

17th Annual Bill McWilliams Lecture

Why Probation Matters

Sue Hall

Cambridge
17 June 2014

Why probation matters

‘The great contribution of the probation service has been to the humanisation of justice’

(Joan King, 1969)

Jurisdictions with no effective community justice



European Probation Rules

Principle (1):

Probation agencies shall aim to reduce reoffending by establishing positive relationships with offenders in order to supervise (including control where necessary), guide and assist them and promote their successful social inclusion. Probation thus contributes to community safety and the fair administration of justice.

European Probation Rules, Council of Europe (2010)

What is distinctive about probation?

'Other agencies, after all, are committed to public safety and reducing (re-)offending: what is distinctive about probation is its belief that this can best be effected through establishing positive relationships with people who have offended'.

Rob Canton

Optimism and confidence in values-based practice

- We aim to reaffirm probation values, which can get blown about in the prevailing political wind...Much of the information here has been handed on from colleagues: be they practitioners, teachers, managers and partnership workers, and our clients themselves.
- There are currently some positive developments in probation work. 'Offender engagement' affirms the importance of working relationships...Examining what influences desistance from crime is providing new directions in practice and it looks possible that reciprocal learning might officially claim a space in the relationship between practitioner and client'

(Napo Professional Practice Book 2011)

Death of probation...?

- Is Probation still possible? (Raynor, 2011)
- ..whether the probation service and the concept of probation would survive in a form which is recognisable (Collett, 2012)
- Death knell of a much-cherished service? (Senior, 2013)
- The service has potentially 'lost its roots, its traditions, its culture, its professionalism' (Mair & Burke)

Professional identity

‘when in the mid-1990s the government's hostility to the idea of social work with offenders led the Home Secretary to repeal the need for probation officers to hold a social work qualification, the service lost a claim to an identity defined outside government policy’

Gwen Robinson and Fergus McNeill (2004)

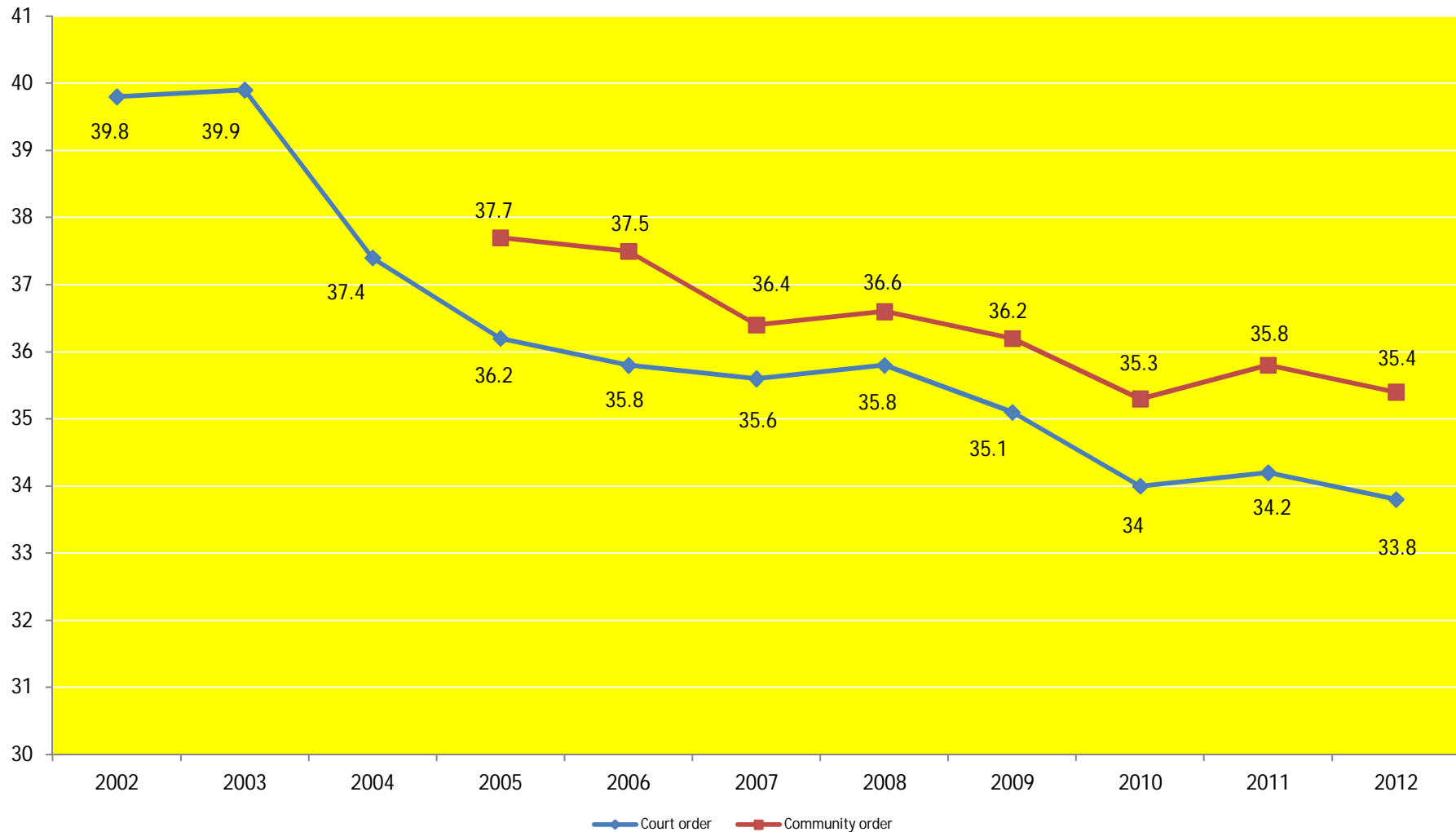
‘probation workers are skilled at crafting their job in ways that allow them to meet the organisation's demands while maintaining their identity as honourable professionals who 'make a difference'

Rob Mawby and Anne Worrall (2013)

Transforming Rehabilitation

- Justice minister Jeremy Wright described the planned (Napo) strike as "in favour of the status quo" and of "high reoffending rates". He added: "More than 600,000 offences were committed last year by those who had broken the law before, despite spending £4bn a year on prisons and probation. The public deserves better and we are committed to introducing our important reforms, which were widely consulted on". (BBC news online, 25 Oct 2013)
- "While the same old approach has seen reoffending rates barely change in a decade, these groundbreaking through-the-gate pilots, with the voluntary, private and public sectors working together, are getting results. The message is clear — our reforms are the right approach and will help us end the depressing cycle of reoffending too many are caught up in, keeping our communities safer" (C Grayling 24 April 2014)

Proven Reoffending - Adults



TR – a missed opportunity?

One cannot help feeling that a huge opportunity has been lost, to build on existing effective arrangements delivered by probation trusts that have all been judged by the MoJ as good or excellent, and which were never asked if they were able to take on the extra work.

(Savas Hadjipavlou, Guardian, 27 May 2014)

British Quality Foundation Gold Medal for Excellence 2011



Risks of Transforming Rehabilitation

- ...witnesses, including some supportive of the proposed changes, had significant apprehensions about the scale , architecture, details and consequences of the reforms and the pace at which the government is seeking to implement them.
(Justice Select Committee, January 2014)
- Concern about the 'scale, complexity and pace of the changes....'MoJ's extremely poor record of contracting out...gives rise to particular concern'
(Public Accounts Committee, March 2014)

TR – not supported by staff



Competition for CRCs

- Uncertainty for staff about what share sale means
- High profile failures of private sector delivering public services
- Experience of prison service
 - 14 contracted prisons
 - run by 3 companies (Sodexo Justice Services, Serco Custodial Services, G4S Justice Services)
 - Performance reasonable compared to public sector prisons (but 2 of 3 worst performing prisons – privately run)

Immature Market

- Probation market – immature
- Model which being outsourced – untested
- International experience?



If your court is looking for a comprehensive solution to recidivism, Judicial Correction Services has the experience to create and implement a system of supervision that works for your court. These community-focused enhancements come at no cost to the taxpayers. Further, they've shown to decrease correctional costs to local governments by decreasing jail populations and docket size.

Some of the benefits courts using JCS enjoy include:

Courts are given 24/7 Internet access to probationer files and complete statistics for their jurisdiction

Increase in successful supervision of all court ordered sanctions

The court incurs absolutely no cost for the services

Enhancement of efficiency and accuracy of case management through JCS' proprietary software

Increased successful completion rates on supervised cases.

High involvement of local management for solutions tailored to each court

Improved level of services to the offenders the court serves.

The logo for NEUSTART, featuring the word "NEUSTART" in white, bold, uppercase letters inside a magenta rounded rectangle.

NEUSTART

Leben ohne Kriminalität.
Wir helfen.

*NEU**START** is an organisation that offers our society help and solutions in coping with the problems of criminality and its consequences.*

What does that mean in particular?

In principle, we focus on dealing with the causes for criminality instead of deterrence.

Therefore, our mission in a nutshell is

Treat - the Past
Manage - the Present
Secure - the Future

Marketisation – the final nail in probation's coffin?

- Market deals in commodities , driven by profit, not ethics
- Role of state to safeguard standards
- Risks to probation - loss of shared professional identity, history, training
- How can profession be safeguarded when CRCs not required to employ qualified probation officers or use the PQF?

The case for a Probation Institute

‘Under our proposals, we expect that probation professionals will work in the public, private and voluntary sectors, protecting the public and delivering rehabilitation services using their considerable skills and experience in working with offenders. We are clear that we will maintain this expertise and a strong probation profession. All providers in the new market will be required to sustain appropriate skills for these services with effective training and accreditation comparable to the high standards in place today’.

‘Transforming Rehabilitation: A Strategy for Reform’ (January 2013)

Probation Institute - ‘..a recognised centre of excellence in probation practice, applying rigorous standards to the assessment of research and other evidence and its implications for the delivery of services that protect the public and rehabilitate offenders. It will develop a strong probation profession across private, public and voluntary sectors.’

(Target Operating Model, version 3. May 2014)



Promoting excellence throughout the offender rehabilitation sector



Developing an Institute for probation professionals

www.probation-institute.org

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