



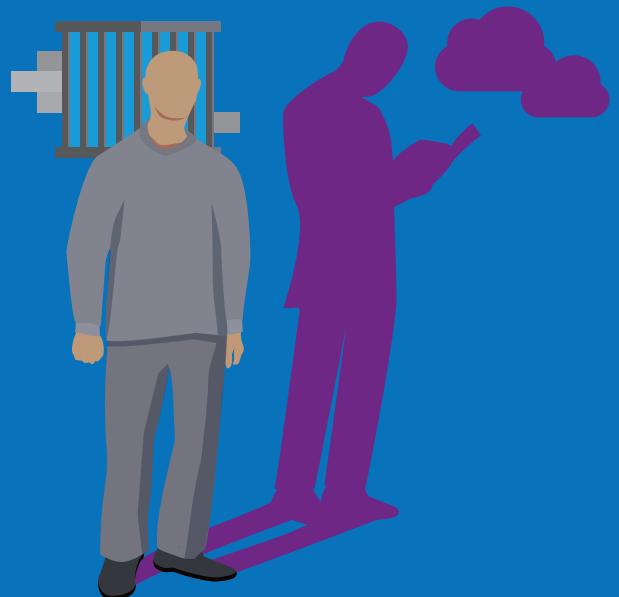
# Reimagine reducing reoffending

How the introduction of a Prisoner Performance Manager could help to reduce reoffending

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# Let's reimagine



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This paper is one of a series of thought experiments in which KPMG staff imagine new ways for government to achieve public policy objectives.

This might mean building services around the user rather than the provider. Or drawing on the huge potential of data and digital technologies. Or tapping into the power of markets, new incentives, transparency, or the wisdom of crowds. In every case, it involves fresh ideas.

To channel our thinking, we imposed three rules.

1 Ideas must be designed to produce better public outcomes without increasing the burden on the taxpayer.

2 They must align with the government's philosophy and headline policies.

3 They must be realistic and deliverable.

But within these rules we want to step outside conventional thinking, and test out new ideas on how public policy goals can be achieved. We want to stretch ourselves, applying new technologies and techniques to solve old problems. We are not calling for a specific future – but we are reimaging it. **What do you think?**

# Cutting crime

Reducing reoffending is one of the biggest challenges facing the British justice system. Currently, 46% of those released from prison commit another offence within 12 months – creating over 26,000 new victims every year<sup>1</sup>, whilst jeopardising their own chances of turning their lives around.

This level of recidivism undermines the effectiveness of public services, and creates massive additional costs. The Ministry of Justice and Home Office sit at the sharp end, while their staff endlessly process repeat offenders rather than concentrate on prevention or rehabilitation. But the effects are felt across the public sector. Local authorities and the Department of Work & Pensions must provide accommodation and a basic income for released prisoners unable or unwilling to find work. The Department of Health handle the mental and physical health impacts of long-term drug addictions and violent crime. Social services must cope with the impact of repeated offending on families – including the creation of new generations of offenders.

Government knows the importance of addressing reoffending, and spends millions providing prisoners with education, training and counselling. But participation is generally voluntary, and interventions aren't carefully targeted to address the challenges facing each individual.

**"46% of those released from prison commit another offence within 12 months."**

Within the prison environment, many criminals are reluctant to admit that they have issues such as illiteracy or addiction - and the long-term benefits of addressing their problems are often lost amongst the hard realities of life behind bars. So many offenders leave prison without having tackled the challenges that brought them there; and once alone on the outside, they too often slide back into criminality.



1. [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/541187/proven-reoffending-2014-q3.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/541187/proven-reoffending-2014-q3.pdf)



# Incentivising beyond the prison gates

Let's reimagine how we tackle the problem. One solution could be to provide support in the form of a prisoners' personal 'performance manager', tasked with the rehabilitation of prisoners. They would adopt a mentoring approach, using incentives to drive rehabilitation through a programme of activities.

On entry to prison, offenders would be interviewed by the performance manager, who would identify the factors most likely to lead to the individual reoffending. Prisoners would be asked to help develop their programme of support and interventions – taking into consideration their needs post-release.

Following these mandatory one-to-one assessments, a bespoke programme of interventions could be tailored to offer support both during an offender's sentence and for an agreed period after release. Accompanying this rehabilitation programme would be an incentivisation scheme, rewarding those who actively address issues and display good behaviour whilst inside. The performance manager would also be responsible for supporting and encouraging a prisoner's self-development, ensuring that targets are met within the sentence plan, and approving incentives.

Prisoners who participate by completing elements of their tailored plan – e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, English GCSE or a skills based course – would be entitled to earned benefits. For example, those prisoners who have lost their homes could receive additional transitional housing following their sentence, and support or funds to help them secure new permanent accommodation. Those without work could benefit from additional Job Seekers Allowance, basic qualifications or a supported programme

to help them into a job. Those who've damaged family relationships might be provided with personal development classes or the services of a family mediator in the weeks after their release.

It would also be important to address some of the wider problems that hinder an offenders' ability to keep on the straight and narrow. Those with mental health problems could receive treatment in prison, and mentoring or support services after release. Those with drug problems could benefit from addiction counselling whilst inside, and the provision of accommodation or activities to help them steer clear of bad influences back in the community. Those facing the longest and most onerous job-hunts could even be offered more flexible terms around the provision of Job Seekers Allowance, giving them more time before securing work.

Prisons currently adopt a national 'Incentives and Earned Privileges' scheme - those who behave well, attend training courses and contribute to prison life can earn luxuries such as TVs, personal possessions and the right to wear their own clothes. This programme is an integral part of a the day to day running of a prison, but its incentives end at the prison gates; it's not designed to help prisoners tackle their offending behaviour once on the outside.

Researchers and prisoners themselves are clear about the problems that most often lead to reoffending. Whilst offenders are on the inside, many lose their homes, jobs, and connections to family and community, which makes it far harder to integrate back into society. The rehabilitation programme designed for each offender would focus on the greatest risks, in order to help minimise those risks and reduce reoffending.

# One strike and you're out

In order to win public approval for this type of programme, it must be very clear that incentives have to be earned - only awarded through a prisoner's active engagement and results.

In order to be effective, this programme would have to offer offenders things that they value – and for some media commentators, prisoners' entitlements end at food and water. But this programme isn't about entitlements: it's about earned rewards, and would be presented as a tough regime that offers benefits for those trying to turn their lives around. It would no longer be possible for offenders to earn privileges simply for behaving well inside, whilst refusing to address their criminal behaviour.

The programme would also have to ensure that prisoners couldn't play the system. Offenders could behave well and participate in order to earn benefits following release,

and then reoffend. The obvious solution here is a 'one strike and you're out' rule, under which people who've reoffended following their participation in the programme wouldn't be eligible to participate again.

Perhaps the greatest challenge, though, would be the task of lining up funding and services required for the programme. Rather than providing a set budget to meet the needs of the UK's prison population, the departments funding education, training, mental health and drug treatment services would have to serve all those offenders who've earned the rewards set out in their development programme. And when committed and well-behaved offenders left prison, their support packages would call on those providing services such as housing, job support, counselling and benefits. To trial this approach, a pilot scheme could provide a good indication of how successful this programme could be.

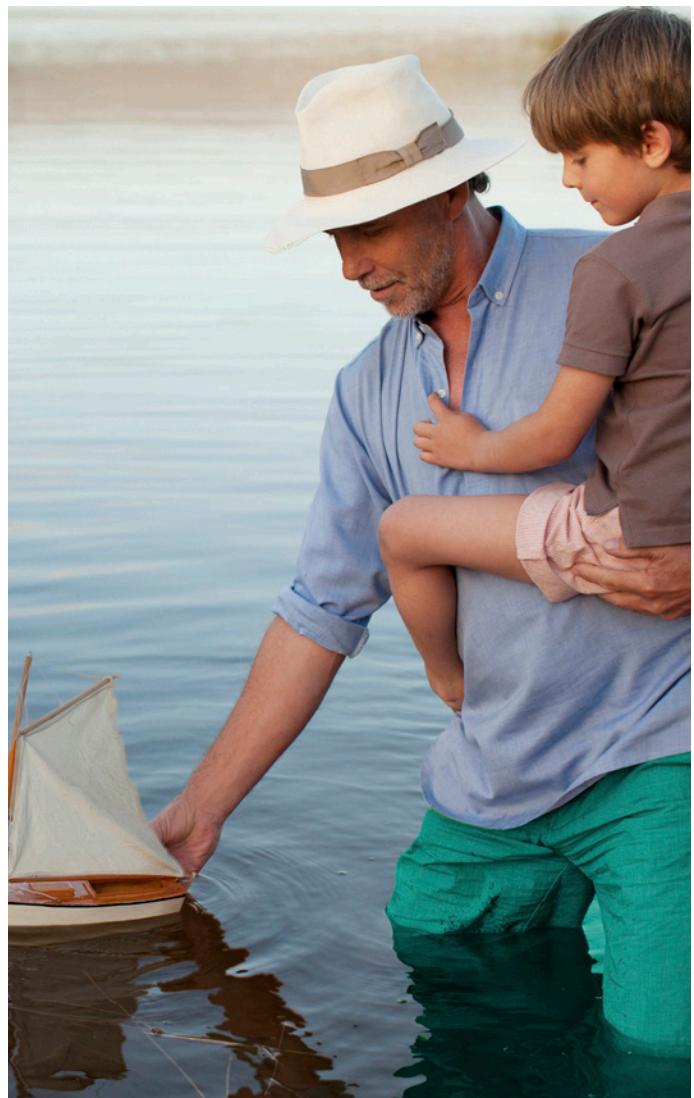


# Ending the offending life-cycle

In the long term, investments would help tackle some of the missed opportunities produced by our failing rehabilitation system. If the UK could cut its reoffending rate, the savings would reach far beyond policing and criminal justice – reducing demand for benefits, healthcare and social services. So this would be a long-term investment, producing long-term rewards. To calm concerns in those departments required to commit resources up front, ministers could divert the cash savings accrued by the police, courts, probation and prisons – repaying investments by health, education, housing and employment services.

Taking a more personalised and incentivised approach to rehabilitation would ensure that government is delivering the right interventions to tackle each individual's offending.

In time, this new holistic approach could not only generate big savings across government, but also provide huge social and community benefits. Happier families and communities. Less economic drag. Falling rates of drug addiction, unemployment, homelessness and violent acts. A drop in the number of people wasting their lives in criminality and prison sentences. And, above all, fewer victims of crime. What we're doing now isn't working. Perhaps it's time to try something new.



# Contact us

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