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HM Prison & Probation Service

Amy Rees

Director General of Probation and Wales

Ian Barrow

Executive Director Probation Workforce Programme

[sent electronically]

To:

Ian Lawrence, NAPO

Ben Priestley, UNISON

George Georgiou, GMB Scoop

CC:

Mark Adam, MoJ People Group

Francis Stuart, Employee Relations

Jim Barton, Probation Reform Programme

16 October 2020

Dear Trade Union colleagues

NATIONAL PROBATION SERVICE (NPS) PAY OFFER 2020/2021

Following our letter of 5 October, we write you to provide further details as to the best and final offer for the remainder of the 2020 – 2021 pay remit year award, in addition to the recent confirmation of contractual pay progression being processed for eligible staff in their October pay. We also wish to reemphasise our intent to engage with you imminently on future work and reforms we would like to tackle, together, to address systemic issues in the pay structure as is currently constituted and as noted in your pay claim this year.

We want to thank you for the provision of the pay claim. We want to note that it provided great detail and insight as to areas of concern for our staff, and assisted officials in the preparation of the business case that was submitted to HM Treasury and Cabinet Office in June to seek pay remit flexibility to present an award in excess on the published remit guidance. We agree that fair and sustainable pay, and pay structures, will benefit the workforce greatly. We are working, as part of the Probation Workforce and Reform Programmes, to improve retention and attraction to the service and are appreciative of the impact that improved reward offers can have.

In addition to contractual pay progression, for the 2020 – 2021 remit year, eligible staff already at the top of their pay band as at 31 March 2020, and therefore not in receipt of progression, will receive a non-consolidated and pensionable payment of 2% of their band pay maxima.

In line with the important concerns put forward on behalf of your members we will continue to work to eliminate pay band overlaps by removing all band minima, as they were at 31 March 2020, in the 2020 – 2021 remit year, once staff on the minima have progressed to the next pay point. In addition, we commit to address pay band overlap issues further as part of proposed future reforms in consultation with Trade Union colleagues imminently.

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We know that reform and progress has not come at the pace expected, but we are committed to working collaboratively and effectively to tackle residual issues in the pay structure to make sure that it is working for staff and the Service alike into the future. Part of this approach will be working collaboratively towards reforming the structure to provide for fewer steps within each band, and progression within each band on the basis of capability – facilitated through delivering a viable progression framework to support this. This will allow us to minimise the incoherence in the pay structure, ensure adequate development and experience at each step, and deliver pay awards that are more reflective of the expectations of staff and their Trade Unions. As mentioned, we will also seek to progressively resolve overlap issues with all Pay Bands and in addition to removing the minima for all pay bands this year, we are also removing the second step (as at 31 March 2020) for Pay Bands A and B to expedite this process.

We are also working to ensure we tackle residual issues of low pay, and as a result of the removal of band minima, those individuals in Pay Band 1 will be moved onto a single step rate for 2020 – 21. The NPS will also increase that rate to £18,174 per annum, to be effective as at 1 April 2020.

In response to your representations in the pay claim and verbally during negotiations, we have further reflected on the future design of the unified service and will conduct a review of roles in Pay Band 1 with the intention of redesigning all roles at that level to align with Pay Band 2. This review will start immediately. We are committed to this review, particularly with respect to the agreed objective of phasing out Pay Band 1 from use by no later than 1 April 2021. Concurrently, we will refrain from hiring any new staff into Pay Band 1 while this review is under way, nor will we seek to assimilate any CRC staff who transfer into the NPS in June 2021 into this pay band.

We are willing and ready to start engagement on these reforms immediately to avoid the difficulties that we have faced in 2020 – 2021 in navigating the central pay processes we were required to. Proactively engaging in discussions around reform over a multi-year basis, to support the preparation of a business case for HM Treasury and the Cabinet Office, will alleviate significant barriers faced this year in securing permission to offer and agree a retrospective award above the pay remit guidance levels.

We thank you for your hard work and tireless advocacy on behalf of your members and our staff and we look forward to your further consideration of these proposals and to your determination in respect of recommendations to your respective memberships.

Yours sincerely

Amy Rees

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