

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND COURT SERVICES ACT 2000

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part I: The New Services

Chapter I: National Probation Service for England and Wales

Section 4 and 5: Local administration of the service

53. At present there are 54 separate and independent probation services, each governed by a probation committee. The new service will operate as a single unified service for England and Wales.
54. The unified service will be administered on a local basis by local probation boards. This is to allow national priorities to be interpreted in the light of local circumstances and local needs. There will be 42 areas in all; 41 will match the police areas and a London service will cover both the Metropolitan Police District and the City of London Police Area. This will reduce the current number of 54 probation areas, with 20 of the existing services amalgamating to form 8 new local areas. This is designed to improve the management of the criminal justice system by creating common boundaries, based on police areas, for the different criminal justice agencies. *Section 4(6)* allows the Secretary of State to alter the probation areas.
55. *Section 5* describes the functions of the local probation boards. These will include the employment of staff, and may also include contracting with partner organisations (other boards, private sector companies, voluntary organisations or individuals) for the provision of services. Local probation boards will be able to contract out any activity relating to their core functions such as community service provision or delivery of offender programmes, but the Board will remain responsible for ensuring the quality of the service delivered by the contractor. They will be able to provide hostel accommodation for people who are on bail, people under supervision, people released on licence from prison and people who accept the need to live in a hostel on a voluntary basis because of the nature of their offending.
56. *Section 5(4)* allows the staff employed by local probation boards to work with other agencies in their local area on crime reduction, crime prevention and assisting victims of crime. This will include work on local crime reduction strategies undertaken under the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which will require the Boards of the new Service to contribute to the development and implementation of a crime reduction strategy for the local area.
57. *Section 5(8)* gives the Secretary of State the responsibility for determining whether a local probation board has made sufficient provision to meet its responsibilities.