

**BBC News 24 live interview after the lead news item on 9pm news bulletin with:
Rachel Schofield, BBC Presenter
Steve Collett, Vice-Chair, Probation Chiefs Association**

Identity issues arising from naming the offenders in the Baby P case

Rachel Schofield: Well let's discuss some of the issues around this with Steve Collett, Vice-Chair of the Probation Chiefs Association, which represents probation chiefs in England and Wales who is in our Liverpool newsroom.

Thanks for being with us.

So the identities of these three people are known. They are for the time being in prison but at some point they will be released and then the probation service comes in. How much of a challenge for you is it now that their identities are known?

Steve Collett: Well it will be a significant challenge if and when they are released in the future because we know that feelings are running very high and we'll have to take that into account in terms of the release plans and the things we put in place to protect them – because although The Probation Service's primary responsibility is to protect communities and individuals from serious violent offenders this case turns that on its head – and we will have to protect offenders themselves from possible retaliation from the community.

Rachel Schofield: One of the ways this can be done is for them to be given new identities. If they applied for that, said that's what they wanted, what light can you shed on how that process works, how those decisions are taken?

Steve Collett: Can I explain – we deal with a broad spectrum of offenders where there may be some risk to them in the community and for the majority it's about providing them with some fairly straightforward information about how to behave and act. What we do in cases where offenders have committed particularly notorious crimes is that we'll undertake a risk assessment with our police and prison colleagues through the multi-agency public protection arrangements. And it will be through that process that we determine exactly what measures we have to put in place. The issue of changing

identity is at the far extreme of the kind of actions we will take.

Rachel Schofield: So just to clarify, that would be something that happens – what – in a handful of cases and is decided at a very high level?

Steve Collett: Yes. I can't tell you how many because by definition these cases are highly secretive for obvious reasons. But my guess would be that you can count on the fingers of one hand the number of cases where the issue of changing identity is discussed. My understanding is that will always be subject to ministerial decision and approval.

Rachel Schofield: A brief final thought on the psychology around this issue of, in a way, the offender thinking that they have become the victim – that they need somehow protecting. Does that complicate things in their rehabilitation if they see themselves now at risk of being attacked and so on?

Steve Collett: I think it probably does. And it's one of the problems about when communities or individuals decide that they want to take action and demonise individual offenders – it actually makes our job much harder because we spend some of our time protecting the individual rather than focusing on the needs of the community. So it is a difficult balance to maintain. But my experience is that I don't think offenders suddenly think they become victims. They often accept it as part and parcel of the punishment they get for committing the kind of crimes they have committed.

Rachel Schofield: Ok, Steve Collett thanks very much for talking us through some of those issues. That's Steve Collett from the Probation Chiefs Association.