

Transforming Rehabilitation: Progress Review - Transcript

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Probation services in England and Wales are the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. In 2014, it fundamentally changed the probation system, creating 21, privately owned, Community Rehabilitation Companies, or CRCs, and a public sector National Probation Service. Our report shows that the Ministry of Justice set itself up to fail in how it reformed the probation system, and services have suffered as a result.

The reforms have failed to reduce reoffending by the levels expected. Between 2011 and March 2017 there was a 22% overall increase in the average number of reoffences per reoffender, and just six out of 21 CRCs consistently achieved their targets to reduce reoffending.

CRCs have failed to innovate, and overall they have not met commitments to transform services. The quality of their probation work has also been found to be poor by the independent Chief Inspector of Probation.

We found that the Ministry of Justice rushed rolling out its reforms without sufficient testing. Ultimately this resulted in CRCs facing severe financial pressures, which made them less willing to invest in failing services. The contracts also left the Ministry unable to hold CRCs to account for poor services.

Ultimately, the Ministry of Justice had to exit the contracts 14 months early with additional costs to the taxpayer. Coupled with earlier failures to stabilise the contracts, taxpayers will pay at least £467 million more than required under original contracts.

The Ministry of Justice has acted on many of the underlying issues, but many risks remain. For example, it will need to manage the risk of providers withdrawing services or failing outright, which we saw happen recently when Working Links, the owner of three CRCs, entered administration.

The Ministry of Justice has consulted on what to do next. It needs to pause and reflect on its proposals so that it get things right this time and addresses the risks we have set out.

For more information on read our [report online](#).