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## Where next for criminal justice reform?

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The Auditorium  
BT Centre  
81 Newgate Street  
London  
EC1A 7AJ

Thursday 30 March 2017  
09.00 – 12.20

#reformjustice  
@reformthinktank



“It is a great pleasure to return to *Reform* – which has led the way on public sector transformation. It was in 2001 that you pointed out the answer to better public services wasn’t to simply “spend more money” but to have reform.”

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, launching the Government’s prison reform white paper, 3 November 2016

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# Programme

<b>09.00 – 09.10</b>	Welcome and introduction	<b>Andrew Haldenby, Director, <i>Reform</i></b> <b>Jason Hall, Vice President, Central Government and Police, BT Group</b>
<b>09.10 – 10.20</b>	Panel one: Connected justice: a single system?	<p>Lord Leveson's 2015 review of efficiency in the justice system highlighted substantial opportunity for reform and the Ministry of Justice is working with HM Courts and Tribunals and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to effect change, including implementing a Common Platform. In September, Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP reaffirmed the Government's commitment to reform, calling for a justice system that is "no less just but is far more efficient and accessible".</p> <p>The appetite for reform is clear, but change in isolation is unlikely to drive the greatest value, and may even have unintended consequences. As Lord Leveson pointed out, "the criminal justice system is not, in reality, a single system", so different participants must work together to improve the whole. If the new Government wants to build a more efficient and effective justice system, collaboration across each separate service will be crucial. This means agreed data principles, interoperable IT systems and common processes.</p> <p>Panellists will discuss opportunities for better integrating police, CPS, courts and prison systems, and the delivery challenges in doing so.</p> <p><b>Bryan Clark, Director of Digital and Change, National Offender Management Service</b>  <b>Paul Whittaker CBE, Common Platform Transformation Director, Crown Prosecution Service</b>  <b>Katy Bourne, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and Chair, Sussex Criminal Justice Board</b>  <b>Jason Hall, Vice President, Central Government and Police, BT Group</b>  <b>Chair: Andrew Haldenby, Director, <i>Reform</i></b></p>
<b>10.20 – 11.30</b>	Panel two: Prisons and probation: making a reality of rehabilitation	<p>The last administration put forward an ambitious agenda of prison reform, including the establishment of Reform Prisons, to give governors the autonomy to run their prisons as they see fit. The current administration is continuing that change agenda. In the recent white paper, the Justice Secretary called for "huge cultural and structural change within our prisons" to create "disciplined and purposeful centres of reform." Rehabilitation must be at the heart of prisons. Estate reform will play a key role in this, as will improved use of technology and collaborative partnerships.</p> <p>At the Justice Committee, Liz Truss stated that she also wants to reform the "overall system". This is welcome since evidence shows that continuity of contact and case management is key to successful rehabilitation. A seamless end-to-end offender journey means a joined-up prison and probation system.</p> <p>This panel will explore how the new administration can best reform the system to maximise rehabilitation and deliver better outcomes for offenders and society alike.</p> <p><b>Ian Blakeman, Executive Governor, HMP Holme House and Kirklevington Grange Reform Prisons</b>  <b>Joanne Drew, Director of Housing, Nacro</b>  <b>Gary Monaghan, Digital Prisons Lead, National Offender Management Service</b>  <b>Jerry Petherick, Managing Director, Custodial and Detention Services, G4S</b>  <b>Chair: Charlotte Pickles, Deputy Director and Head of Research, <i>Reform</i></b></p>
<b>11.30 – 11.35</b>	Welcome and introduction to the Secretary of State for Justice	<b>Charlotte Pickles, Deputy Director and Head of Research, <i>Reform</i></b>
<b>11.35 – 12.15</b>	Keynote speech	<b>The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice</b>
<b>12.15 – 12.20</b>	Closing remarks	<b>Charlotte Pickles, Deputy Director and Head of Research, <i>Reform</i></b>

# The *Reform* team: setting the agenda



Andrew Haldenby  
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@andrewhaldenby



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Eleonora Harwich,  
Researcher, *Reform*  
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In November last year, on a *Reform* platform, Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP launched the Government's prison reform white paper. The speed with which *Prison Safety and Reform* was published – just four months after the new administration was formed and the new Secretary of State appointed – shows the importance attached to this policy area.

Escalating violence has provided a burning platform for reform, but high reoffending rates have long been cause for concern. The white paper addresses both. It continues the policy of Reform Prisons (and we are delighted to have Ian Blakeman, an Executive Governor of two, speaking today), devolving power to those who know best the changes needed to deliver better outcomes. Additional staff and £1.3 billion of investment in modernising the prison estate will help in that transformation.

It is, however, the Secretary of State's comments in front of the Justice Committee last September that are most encouraging: the Government would seek reform of the "overall system". Reforming prisons without regard to probation limits the potential of those reforms. Evidence shows – as *Reform's* report *Local commissioning, local solutions: devolving offender management* argued – that the best outcomes are achieved where an offender's journey from the criminal justice system is as seamless as possible. Services must be delivered at the right time and in the right place, and consistency of

case management is key. 'Through-the-gate' provision might be a catchy phrase but it is also an essential ingredient to successful rehabilitation.

Our second panel will explore this topic, looking at how prisons and probation services can deliver the desired 'rehabilitation revolution', including through better use of technology. Panellists will explore how the white paper's reforms can act as building blocks to a much more joined-up system that makes the most of the opportunity to intervene to turn offenders' lives around. Gary Monaghan, Ian Blakeman, Jerry Petherick and Joanne Drew will share their deep experience of working to do just that.

Another priority for Government is building a more efficient and effective justice system. In his 2015 review, Lord Leveson noted that "the criminal justice system is not, in reality, a single system". This has led to unnecessary expense and delays in the delivery of justice – with adverse impacts on victims and witnesses. Liz Truss reaffirmed the Government's commitment to reform, calling for a justice system that is "no less just but is far more efficient and accessible". Collaboration across each separate service – from police forces through the Crown Prosecution Service to the courts and into prisons – will be crucial. This means agreed data principles, interoperable IT systems and common processes.

It is this topic that will kick off the conference. The opening panel will explore

the role of the Common Platform in connecting different services and enabling the fast, secure transfer of data – *Reform* is delighted to have Paul Whittaker to share his insight as the person leading that programme. It will also consider the potential of video-enabled justice to deliver swifter justice – something *Reform* explored in *The future of public services: digital justice*, which looked at the work being led by Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne in Sussex, also a panellist. Digital capability must underpin a modern, effective justice system that works for citizens. Jason Hall, alongside Paul and Katy, will share his extensive insight of how the Government can go further.

To conclude today's conference, Liz Truss will deliver the keynote address. The Justice Secretary is leading a reforming team in the Ministry of Justice who are committed to delivering better outcomes for victims, offenders and society more broadly.

*Reform* is thrilled to have such excellent attendance, and delegates are encouraged to ask thought-provoking questions of our speakers. We are grateful that you have given your time to discuss this crucial area of public service reform. It will remain a topic at the centre of *Reform's* work.

Charlotte Pickles  
Deputy Director and Head of Research  
*Reform*  
@ce\_pickles  
@reformthinktank



# Where next for criminal justice reform?

## Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP



Reforming our criminal justice system is my top priority.

Since my first day as Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor, I have been clear that we must create prisons that change lives and a court system that works for all.

The ground-breaking Prisons and Courts Bill is a crucial step towards achieving that vision.

It is a firm commitment from the Government to overhaul the system for the better.

Prisons will be transformed, protection for victims and witnesses will be boosted and the courts will be revolutionised so justice can be delivered more swiftly.

Making prisons work is something in which we all have a stake.

They keep some of the most dangerous criminals locked away from society, depriving them of their liberty and putting an end to the misery they have heaped on so many. And of course, it is right that prisons are there to punish people who break the law.

But I am clear that there is more to do in order to reduce the likelihood of them reoffending after they've been released.

The burden on society caused by those who are caught in a cycle of reoffending is staggeringly high. It costs society £15 billion every year. And then there is the emotional turmoil faced by the millions of blameless victims who come home to find their home has been ransacked or car stolen.

I'm absolutely determined to get a grip on this and that is why the changes in the Prisons and Courts Bill are so important.

They will give prisons a clear and direct instruction that they must achieve more than simply act as offender warehouses.

This is a crucial change that will, for the first time ever, set out that reforming offenders is a key aim of prison. We will require prisons to show progress in areas such as getting prisoners off drugs, boosting their English and maths skills, and into meaningful employment.

This matters because we know that prisoners who are drug-free, are able to read and write, and have a job to go to are less likely to go on committing more crime when they're on the outside.

But when offenders do commit crime, the system must support victims.

I know from conversations with those who have had to appear in a courtroom that the process is a daunting one, so we must do all we can to help make it a smoother and less-traumatic experience.

That is why I have included specific measures within the Prisons and Courts Bill that will extend the use of online courts and virtual hearings, allowing more witnesses to give evidence outside the courtroom to help deliver swifter justice.

As a result of this legislation, many more people will be able to take part in court proceedings without actually being in court.

The legislation will also give courts the power to end the appalling practice of domestic violence victims being cross-examined by their abusers in family proceedings.

The bottom line is I want victims to have real confidence in the system and to feel empowered to come forward and speak out.

And I want prisons that provide offenders with the best possible chance of turning their lives around for good.

It will take time to make these substantial changes and there is a great deal of work to do.

But there should be no doubt that the Prisons and Courts Bill is a critical component in our mission to drive reform.

*Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP*

*Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice*

*@MoJGovUK*

*@trussliz*

# Connected justice: a single system?

## Reform comment



Public services remain well behind the private sector in harnessing the potential of technology. In the criminal justice system, with its fragmented parts, the scope for digitisation to help deliver better outcomes is particularly evident. As Lord Leveson stated in his 2015 independent review of the efficiency of the justice system, there is no “single system”.

Historically the 43 police forces in England and Wales, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), HM Courts and Tribunals (HMCTS) and the National Offender

Management Service (NOMS) have all used different IT systems and paper-based communications have been the norm. This has led to unnecessary cost and delay, hindering the delivery of swift justice. The Common Platform programme seeks to digitise criminal proceedings in court, the Digital Prisons programme aims to improve safety and rehabilitation in prisons, and in policing the National Police Chiefs Council and the Police ICT Company are seeking to dramatically improve the use of technology in policing. The greatest benefit will come, however, from interoperable systems and the seamless transfer of data, underpinned by agreed data principles. There is much more to be done to make this a reality.

Video-enabled justice (VEJ) is another potential game-changer. The median duration of cases from offence to completion was higher in 2015 than in 2010. Analysis in Sussex found that police officers wasted on average 5.5 hours per

court attendance. Lengthy waits for trial do not serve victims or witnesses. A new model of VEJ designed by Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner Katy Bourne estimates that savings across agencies could reach £27 million and ineffective trials could be reduced by 43 per cent.

Contrary to reactive claims, digitisation has the potential to make the justice system more accessible. It can improve outcomes for victims, witnesses, service staff and offenders. And it can significantly reduce taxpayer costs. The case for radically better service join-up, enabled by digital, is clear.

Charlotte Pickles  
Deputy Director and Head of Research  
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**REFORM**

**The future of public services: digital justice**

William Mosseri-Marlio  
Charlotte Pickles

February 2016

**“The use of video technology can drive out court inefficiencies. More importantly, reform has the potential to improve the experience of victims, witnesses and defendants.”**  
*The future of public services: digital justice, February 2016*

**“...digitising the criminal justice system reflects the direction in which citizens’ lives are increasingly going. The courts and other public services need to catch up.”**  
William Mosseri-Marlio writing in *The Guardian*, February 2016

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## Paul Whittaker CBE



The government has invested in technology to improve the efficiency of criminal court proceedings. The aim is to reduce duplication between criminal justice agencies, eliminate unnecessary attendance at court and remove inefficient paper processes. The objectives are to transform the way the criminal justice system works, to instil public confidence and to deliver improvements to the experience of all participants across the criminal justice system.

The CJS Common Platform Programme is an IT-enabled business change programme. It is a partnership between HM Courts and Tribunals Service (HMCTS), the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police, with strong support from the judiciary.

Working closely with people who understand how our businesses operate, the programme is taking a once in a generation opportunity to design, build and embed a single shared process to manage and progress criminal cases, delivering a unified way of working for HMCTS and CPS staff and the wider participants in the criminal case management process. Essential information about crime will be brought together to enable practitioners to access relevant criminal case management information where and when they need to. A new digital system will allow defendants, victims, witnesses and professional users to interact on-line. Only actions that absolutely need to be conducted in the courtroom will be done there.

The programme is developing new ways of working, delivering cost and time savings through:

- > robust business processes to support a

unified and joined up approach to the justice system;

- > consistent and digitised services, which will improve people's interactions and offer better experience across the business, particularly to victims and witnesses;
- > a single source of data entry, which reduces repeat processing of information; and
- > modernised IT automated systems that will provide the opportunity to decommission outdated legacy systems and save maintenance costs.

Some of its products and services are:

- > a digital system where all necessary criminal case preparation activities will be completed online for an effective trial to take place in court;
- > an online portal for defendants charged with summary offences to submit a plea;
- > a digital service that will process "guilty" and "proof in absence", Single Justice Procedure work (typically, summary-only non-imprisonable cases) in magistrates' courts;
- > an end-to-end digital process to record, transmit and publish court decisions; and
- > a new digital system to schedule magistrates' court sittings.

*Paul Whittaker CBE  
Common Platform Transformation Director  
Crown Prosecution Service*

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## Katy Bourne



As we enter our second term as Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC), we are now firmly at the heart of local and national policing, attempting to reshape the criminal justice system around the experience of

victims and witnesses.

However, the harrowing accounts we hear make it clear that the criminal justice system isn't moving quickly or smoothly enough.

The Ministry of Justice's vision for PCCs is to galvanise the local policing and criminal justice landscape and provide leadership for multi-agency partnerships.

As Chair of the Sussex Criminal Justice Board, I've worked to join-up local criminal justice services to make our collective ambition and service provision more effective than the sum of its parts.

Our Strategic Restorative Justice (SRJ) partnership of 20 organisations is delivering benefits for victims and offenders, and for society. The national reoffending rate is 26 per cent but for offenders reviewed after SRJ interventions, it is 17 per cent with 100 per cent satisfaction for victims. In its first year, the partnership also delivered eight times the national average of outcomes and gained national accreditation across all participating agencies.

Reform of the criminal justice system must involve all the component parts, but our ambition to improve it should not be hamstrung by a nostalgic attachment to ancient and established processes.

We all depend on 21st century digital technology to communicate, shop and conduct everyday business, so why does the criminal justice system appear to be stuck in the 19th century?

If we were designing a 'system' from the start, we would put the experience of people at the core of it, to ensure that victims, witnesses, criminal justice agencies and the public would trust and want to engage with it. The sad reality is that current processes are arcane; people often fail to appear in court and justice is not always served.

With so many agencies navigating a course through the system, we need to ensure they have a golden thread that seamlessly leads them from incident to judicial outcome.

We need to minimise duplication of data, maximise cooperation and data-sharing



between agencies and exploit the technology we already rely on in virtually every other aspect of modern life.

Previous attempts to use video to give evidence have failed to deliver the expected return on investment due to insufficient cross-agency collaboration or the leadership to succeed. We need a new, video-enabled justice (VEJ) service to encourage the uptake of technology and deliver on the Government's plans for criminal justice reform.

Working with partners in London, Kent and Surrey, my office is developing a VEJ model for the South East that will save thousands of hours of police officer time and speed up the process of giving and transferring evidence. This allows officers to spend more time policing their own areas.

My office and its strategic partners will present a VEJ solution as part of a transformation project where individual agencies retain autonomy, but commit to improve the use of technology.

Overcoming organisational inertia is challenging but, by simply asking "why can't we?" and not accepting the status quo, attitudes and services can, and will, change.

Katy Bourne

Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner  
@SussexPCC  
@KatyBourne

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## Jason Hall



As policing and justice organisations look towards a digitally-enabled justice system that delivers major benefits to those who work in it, use it, and pay for it, what strikes me is how similar the issues are to those in the health system a few years ago. That

sector is already seeing transformations in the patient 'journey' and there are many areas in the criminal justice system journey which could be transformed by the application of technology:

- > **Police officers** could have live access to key information fields to confirm a suspect's medical status – 30 per cent of suspicious behaviour has mental health as the underlying cause. They can also capture information from digital sources, index it and securely store in the cloud, then deliver this evidence remotely, saving hours per day.

- > **The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)** could receive police statements and evidence electronically. They could then collaborate with key decision-makers remotely, assessing the likelihood of a successful prosecution based on that evidence using collaboration tools.

- > **The Court system** can increase the number of hearings conducted daily by having one single electronic Case Management File shared between all parties. They can also use technology to reduce the number of postponed hearings due to "no-shows".

- > **Prisons and probation services** can have improved information allowing more appropriate tailored prisoner regimes. They can reduce costs by using remote video technology instead of transporting prisoners to and from hearings. Additionally, improved education programmes and prisoner interventions can be delivered at lower cost within the prison environment, better reintegrating offenders back into the community, making more informed decisions regarding offender management, ultimately leading to reduced reoffending – *the whole point of having a justice system in the first place.*

Significant activity is already well underway to address many of the above points:

- > Pilots of the first "Digital Case File" in selected police forces to better prepare prosecutors for first hearing cases.
- > The creation of a "Case Data Store" for criminal courts reducing the massive paper and manual process overhead.

- > Wi-Fi access in courts enabling secure access to information, and digital collaboration facilities to speed up the presentation and interpretation of evidence.

- > The "digital prison" at HMP Wayland and the on-line visit booking system – the first of its kind in the UK and sure to extend to other prisons and areas of public interactions.

- > Greater use of video links for evidence-giving, removing the cost of moving people to and from prisons and courts, all delivering against the "swifter justice" agenda.

One example of how digital justice could work is the solution BT developed for Islington Clinical Commissioning Group and Borough Council that enables over 200,000 patient records to be securely accessible by 10,000 health and care practitioners, patients and families. It's already enabling quicker decision-making, and the provision of more relevant healthcare which is also often cheaper overall.

Now suppose these were instead case records moving from police to CPS to courts to prisons to probation. What impact would that have on the speed and cost of delivering justice in the UK?

To quote Natalie Ceeney, former CEO of HMCTS: "It's not just about digitising and introducing technology to streamline processes, but also about rethinking processes for today's society". *Doing this will, of course, reduce costs. But, far more critically, it will deliver **better justice**.*

Jason Hall

Vice President, Central Government and Police

BT Group

@BTBusiness

# Prisons and probation: making a reality of rehabilitation

## Reform comment



The prison reform agenda, established during the previous administration, intended to be the biggest overhaul of the prison system. The current context presents serious challenges that need to be addressed with violence, self-harm and self-inflicted deaths reaching record levels and reoffending rates remaining stubbornly high. The *Prison Safety and Reform* white paper set out to deal with these challenges by transforming the way prisons are run and focusing on creating an environment propitious to rehabilitation.

The prison rating system has concentrated for too long on process measures, such as completion of offender behaviour courses, which do not allow for an appreciation of outcomes, such as the impact of the course on an offender's actual behaviour. In addition, performance measures have lacked an appreciation of quality when evaluating post-release outcomes. Although changes have been made in the white paper, there is still scope to improve prison performance metrics. For example, both the measures of employment and housing post-release include no appreciation of continuity which means that there is no way of knowing if an offender has housing secured just for one night or for longer. Increasing the quality of performance metrics can create the right incentives to focus on long-term rehabilitation plans instead of only focusing on activities which happen within a prison's walls.

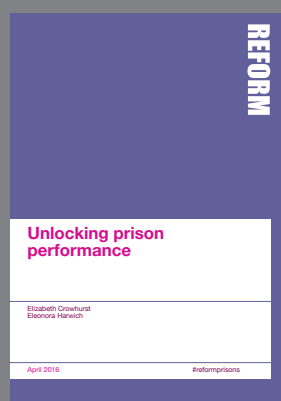
Rehabilitation does not end at the prison gates. For the reform agenda to be successful it will have to take into account the whole prisoner journey from prison to post-release probation services. This is not yet happening, as services are still fragmented and Transforming Rehabilitation is not delivering real through-the-gate services as was highlighted by both a National Audit Office and joint Inspection report on Transforming Rehabilitation.

With their extended powers, governors can play a central role in the joining-up of services and the delivery of rehabilitation in prison. This recognition of frontline expertise presents real opportunities to do things differently and better to stop the revolving door of crime.

Eleonora Harwich  
Researcher  
Reform  
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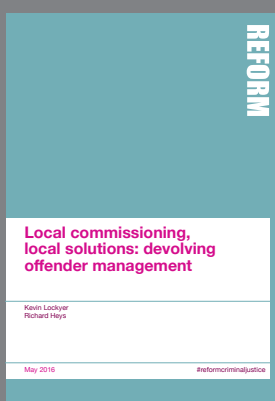
**“Closing the gap between the best and worst performing prisons therefore presents considerable opportunity to both realise savings and improve outcomes.”**

*Unlocking prison performance, April 2016*



**“An offender’s journey through prison and probation should be as seamless as possible – the right services, delivered at the right time, in the right place.”**

*Local commissioning, local solutions: devolving offender management, May 2016*



**“If we are spending £34,000 a year on housing a prisoner, should government not turn this captive audience into law-abiding, contributing citizens?”**

*Charlotte Pickles writing in The Times, April 2016*



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## Ian Blakeman



At Tees and Wear Reform Prisons we are *working together to create chances for change and hope for the future*. Working together is about developing a real sense of place, of understanding that local matters and that we need to be connected to our communities if we are to achieve the best possible outcomes for the public. We've been working with Involve to ensure an open Government approach of transparency, participation and accountability. Transparency is about good governance and using data and evidence. So we have established an independently-led data and evidence advisory board. And it is about a different way of involving our staff and the men in our prisons, and making sure that every voice gets heard and we make the best decisions together as we reform our prisons.

Chances for change means ensuring every man who comes into our prisons knows what he needs to do to make the progress we expect to see, and has every possible chance to change. We believe that every man can change and lead a crime-free life, and that the public deserve our very best efforts to make this possible. We also know that for change to last, the men need to take responsibility for their own lives. So we are ensuring our prisons have a real focus on assessment and give each man a clear plan to guide their time in the prison; that we motivate them to follow it and we review the progress they are making. We are ensuring that we have the right mix of work, education, training and interventions so that our prisons are busy and purposeful and the men have the opportunity to deal with all of the issues that meant they ended up in prison. We are developing our learning provision using our new powers over the

contract to ensure our provision matches what the men need. We are working with local businesses to provide real work in prison and develop job opportunities for men on release. And we are focusing on making our prisons safe so that there is nothing getting in the way of change. And this means preventing drugs coming into our prisons, and providing the right support to get men to stop wanting drugs. And at Holme House this means becoming a Drug Recovery Prison with a significant increase in resources to do all that we can to sustain men in leading drug-free lives.

We do all of this because we know that our job is to support safer and stronger communities by stopping people who leave prisons from committing further crimes. For us, hope for the future is about giving hope to communities that there will be less crime, giving hope to families that they can rebuild their lives and giving hope to the men leaving prison that they can leave their offending behind them and lead lives that are positive and become assets to their communities. And we know that for all this to be true we need to work with all of the organisations in the community who share our goals. So we have signed a joint statement of intent with the probation service and the community rehabilitation company and we have employed a Director of Rehabilitation to oversee effective joint working. And we are working closely with our police and crime commissioners and local authorities.

This is what prison reform means to us at Tees and Wear Reform Prisons. The prison safety and reform programme is giving us much greater scope to design what works for us in the north east. It is empowering our prison leaders and allowing us to decide for ourselves how to deliver the best possible services for the public. And it is giving us the resources we need to deliver prisons that are working together to create chances for change and hope for the future.

*Ian Blakeman  
Executive Governor  
HMP Holme House and Kirkclevington  
Grange Reform Prisons*

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## Joanne Drew



Housing has become a social justice issue.

United Nations Special Rapporteur, Leilani Farha, told the Human Rights Council in Geneva earlier this month that: "Housing has lost its social function and is seen instead as a vehicle for wealth and asset growth. It has become a financial commodity, robbed of its connection to community, dignity and the idea of home."

With the publication of the Housing White Paper this year the Government has admitted that the current housing market in England is broken.

The impact is clear for all to see.

Homelessness is spreading across all areas of the country as councils spend £2 million a day to house vulnerable people. Housing associations currently house less than 20 per cent of tenants who have been homeless. Private sector rents are rising above household incomes with high deposits and reference requirements. It is a sector used by many more people that cannot afford to buy their own home.

This means the competition for housing is severe.

We know that prisoners with no home to go to upon release face multiple barriers to access housing:

- > Single men are not deemed to be in priority need for council housing.
- > Offending can be seen as a reason to class someone as unsuitable to be a social housing tenant.
- > Private landlords will often not accept ex-offenders or those on benefits.

Even the best resettlement and advice officer will struggle to overcome these systemic problems.

There are two ways in which we can make a step change to improve the prospects of prisoners with no fixed abode.

First, nationally we need to increase the supply of new homes in light of national output slowing down to a 24 year low. In the short term, the criminal justice sector must therefore be prepared to use its assets, resources, financial capacity and partnerships to secure more housing that can be accessed by offenders. We know that having a place to call home has a major impact upon offenders trying to build a life without crime. Investment in housing is an investment in reducing re-offending rates.

Secondly, we must influence key players within the current housing system to reduce the barriers that offenders face. Offenders must be considered fairly for housing and we must identify when this is not happening and work for change. For example housing decision-makers should be asked to quantify and consider the specific risks that they believe makes an offender unsuitable to be a tenant. We have legislation to give offenders a fair chance at employment and our Ban the Box campaign promotes a risk-based approach. It is about time we adopted such a measure for those in need of housing.

*Joanne Drew*  
*Director of Housing*  
*Nacro*  
*@Nacro*

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## Gary Monaghan

The digital revolution has largely passed prisons by. Staff have poor access to technology. It is not really integrated or leveraged in any way to enhance efficiency or effectiveness. Prison officers still administer a complex sometimes Kafkaesque paper application system to administer and support a prisoner's daily life. This system, invented in Victorian times, accounts for much of the working day for officers, taking them away from supervision and rehabilitation. Add to this reduced staffing numbers, it is unsurprising that the result has been increased tensions between prisoners and prison officers struggling to meet these day-to-day requirements.

The lack of modernisation helps to reinforce the institutionalisation of offenders, who themselves have even less access to technology than officers, leaving prisons with little or no digital literacy in a world that demands these skills to cope with daily life. Education is largely paper-based and for teachers chalk and talk.

So what can the provision of technology and greater use of digital tools do, to help staff reform prisons and assist prisoners to rehabilitate? We are already looking into this question through our proof-of-concept sites HMP Wayland and the newly opened HMP Berwyn. Both have been digitised. The benefits, although self-evident, are subject to rigorous research led by the University of York.

One of the issues to resolve is prisoners' lack of access to landline-based telephones which increases tensions and alienation from society. Research shows that maintaining relationships with the outside world is pivotal to order, control and rehabilitation. A planned reduction in telephony rates (prisoners pay for their own calls) and increased telephony using the new infrastructure could be a first step. At a later stage, these networks could be used to detect and block mobile phones which will help reduce trafficking and drive up levels of prison intelligence.

Another issue is ensuring that technology is used to make prisoners responsible for their daily lives and free officers up from the amount of paperwork they must administer. Also, many prisoners' level of education leave them in a position that fosters recidivism. The demand for education in prisons outstrips several-fold the resources available to governors. Using technology can dramatically increase the volume and quality of adult learning in prisons. Non-structured learning tools can be provided to prisoners to be supported and guided by officers for those waiting entry to formal educational programmes.

Access can be given to our partners so they in turn can reach prisoners, digitally increasing the effectiveness of their work and helping prisoners be more responsible. The increase in digital literacy will prepare prisoners upon release to be law-abiding citizens in our digital economy and society. Technology can allow us to join-up our systems with other criminal justice partners more easily and cheaply, helping to provide seamless through-the-gate digital services to better protect the public.

If prison is to be a place of reform, greater access and use of technology is essential to greater security, order, control and rehabilitation.

*Gary Monaghan*  
*Digital Prisons Lead*  
*National Offender Management Service*



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## Jerry Petherick



There is no doubt that the most pressing problem to tackle in prisons in England and Wales is the increase in violence. The safety of prisoners and staff must be our priority because it is only when the prison community feels safe that we can make headway in the work of rehabilitation.

The UK's prison system has never been particularly reliant on coercive control to manage prisons. Instead, an environment of mutual respect between prisoners and staff underpins a more subtle notion of imprisonment "by consent". Our experience at HMP Birmingham and other local prisons at the end of last year underlined the fragility of that relationship and how at times, it can shift dramatically and with devastating consequences. Just as on the outside, values that support relationships, such as respect for authority, for institutions and for each other, are under threat. Inside prisons, the rise in new synthetic drugs and concerns about staff numbers can also be added to that challenging mix.

The Government's White Paper puts the governor at the heart of efforts to meet these challenges and it is right that more powers should rest with local prison leaders. We also support measures to strengthen the role of the prison officer, which has become devalued in recent years as other more detached professionals exert a greater influence on the terms and conditions of a prisoner's sentence.

Technology can also play a role in improving safety. We swiftly rolled out body-worn video cameras in 2013 after seeing how they can de-escalate situations at HMP Birmingham and HMP Oakwood

where we put them in as part of our tender to operate both establishments. A trial of new machine learning technology attached to CCTV at HMP Altcourse near Liverpool to understand the picture of a 'normal' operating environment is also showing promise as a way to improve perimeter security.

While the safety of prisoners and staff is the immediate priority, we agree that the long-term goal must be to put rehabilitation at the heart of prison life. What we have learned through our family unit at HMP Parc in south Wales, which motivates offenders by taking a whole family approach, is that successful rehabilitation relies on a range of factors both inside and outside of the prison to work. It's no coincidence that the programme is called 'Invisible Walls' (IW). It allows a prisoner's family to 'look through' the prison walls so that they see the prisoner taking positive steps. The IW team also allows the prisoner to have a 'lens' on the impact of their behaviour on their children and family. Working with social services, schools and charities enables IW to gain traction and 'stickiness' as it works, cross sector, simultaneously inside and outside of the prison and energises a prisoner's bonds with his family and community. Inspectors have called the approach radical and initial indications point to a substantial reduction in re-offending rates in high risk families.

As the Government's White Paper makes clear, reform of our prisons is an urgent necessity. Success depends on all of us within the criminal justice system being open about what we deliver and committing to an unrelenting focus on following and responding to the evidence. This will lead to safer prisons, improved safety and ultimately cut the number of future victims of crime.

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“We’re compiling this data from new metrics, along similar lines to those developed by *Reform* and others. These will check prisons against four standards: public protection, safety and order, reform and preparing for life after prison.”

Sam Gyimah MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Prisons and Probation, writing for the *Reformer* blog, March 2017

# REFORM

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