

# One Probation One Profession

Napo's strategy for the  
new probation environment

**MEMBER CONSULTATION**

**Summer 2016**

# One Probation One Profession

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## INTRODUCTION

This is one of the most difficult and critical periods in probation's history in England and Wales. Whilst seeking to rebuild everything from morale and trust to working practices within and across the new split working environments, we stand nervously awaiting the impact of major reforms proposals for prisons and other parts of the justice sector.

In such times of uncertainty it would be easy to duck for cover, hide and seek to merely protect what we've salvaged to date. But probation isn't about fear or hiding. The essence of probation is being proactive and not afraid of the difficult. As the professional association and union for probation and Family Courts staff, Napo's proactively championed probation for over a century and we're not going to step back from the challenge now. In adversity comes opportunity.

***In this period of confusion, uncertainty and change, Napo's in a unique position. We are the constant.***

We are the only body with members from all parts of probation—from admin to ACO's in every CRC, part of the NPS, prison and mutual. We are the place where anyone regardless of grade or union rank is invited and encouraged to come and have their say both about current concerns and the future.

***Napo's always been proud of presenting the professional voice for probation***—whether to policy makers in Parliament and the National Assembly, or to senior managers when designing training; through campaign materials and briefings to publishing the Probation Journal. We're effective because our voice is genuinely inclusive—our unique open and flat democratic structures encourage members to be involved in these debates.

That's what this consultation is about. Probation talks about being a profession but ***for many and varied reasons we've lacked the structures and supports that sustain recognition for a profession and professionalism.*** Pathways in to being a probation officer are consequently restricted with our own form of class system between PSO's and 'qualified PO's'. Managers and leaders don't have the training and qualification structures now common place in other professions. ***Consequently, probation has been a 'Cinderella service', not having the status or recognition it needs and deserves. Napo think it is time probation came to the ball.***

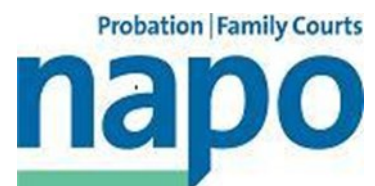
**We can do that by having a plan when all around us are having a panic. This consultation outlines a starting position. In the tradition of Napo we want you, the professionals at all levels who know and care about probation most, to help shape and develop the plan so Napo can take something you can have confidence in to those with the power and resources to implement it.**

Please read through the document, talk about it with colleagues and return the questionnaire by **3rd September 2016**. Then come to the AGM to make the final decisions.

Thanks for continuing to support Napo and your probation service.

**DEAN ROGERS, Assistant General Secretary**

**TANIA BASSETT, National Official (Campaigns and Parliament)**



# One Probation One Profession

## 1. Establishing Probation's values and core principles

### After the Earthquake

Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) was an earthquake that has shaken probation to its foundations, with further seismic shocks predicted for probation and other parts of the justice sector. We don't know when or where these occur. All we can be certain of is further uncertainty.

If what, where and how our work is different and uncertain then it's more critical than ever for all of our work to be anchored to a strong, clear sense of **WHY**. Every change must be assessed, measured and tested around **WHY**.

The **WHY** provides the **VALUES** underpinning our service, against which the outcomes and processes are benchmarked. How and what we do must reflect these **VALUES** consistently for clients, partners, funders and staff to invest their trust, commitment and faith in the new operating environments.

### So what are probation's **VALUES** ?

Napo proposes that professionalism is a **PRICE** worth paying— **PRICE** standing for:

- ◆ **Professional**
- ◆ **Respectful**
- ◆ **Independent**
- ◆ **Challenging**
- ◆ **Ethical**

If **PRICE** encapsulates the values upon which probation is built – the foundation of all probation does, how it operates and how it is judged **what are the principles that translate these values into practice?** What are the principles to benchmark and test these values and tie them to probation's goals and purpose?

Napo's starting point would be **FIRST PRINCIPLES**—at university the brightest and the best can get the ultimate accolade of a Double First and Napo think that nothing less than the best is good enough for probation members. Napo's Double First Principles would be:

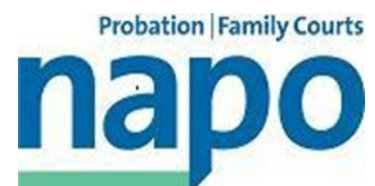
- ◆ **Fair & Flexible**
- ◆ **Independent & Inclusive**
- ◆ **Responsive & Responsible**
- ◆ **Safe & Supportive**
- ◆ **Trusted & Transparent**

**Q1. What are the common probation values and principles that should underpin all probation does and how we should do things?**

**i. Does PRICE and FIRST principles capture these?**

**ii. What 5 words best sum up probation values?**

**iii. What 5 words best sum up probation principles?**



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## 2. Regulation and a Licence to Practice

Social workers are regulated and licenced by the Health Care Profession's Council (HCPC). Medical professions have their own professional councils (e.g. nursing, the General Medical Council, midwifery, etc) and teaching has the General Teaching Council.

These set and monitor core values against a set of professional standards and qualification expected at each level of their profession. They're independent of politicians and political interference (unlike Ofsted for example) so retain their credibility. Translating values into practice at different levels and situations is done via genuine dialogue with partners, including unions and professional associations. They can also develop training standards and advise on what continuous professional development (CPD) is required for professionals at different levels to progress along clearly defined professional pathways - e.g. requirements for managers and leaders to be successful.

They also maintain a register of those licenced to practice. These are graduated at different levels, backed up by qualification that recognise professionalism, status and the monitoring of CPD. Napo has had policy since 2011 supporting setting up a probation licence to practice—is now the time to push for this again?

### Professional advantages...

Applying minimum professional standards and applying a professional status to all frontline staff would protect probation from divide and rule, downward grade drift and people being pressured to do things they don't feel qualified to do. It would support a structured career pathway, up to managerial or advanced professional roles, aligned to qualifications and training. Employers who don't support this would risk being criticised by the independent regulator.

### Who could regulate probation?

The whole probation profession would need to have initial confidence in its professional regulator. The regulator would have to have the capacity to then build and retain this confidence. There are a number of options for probation that Napo wants to consult members about.

One option would be to expand the role of the Probation Institute (PI). Some Napo members have already chosen to join the PI and register via the voluntary licence they operate. However, the PI currently lacks the status, universal credibility and legislative standing to quickly or automatically fill the role of a probation wide regulator.

It is possible the MoJ could task an established regulator, such as the HCPC, to establish a probation arm, which could be less complex legislatively and quicker to set up using establishing operating frameworks. Cafcass members are already regulated by the HCPC and aligned to social work frameworks. Could probation benefit from getting closer to social work in this way? Or is there merit on there being something new and specific set up for probation?

### Q2. Should probation be regulated and, if so, who by?

- The Probation Institute
- The HCPC
- Something new and probation specific

### Q3. Should this include a licence to practice?



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## 3. Building Partnerships in the new environment

Probation’s reputation as a successful service was founded upon being innovative, open and accountable.

In the new probation environment transparency is more difficult because of commercial competition between providers and weak foundations for the NPS where local autonomy and creativity’s often suffocated by central dictates and a bureaucratic pull to standardise everything.

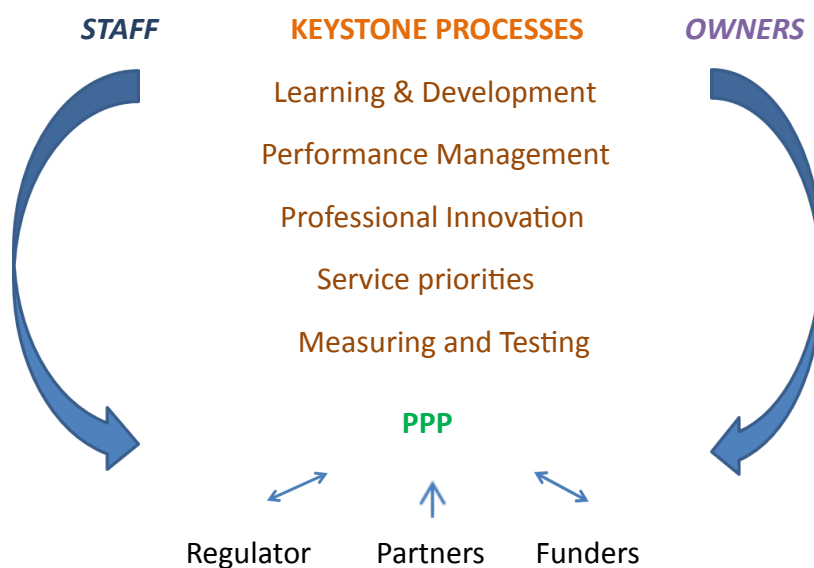
Napo also recognise that long-standing relationships with wider agencies and partners have also been strained by the new post TR structures.

Napo thinks coming together around professional standards can begin to address these challenges and facilitate trust building between providers, professionals and wider partners.

We also recognise partner agencies have a vested interest in a successful probation service. Napo thinks they need to also be brought in to the conversation, and that staff who work for them and are engaged on the probation frontline should also be protected by professional standards and expectations - e.g. agency staff, staff delivering relevant programmes. Napo’s rules may need to change to allow us to support and represent people in this position.

### A new place to come together

Napo has therefore supported proposals already advanced for a new national Probation Professional Partnership forum (PPP), where all owners and employers would meet with unions to discuss and develop professional issues. The principle of a new PPP has been agreed but debate about its exact scope continues. We think there should be input from a new regulator and wider partners and that the PPP should have scope to direct and shape all of the keystone processes to sustain professionalism. We also think core values and first principles should be embedded into its measures and tests.



**Q4. Do you support the creation of a national Probation Professional Partnership forum, and if so which organisations do you think could or should be invited?**



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## 4. Keystones for Professionalism

Securing and sustaining recognition as a true profession requires structure to be in place—the keystones of professionalism. We believe the lack of these structures have been part of the reason why probation has felt so fragile and vulnerable. Now is the time to re-examine these and make sure they're firmly secured into the new probation environment.

This is especially important in a service like probation, which deals with complex people with complex problems. There are very few 'black and whites'. People need to be confident and secure about making judgements. One of the greatest threats to probation is that it succumbs to a 'single point of blame' culture—highlighted by the likes of ex-Chief Constable Sara Thornton in the police and seen in numerous social work 'scandals'. This needs probation to act now, coherently and consistently, in critical areas.

These include:

### **Broadening access and professional pathways**

***Unless we unite as One Probation new employers will inevitably seek to divide and rule, but challenging vested interest must start with challenging ourselves*** and having the strength, honesty and confidence to recognise that a few sacred cows have already been taken to market and sold.

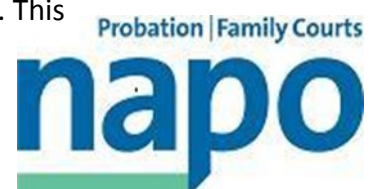
Our world had already been moving around us before TR. The NPS E3 project's flushed out widespread variations in who and how some work's being delivered with people doing similar functions at different grades. The 'professional boundaries' and strict role demarcations that tucked a quasi-professional blanket around us has been pulled off exposing probation to an uncomfortable chill.

In this regard, probation's catching up with other frontline public services—teaching, social work, health professionals and police all having seen traditional boundaries blurred over the last 20 years, in part through on the job training and broader entrance routes. In almost all cases, unions and professional associations initially opposed these changes, predicting professional disasters, widespread service failure and exploitation. Almost all then recognised the risks from being seen to oppose not just these practices but those who accessed them—including many who'd evidently become excellent, committed professionals utilising pathways that would otherwise have been shut to them.

Napo has largely taken a defensive stance around where existing grade and/or professional boundaries are set, which to a large extent has been, until now, successful in preventing more rapid and widespread de-professionalisation. But this excludes those looking to find a way over, around or through the professional walls we've been maintaining. ***If we're serious about wanting One Probation then we have to do better at reaching and engaging with PSO's and admin grades—many of whom are already doing or aspiring to deliver higher level frontline services, especially in the CRC's.***

### **Embedding a Learning Culture**

A graduated licence to practice and broadening of probation qualifications to include apprenticeships, BTECs and other vocational qualifications potentially provide the first keystone. This would strengthen not reduce 'professionalism' at all levels, with scope to



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extend structured, formal training and qualification strands for managers and leaders including into areas such as HR, project management or, as in social work, for those not interested in becoming ‘managers’, advanced probation routes. In most professions, advancement of this sort now requires specific professional qualifications, the requirement for which acts as an engine to power Continuous Professional Development—something evidently lacking across the new probation environment.

## Napo Days

To encourage and embed some structure into this we’re also considering the idea of Napo Days. These are based on school INSET days, also still known as Baker Days after the Minister who introduced them. Our initial thinking is for every employee to have an allocated bank of time specifically for CPD (e.g. 10 days a year). This would be enough to ensure flexibility for individual and collective, formal and informal learning, training and reflection to take place. We’d expect about 1/2 to be collective and incorporate active learning with the scope for whole days to be allocated for team rebuilding and reflection. How and what this was used for would be built into monitoring as part of performance management.

## Performance Management

***Performance management is a huge weakness across the public sector***—especially in the civil service where staff survey after staff survey shows it ends up being demotivating and self-defeating. ***This can and should change.***

Good performance management should be rooted to the values, purpose and goals of the organisation as they relate through to the work people do. Measurements should reflect what and how people do their work, tested against the key behavioural values (KBVs) - our PRICE for professionalism. Where people work in teams the performance management should reflect teams. It should be forward looking and support CPD not defensive and punitive. When supported by professional values, principles and structures it should be positive, proactive and part of everyday practice, not something that happens once a year or is done to someone.

We think the current probation appraisal and performance management systems fail to meet these standards and that this is the opportunity to set out something better that works for all staff and all grades in all roles.

## Appropriate pay and reward

Our professional agenda is not separate from our traditional union agenda. Repairing the broken pay system is a central pillar of any One Probation One Profession strategy. A good pay system would be:

- ◆ **Transparent and easy to understand**
- ◆ **Fair and measurably equitable**
- ◆ **Competitive to attract and retain good people**
- ◆ **Affordable and sustainable**

***Our current pay system’s inflexible, opaque, uncompetitive and unsustainable.  
Now is the best and right time to modernise our pay system.***





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A new model must be tested against how it promotes and sustains a new professional framework. This should rule out any moves to performance pay.

Pay and reward should be intrinsically set according to what people do; the skills, knowledge and experience they use; and the responsibility and risk they manage. Fairness is critical.

***Talks have already started at national level and we're developing our ideas on how we can move from where we are to somewhere better. Please look out for further consultations on pay over the coming weeks and months.***

### **Developing practice and innovation**

Professionalism and innovation go hand in hand—professionalism becoming a driver for promoting innovation by driving out complacency, forward thinking reflection drowning negativity. Probation has a long tradition of promoting innovation and evidenced based practice and Napo has been at the heart of that. TR ditched this tradition and space needs to be found for it to be re-established. This can't happen by accident or chance.

Napo wants to explore ways of promoting Design Thinking principles and inclusive development practices—proper pilots tested and evidence based assessments returning, including in partnerships via the PPP forum and by finding ways to celebrate success. For example, we're looking to pilot Probation Meets, again modelled on successful education practice, where Napo supports members meeting informally just to talk about what's still great about being in probation and supportively share what we do well. Let us know if you'd be interested in finding out more about this approach.

**Q5. Do you think Napo Days are a good idea?**

**Q6. Do you think workloads and current appraisal adequately support your CPD?**

**Q7. Estimate how much time you have had for CPD in the last year?**

**Q8. Does your current appraisal system actively make a positive difference to your performance?**

**Q9. Do you think performance management could be improved to better reflect and support how you work and help you to do this even more effectively?**

**Q10. How well do you understand the current pay system and why you earn what you do in relation to other colleagues earning more or less than you?**

**Q11. Does your pay fairly reflect and reward what you do?**



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## Summary and what happens next....

We think that if these pieces can be brought together then we'd be well on the way to:

- ◆ Achieving greater recognition and support for managers
- ◆ Putting people at the heart of how, what and why questions at all levels
- ◆ Having greater support and structure to leadership development at all levels
- ◆ Greater self-awareness of professionalism, autonomy, trust and mutual respect at all levels.

Staff would be more engaged which 30 years of consistent research shows promotes innovate practice, more flexibility, encourages diversity, which increases productivity. Greater productivity means greater efficiency, greater resilience, greater value for money for the taxpayer and more support for the service. Ultimately this means better outcomes for clients and the public. Prioritising developing and supporting a One Probation One Profession strategy is a global win-win argument.

## Over to you....

However, you know probation best so we want to find out whether you agree with us; if you think pieces are missing; and what you think needs more developing. The 12 questions set out through the document will help structure this genuine consultation which will run throughout July and August. You can email us your answers or print the document off and send us your answers directly. You can do this as individuals or collectively.

Your responses will then be assessed and will inform the debate we'll have at this year's AGM in Cardiff from 29th September until 1st October. AAs ever, all members are invited and encouraged to come to the AGM, which itself doubles as a CPD event.

Following the AGM Napo will lobby all owners, employers, partners and policy deciders to support the final professional agenda you've agreed to support at the AGM.

At the same time we'll practice what we preach by continuing to review, refine and add to it post 2016 in consultation with you. You can join in through our soon to be launched new Members' Networks, accessing our regular surveys through our improving communication platforms or by just old fashioned writing and emailing us via [info@napo.org.uk](mailto:info@napo.org.uk)

**Thanks you for taking the time to consider this paper and for your continued support for Napo and probation.**



# One Probation One Profession SURVEY

Please return via [info@napo.org.uk](mailto:info@napo.org.uk) with email title 'Professional Survey'

Or post to Professional Survey, Napo, 4 Chivalry Road, London SW11 1HT

**YOU CAN COMPLETE THIS FORM ONLINE OR BY PRINTING IT OFF AND POSTING IT TOO US.**

**YOU CAN FILL IT IN AS AN INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVELY**

**PLEASE RETURN BY NOON ON 3RD SEPTEMBER 2016**

NAME(S):

EMPLOYER (OPTIONAL):

GRADE / JOB TITLE (OPTIONAL):

IF WE WANT TO FOLLOW UP YOUR RESPONSES WITH YOU WOULD THAT BE OK? Yes / NO

If yes please add an your preferred email address: \_\_\_\_\_

## QUESTIONS

**Q1. What are the common probation values and principles that should underpin all probation does and how we should do things?**

i. Does PRICE and FIRST principles capture these? Yes / No

ii. What 5 words best sum up probation values?

iii. What 5 words best sum up probation principles?

**Q2. Should probation be regulated Yes / NO**

**and, if so, who by?**

- The Probation Institute
- The HCPC
- Something new and probation specific (tick preference)

**Q3. Should this include a licence to practice? Yes / No**

**Q4. Do you support the creation of a national Probation Professional Partnership forum, and if so which organisations do you think could or should be invited?**

**Remember—please add any comments to your answers....**

**Q5. Do you think Napo Days are a good idea? Yes / No**

**Q6. Do you think workloads and current appraisal adequately support your CPD? Yes / No**

**Q7. Estimate how much time you have had for CPD in the last year?**

**Q8. Does your current appraisal system actively make a positive difference to your performance?**

**Yes / No**

**Add any comment....**

**Q9. Do you think performance management could be improved to better reflect and support how you work and help you to do this even more effectively? Yes / No**

**Q10. How well do you understand the current pay system and why you earn what you do in relation to other colleagues earning more or less than you?**

**Q11. Does your pay fairly reflect and reward what you do? Yes / No**

**Q12. Do you support the development of a Balanced Scorecard Model (as described) across probation in partnership with Napo and a PPP forum? Yes / No**