

UNDER EMBARGO: WEDNESDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2014

PROBATION WORKERS SURVEY DELIVERS VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT PRIVATISATION PLANS

Napo and UNISON survey reveals a stressed and demoralised workforce that has no confidence in government privatisation proposals

A survey of more than 1,000 probation workers has delivered a damning verdict on the government's decision to break up the probation service and sell-off half to profit making private companies.

99% of respondents revealed they do not support the government's probation reforms, while 93% do not believe that the changes will provide value for the money for the taxpayer. 98% said they have no confidence in Secretary of State for Justice Chris Grayling.

Napo and UNISON - the unions representing more than 12,000 probation workers - have today sent the results of the survey to the Justice Select Committee.

The unions are calling on the government to urgently halt its plans to privatise the service amid rising concerns that the plans could put public safety at risk and are having a detrimental impact on its staff and service users. 91% of those surveyed said they don't believe that service provision will improve for users under the government's Transforming Rehabilitation agenda.

The survey also painted a picture of a stressed and demoralised workforce, with almost 80% admitting they have considered leaving their job in the past 12 months, while 55% are actively looking for a new job.

74% of respondents say that workload and pressure has increased since they transferred to the NPS or a CRC*, with 86% indicating that stress levels have increased since the transfer. 82% said that staff morale has decreased following the transfer, with 46% of members identifying themselves as "extremely stressed."

84% would not recommend their own occupation as a career to others, showing that there is now a real crisis amongst probation professionals. The Probation Service is one of the most successful and efficient public services. It plays a vital role in rehabilitating offenders, protecting victims and keeping communities safe.

Ian Lawrence, General Secretary of Napo said:

"We have been campaigning against these dangerous reforms since they were announced last year. Our campaign now has the support of the Labour Party as well as many stakeholders both in Probation and in the wider criminal justice system. They are untried and untested and will undermine public protection if they go ahead."

More follows

UNISON General Secretary Dave Prentis said:

"Our members working in probation have spoken loud and clearly of their despair over the government's botched changes to their service, which is affecting the morale of staff and public safety. Selling-off half the probation service to the private sector would be a disaster. The government must act in the public interest and put a stop to this sell-off now to save the probation service before it is too late."

Napo in conjunction with the Justice Unions Parliamentary Group is hosting a lobby of parliament tomorrow (3 September) to call for an independent inquiry into the Secretary of State's controversial "Transforming Rehabilitation" plans which will see half the probation service privatised by next year.

Lobby of Parliament 1.45pm to 3.00 pm (members are assembling at 12.30pm in Old Palace Yard, SW1). There is a rally in Committee Room 14 of the Palace of Westminster from 2pm to 3pm.

Ends

For more information contact Tania Bassett (National Official Napo) 07904 184 195 or 020 7223 4887 or Glen Turner (Press Officer Unison) 0207 121 5555

Notes to Editors

* On 1 June this year, the 35 local Probation Trusts were abolished, with staff transferred to either the new centralised National Probation Service (NPS) or one of 21 Government-owned Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs). These Government-owned companies are set to be sold off to the private sector later this year.

Full survey results

- 1,046 members responded to the survey (nearly 10% of our combined membership)
- 48% of respondents work for the National Probation Service
- 52% work for a Community Rehabilitation Company
- Nearly 40% of respondents are probation officers
- 23% are probation service officers
- 10% are admin and clerical staff
- 10% work in approved premises, community payback and as case administrators
- 9% are senior probation officers
- 2.5% work in corporate services
- 74% of respondents say that workload and pressure has increased since they transferred to the NPS or a CRC
- 86% indicate that stress levels have increased since the transfer

- 82% say that staff morale has decreased following the transfer
- 46% of members are extremely stressed
- 49% are moderately stressed
- Nearly 80% have considered leaving their job in the last 12 months
- 55% are actively looking for a new job now

The top-line reasons that members are looking for a new job are:

- Disagreement with Transforming Rehabilitation - 78%
- Feeling undervalued in my job - 70%
- Having to compromise on standards - 70%
- 84% would not recommend their own occupation as a career to others
- 83% feel less secure in their job now compared to last year
- 99% do not support the government's Transforming Rehabilitation proposals
 - 96% don't believe that they will improve probation services
 - 96% don't believe that they will enhance end-to-end offender management
 - 91% don't believe that service provision will improve for users
 - 93% don't believe that the delivery of statutory duties to the courts will improve
 - 90% say that statutory partnerships will not improve
 - 97% say that the management of risk will not improve
 - 93% don't believe that value for money will be provided to the tax payer
- Nearly 90% say that Transforming Rehabilitation has made their working life more difficult
- 86% do not feel valued by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS)
- 98% have no confidence in the Secretary of State for Justice Chris Grayling