

# Cons' 1st hope on the outside



**myView**

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WHEN I was doing my bird for perjury, one of my saddest surprises was seeing how fearful many of my young fellow prisoners were feeling the night before their release.

As one of them put it: "I don't want to come back here. I want to go straight and stay off the tackle (drugs). I'm scared I won't be able to do it."

*Such worries are justified. Six out of ten young law breakers released after short sentences are back in jail within a year. But at last we have a Justice Secretary determined to halt this revolving door of reoffending.*

Chris Grayling today unveils tough but transformational rehabilitation reforms. At present 50,000 short sentence prisoners a year are freed without any future supervision. Grayling is putting a stop to this abdication of responsibility by the system.

He is turning 70 of Britain's jails into "Resettlement Prisons" with a mission to set young offenders on the rehabilitation road in the final three months of their sentence.

They will prepare for their release with the same providers who will be watching over them for a new and compulsory 12-month period of supervision after jail.

*It will start with being met at the gate by a mentor who will help with problems such as housing, drug abuse and finding a job.*

The carrot is offenders get a chance to be helped into law-abiding lives with personalised, practical help. The stick is that if they don't co-operate they could return to prison.

Chris Grayling's approach is a groundbreaking strategy. I think it will succeed.