



Ministry  
of Justice

**Sam Gyimah MP**  
Parliamentary Under-Secretary  
of State for Justice

Ian Lawrence General Secretary, **NAPO**  
Ben Priestly, **UNISON**  
Will Jones and George Georgiou, **GMB SCOOP**



5 November 2017

Dear All

### RESPONSE TO THE PROBATION UNIONS

When I met recently with you and representatives from NAPO, UNISON and GMB SCOOP, the challenging nature and importance of the work of probation officers was at the heart of our conversation.

I wanted to write to you to express my sincere admiration for the day to day achievements of probation staff in keeping the public safe, and for the professional care and support they provide to those who are trying to turn their lives around. I know that there are many excellent examples of where this has been the case due to the dedication and skill of those working in our probation service.

You rightly raised recruitment and retention as issues which, despite significant progress being made in the NPS, are still of concern and on which, I agree, we must continue to focus. I am extremely aware of the additional pressures that staffing shortfalls place on those in post and remain grateful for the professional manner in which staff continue to deliver in these circumstances.

As well as the NPS national campaigns that are in progress, we are targeting additional recruitment resources at those NPS regions where it is historically difficult to recruit. We are also looking at how we make improvements to the vetting process. On a wider level it is clear that we need to improve the diversity of applicants successfully joining the probation service in order to build a profession that is properly representative of the diversity of those in our care.

I am clear that the exceptional work of those currently working within probation provides the strongest possible foundation to take forward the challenges we discussed. Continued constructive engagement with the trade unions who represent many of these staff is a key part of this.

Yours sincerely,

**SAM GYIMAH MP**