complex needs of individual offenders and rewards service deliverers appropriately. It must also be rolled out at a sensible pace and establish a fair, just and transparent commissioning process.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

The full consultation document can be accessed using the link below:

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

Responses to the consultation must be submitted to the Ministry of Justice by 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013.

Just Results can be accessed using the following link:

<http://www.makejusticework.org.uk/results-3/>