

# Prison Service Wants to Delay Young Offenders' Entry Into Adult Penal Colonies

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Federal Penitentiary Service has drafted proposals allowing teenage offenders to stay in juvenile correctional facilities if their behavior improves, a news report said Wednesday.

Under the current law teenage offenders are transferred to adult penal colonies when they reach the age of 19, but if the amendment is accepted the cut off point will be extended to 25, Kommersant reported.

The aim is to give young offenders an incentive to reform their character, as well as preventing them from interacting with hardened criminals, which damages their re-education, a prison source said.

Young offenders who are dropped into adult colonies try to assert themselves by acting like experienced criminals, which lead to them breaking rules and being punished, the source

added.

Conditions inside correctional facilities will be gradually improved along the lines of the Swiss model. Cells will be equipped with refrigerators and televisions and won't host more than four people. Inmates will also be allowed to socialize in dining rooms.

Other changes to the regime include having social psychologists work with the inmates, and hiring Swiss experts to train staff.

The service said that it's proposals are being studied by the Justice Ministry.

The proposals form part of wider plans to redevelop the penal system by 2020 by remodeling correctional facilities and reducing their number from 46 to 33.

So far only five correctional facilities have been remodeled and it is not known how much of the Federal Budget has been made available for the plan.

Valery Borshchev, chairman of the Moscow Public Monitoring Commission said diverting young offenders from adult penal colonies could reduce recidivism. "Adult colonies break people with unstable psyches; people change and break away from society," she said.

He said, however, that reducing the number of facilities could have a negative effect, because it could lead to overcrowding in the facilities that remain open, which reduces the likelihood of offenders being successfully re-educated.

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