

# Probation and Politics

Maurice Vanstone • Philip Priestley  
Editors

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Academic Reflections  
from Former Practitioners

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*Editors*

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*The enormous wisdom and personal insight in this unique collection of essays from a generation of former probation practitioners-turned-scholars reminds us just how much will be lost if current trends endure and probation work continues to be undermined. Based on personal narratives of probation's recent past, Probation and Politics provides hope and good sense for what the future should hold.*

Shadd Maruna,  
Dean, School of Criminal Justice,  
Rutgers University, Newark

*This is a very original collection, which, as seen through its authors' personal experience in both probation and academia, tells us about the recent changes in English and Welsh probation and its institutional and political roots. It makes for an enjoyable yet informative read, and raises essential questions. Particularly noteworthy is the following: how can we avoid state bureaucratic and centralist "prisonbation", whilst promoting local embeddedness, flexibility and innovation, without "selling out" to for-profit agencies or atomising probation? Whether in the UK or abroad, probation urgently needs to find the right balance, and to convince politicians that quick fixes and simplistic ideologically fuelled U-turns are not helping.*

Martine Herzog-Evans,  
University of Reims, Law Faculty

*None of us wanted what actually happened to the Probation Service, and perhaps we all underestimated, politically and culturally, until too late, how much time and tide were against its survival in the form we desired. There are dark times when the writ of reason and the claims of virtue lose traction, but it is still necessary, in however dissident a spirit, to record why the public Probation Service was dismantled, to point out the moral and practical inferiority of the structures that have replaced it, to nurture such seeds as there are, to insist that things could have been politically and professionally otherwise and, even more so, to insist that they still ought to be. That is the form of truth-telling to which this reflective book aspires, and there is wisdom in the effort whether it bears fruit or not.*

Mike Nellis,  
Glasgow School of Social Work,  
Strathclyde University

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