



AGM 04/2026

**Minutes of the 113th Annual General Meeting of Napo
held in person at the Winter Gardens, Eastbourne and
online 16th-18th October 2025.**

THURSDAY 16th OCTOBER

1. WELCOME

Members were welcomed to conference.

2. CHAIR'S ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

Ben Cockburn, National Chair, addressed conference.

3. QUORUM

It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate and over 150 members registered and shown as being in attendance at the event.

4. INTRODUCTION TO MONITORS

Charron Culnane, National Vice-Chair, gave an introduction to the role of the Monitors during the course of Conference.

5. INTRODUCTION TO STEERING COMMITTEE

The Chair of Steering Committee, Jeanne Peall, gave an introduction to the role of Steering Committee during the course of Conference. Jeanne gave the order of business to conference.

6. MINUTE'S SILENCE

Conference observed a minute's silence in remembrance of colleagues who have passed away during the previous year.

7. MINUTES OF 2024 AGM

The Minutes (**AGM 04/2024**) were **adopted**.

8. NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Ben Cockburn continues his first term as Chair; Duljit Gill starts her first term as Vice-Chair (Finance). Charron Culnane starts her second term as Vice-Chair Probation. Tony Perkins continues his first term as Vice-Chair (Probation) Adam Harmsworth starts his second term as Vice-Chair (Cafcass).

9. FINANCE REPORT (AGM 05/2025)

Carole Doherty, Vice-Chair (Finance), introduced the Finance report and no questions were asked.

The Finance Report (AGM 05/2025) was **approved**.

The appointment of Sturgess Hutchinson (Leicester) Limited as auditors for the year ending 2025 was **approved**.

10. EDRIDGE FUND ACCOUNTS & ANNUAL REPORT

Alan Goode, Chair of the Edridge Trustees presented the Edridge Accounts and Annual Report. The Edridge Accounts and Annual report were **approved**.

11. ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

Liz Saville-Roberts MP, Chair of the Joint Unions Parliamentary Group, gave an address to conference.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY – Workload Stress should be recorded in RIDDOR

On behalf of Thames Valley Branch, proposed by John Ennis and seconded by Bernard Morris.

This AGM notes with concern that workload stress, which can affect staff for more than three days sickness, is not recordable for Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), which undermines the seriousness of the condition of workload stress and wellbeing. This AGM agrees to raise this issue within the wider TUC movement, which will lead to a campaign to get workload stress with more than three days sickness absence recordable in RIDDOR.

This motion was **carried**.

13. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Composite A - You can't punish someone back to health

Proposed by Su McConnel, on behalf of the Retired Members Network and seconded by Neil Cafferky on behalf of London Branch.

This AGM notes that the interpretation of the Probation Attendance Management Policy is becoming more draconian with warning letters becoming the default instead of being used when really necessary.

This AGM believes staff morale and retention would be helped by managers feeling more confident about using their discretion to support members back into work following periods of ill health rather than punishing them for becoming ill.

Napo has already won agreement from our employer that absence management policy should be pursued with more humanity and kindness. Kind words at the top mean nothing if individuals are still subject to cruel and inflexible sickness management.

Managers must be supported in exercising discretion in applying absence policies. Napo will demand from HMPPS a regular review of sickness absence management data and other evidence to firmly establish that management discretion in absence management processes is being encouraged and used.

This motion was **carried**.

14. NEGOTIATING - CAFCASS – Challenge Cafcass’ disrespect of staff and Napo and Cafcass Employee Relations policies

On behalf of the Negotiating Committee – Cafcass, proposed by Nicola Kenney and seconded by Nicola Taylor-Ebong.

AGM notes that Napo reps in Cafcass have reported that the employer has increasingly disrespected the union and their own employee relations policies:

- meetings held under the Trade Union Partnership Agreement are arranged without consultation on date;
- agreed actions by the employer are often delayed or forgotten;
- the employer has repeatedly failed to communicate respectfully on multiple issues. Napo reps have been ignored by members of Cafcass leadership, with emails not responded to for days or ignored entirely. The unions’ pay claim submitted in June was not acknowledged for eighteen days, and has had no response over two months later;
- Cafcass is not following timescales in its own Employee Relations policies. Staff are left for weeks not knowing what is happening, sometimes without pay and sometimes under extreme stress and distress.

This adds up to a clear disrespect of a recognised trade union in Cafcass.

AGM therefore instructs Napo negotiators:

- to write to the Cafcass Board to make them aware of the employer’s actions;
- to maintain pressure on Cafcass to respect trade unions and Cafcass’ own policies;
- to report any delays in response or breaches of policy by Cafcass and keep a record for use in discussion with Cafcass.

This motion was **carried**.

15. NEGOTIATING – PROBATION – Change the appeal system

On behalf of London Branch proposed by Sharon Brereton and seconded by Patricia Johnson.

This AGM understands that the current system for appeals within HMPPS HR policies is flawed and can be subject to bias, unconscious and otherwise which disadvantages our members.

This AGM believes, to ensure independence, appeals for people subject to HR policies have to be heard by a Head of Service (HoS) from other Probation Delivery Units (PDUs) as the home Head of Service is generally involved in the decision-making process. This will ensure each case is looked at in an unbiased way.

This AGM asks that Napo negotiates a new appeals process as part of HMPPS' HR policies.

This motion was **carried**.

16. PROFESSIONAL AND TRAINING – Toolkits no longer fit for purpose

On behalf of London Branch proposed by David Price and seconded by Neil Cafferky.

With the advent of the 'one size fits all programme' and delivery reduced to High and Very High Risk clients, Community Offender Managers are left delivering toolkits on a 1-2-1 basis with increasing numbers of clients.

Many of the toolkits, such as Maps for Change, are complex and difficult pieces of work that require a lot of time to prepare and deliver and training to deliver these toolkits effectively is inadequate.

We call on Napo to demand that the employer consults on developing new toolkits and 1-2-1 work that are dynamic and easier to access. We also need better training to be able to deliver these interventions to a high and consistent standard to enable clients to engage with an effective change process.

This motion was **carried**.

17. CAMPAIGNING – Get us out of HMPPS

On behalf of London Branch proposed by Neil Cafferky and seconded by Patricia Johnson.

This AGM notes the Probation Service is being used to mop up the overcrowding situation in our prisons without regard to our own role and probation ethos. Our

management has been subsumed by prison staff and prison culture, diluting our professional integrity.

This AGM believes the Probation Service needs to retain its identity and professional standards by being truly independent from HMPPS.

This AGM calls on Napo to campaign to remove us from HMPPS control and the wider Civil Service.

This motion was **carried**.

18. EQUAL RIGHTS COMMITTEE – Are we prepared for the far right?

On behalf of Mercia Branch proposed by Andi Kocsondi and seconded by Natalie Dimbleby.

Recent social and political developments have seen a rise in far-right ideologies and anti-immigrant sentiments across the country. With the rise in popularity of Reform, casual racism is becoming normalised and anti-immigration rhetoric is rife. These trends pose challenges to creating a respectful, inclusive, and safe work environment. We are all faced with misinformation about immigration and staff may not feel equipped to challenge these arguments, with colleagues and with service users.

As a union committed to diversity, equality, and inclusion, it is imperative to address these issues proactively. The trade union movement must step up to confront this dangerous tide and ensure our workplaces remain spaces of solidarity, respect and dignity for all workers, and our practice remains free of unconscious bias and discrimination.

We call on Napo to put pressure on our employers to implement an educational program aimed at raising awareness among employees about the rise of far-right movements and anti-immigrant rhetoric. This program should include:

- interactive sessions that educate employees about the dangers of far-right ideologies and how they can be harmful;
- promoting critical thinking skills to help employees identify misinformation and propaganda;
- upskilling practitioners to challenge appropriately in open and respectful dialogues.

This motion was **carried**.

19. CAMPAIGNING – Labour must urgently deliver on its promise to review Probation Governance.

On behalf of Napo Cymru proposed by Su McConnel and seconded Migden-Sue Roberts.

Probation is in crisis and has been so for so long now that crisis seems routine. The HMPPS model of a combined prison and probation service is defunct, never having been fit for purpose. To coin a phrase, it is irredeemably flawed. In its manifesto for election, the now Labour Government promised a review of the governance of Probation. Our frustration that this has not been announced alongside the sentencing review cannot be overstated.

The repeated MoJ excuse for inaction, that probation staff are weary of change, is hollow. Since TR, all changes to probation have been against the expressed wishes and good judgment of experts and practitioners.

The repeated assertion that staff recruitment and retention will fill the void, is belied by the failure of attempts to secure this. Asking rats to board or remain on a sinking ship is a folly.

The promised review of the governance of Probation is urgently needed.

Napo will communicate the urgent need for a review of Probation governance, as promised in the Labour manifesto, to the Minister, and campaign vigorously for it, keeping members and activists informed as to progress.

This motion was **carried**.

20. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

On behalf of the National Executive Committee proposed by Carole Doherty (East Midlands Branch) and seconded by Ben Cockburn (Northumbria Branch).

In Section 14 – Annual General Meeting (AGM)

14(e) – in line two delete ‘The Forum,’.

14(f) – in line two delete ‘The Forum,’.

The section will then read as:

14 (e) The AGM shall consider any motion of which notice has been given in writing to the General Secretary by the NEC or any of its committees and networks, a branch, or two full or professional associate members, not less than eight weeks before the date of the AGM. The General Secretary shall circulate to all members the details of all such motions not less than six weeks before the date of the AGM.

14 (f) Notice of proposed amendments to motions shall be given in writing to the General Secretary by the NEC, any of its committees and networks, a branch, or two full or professional associate members not less than two weeks before the date of the AGM. Details of the proposed amendments shall be available at the AGM.

This Constitutional Amendment was **carried**.

21. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – OMiC Not Fit for Purpose

On behalf of London Branch proposed by Mark Nixon and seconded by Neil Cafferky.

This AGM believes the OMiC (Offender Management in Custody) Model is not fit for purpose. Prisoners are commonly being released into the community without resettlement plans due to staff shortages in prison and in sentence management in the community. Probation staff in prisons are also feeling isolated and disenfranchised since their direct line management moved across to the Prison Governors, who may direct to prioritise prison targets, overriding the focus on resettlement planning.

This AGM notes the introduction of short sentence legislation, such as SDS40 and HDC365, as well as the forthcoming Sentencing Review, namely FTR48, has only increased the pressure due to last minute notification of immediate releases on already limited probation resources, which is unsustainable.

This AGM urges Napo to work immediately towards the cancellation of OMiC and return Prison Probation management to the Probation Service, helping us to regain our independence and get our voices back.

This motion was **carried**.

FRIDAY 17th OCTOBER

22. QUORUM

It was confirmed there was a quorum.

23. ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

Martin Jones (Chief Inspector HMIP) gave an address to conference and, following a challenge to the Chair, responded to questions from members.

24. MONITORS REPORT

Darren Kiggins, Lead Monitor, gave the monitoring report to conference.

25. ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

Jake Philips, Probation Journal Editor, gave an address to conference.

26. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY SLOT

Questions were asked and answered about:

- what progress has been made in respect of establishing a realistic measurement of the time needed to complete Court reports, given the variance in expectations nationally and the additional tasks linked to the completion of reports?
- Should members be concerned that the last two National Court team meetings have been cancelled?

27. ADDRESS TO CONFERENCE

Josh Babarinde, MP for Eastbourne, gave an address to conference.

28. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY CONTINUED

The Annual Report, including the 2024 accounts, were adopted

29. CHANGEOVER OF OFFICERS

Ian Lawrence, General Secretary, thanked Carole Coherty for her service to Napo as National Vice-Chair (finance). Duljit Gill was thanked for her service as National Vice-Chair (Probation) and welcomed to her new role of National Vice-Chair (finance). Carole Doherty gave a speech to conference.

30. GENERAL SECRETARY'S ADDRESS

Ian Lawrence, General Secretary addressed Conference.

31. HEALTH AND SAFETY – Health and Safety minimum standards

On behalf of Thames Valley branch proposed by Kelsey Matthews and seconded by Stefani Georgieva.

This AGM notes with concern that there are inconsistencies in the standards of Health and Safety across England and Wales. There are some practices that are negatively impacting on the health and safety of staff and some areas where some buildings do not meet the appropriate health and safety standards, such as no high risk reporting rooms and CCTV cameras in offices. This AGM agrees to prioritise a set of minimum standards for health and safety and ensure that all areas of Probation are meeting these standards.

This motion was **carried**.

32. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – The Use of AI in Probation

On behalf of East Anglia Branch proposed by David Nash and seconded by Luke Richardson.

This AGM notes that whilst the Probation Service needs to take advantage of available technology to improve its work and reduce the workload of staff, we are concerned at the way in which AI is being promoted and used without a full consideration of the potential harm to workers, to the people we supervise and to potential victims. There appears to be a blanket Civil Service approach to AI, which ignores the specific needs and risks of Probation work.

AGM therefore instructs the National Executive Committee to:

- request a full Probation specific risk assessment for each use of AI, with dates set for meaningful review if implemented; Union input to be a requirement;
- support members to reject the use of AI where they identify potentially negative consequences;
- seek transparency about the approaches made by private tech firms to deliver services to and for HMPPS;
- lobby for AI specific legislation to protect workers' rights and wellbeing, including the right to human review and human contact for any AI decisions which affect staff, victims, or those on Probation;
- not use AI generated images or sounds within Napo publications in solidarity with workers in the creative industries.

This motion was **carried**.

33. EMERGENCY MOTION A - Protecting Foreign National Staff

Proposed by Matthew Pickles (South Yorkshire Branch) and seconded by Claire Patterson (South Yorkshire Branch).

On Monday 13th October 2025 a local Napo Rep from South Yorkshire Branch reported to me, as Branch Chair, that the recent changes in the visa threshold for Skilled Workers in the Home Office Immigration Rules seriously affected a member of the Branch.

Conference should note that these changes remove sponsorship for most HMPPS and Probation roles. Many valued colleagues – Case Administrators, front-line Probation staff and others – now face job loss and/or deportation despite their loyal service. Neither the MOJ nor HMPPS have offered any clear protection plan.

Conference believes that foreign national staff are essential to safe and effective probation delivery and deserve equal security and dignity at work. Sudden rule changes threaten workforce stability, equality commitments and service quality.

Conference resolves that Napo will:

- Urgently press MOJ, HMPPS and the Home Office for a moratorium on taking away the right to remain and work and to introduce transitional visas to protect existing staff.
- Campaign jointly with other unions for fair immigration treatment and a public service exemption or the introduction of a “legacy status clause” for affected employees.
- Support our foreign national colleagues through active representation, campaigning and solidarity across all branches.

Napo stands for justice, fairness and unity. No worker should lose their livelihood because government policy changed overnight.

This motion was **carried**.

34. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Transparency goes both ways

On behalf of Mercia Branch proposed by Andi Kocsondi seconded by Charlotte Turner.

The proposed amendment was accepted by the proposer of the motion, Andi Kocsondi.

HMPPS finally admitted several months ago that the Workload Measurement Tool (WMT) is severely under estimating workloads in sentence management. This is due to its failure to take into account all tasks required by national and regional case management related policies and procedures. They confidentially shared with representatives of the recognised trade unions that their survey results indicated a severe miscalculation of target staffing levels across England and Wales. Rather than sharing this with staff, they decided to embargo the numbers and continue to rely on the wildly inaccurate WMT. Furthermore, HMPPS has ignored all demands from Napo to address the effects of staff shortages.

Transparency. Accountability. Integrity. These are qualities and behaviours staff must demonstrate at all times. It is time that HMPPS is held to the same standards.

We call on Napo to demand that the WMT is replaced with the new, more comprehensive tool, and HMPPS to immediately publish the current figures regarding the shortfall in staffing numbers. Probation staff deserve to know the truth.

This motion was **carried**.

35. CAMPAIGNING – Enough is enough – we need new political representation

On behalf of the Family Court Section proposed by Adam Harmsworth and seconded by Nicola Taylor-Ebong.

AGM notes:

- The ongoing funding crisis in the probation service, Cafcass, and across the public sector.
- Labour's continuation of austerity and various attacks on the working class and oppressed groups, despite clear opposition and demands for an alternative from the trade union movement.
- The 2022 AGM resolution supporting Enough Is Enough and its demands: A Real Pay Rise, Slash Energy Bills, End Food Poverty, Decent Homes For All, Tax the Rich

AGM believes:

- Napo members need political representatives that firmly back our union's policies.
- The Labour government is not representing the interests of Napo or the wider working class. Napo and the broader trade union movement must look for an alternative political voice to Labour.

AGM resolves, without actions requiring a political fund:

- To contact sister unions with an invitation to enter discussion on establishing a new political voice for the working class.
- To invite pro-worker MPs including Jeremy Corbyn MP and Zarah Sultana MP to attend a National Executive Committee meeting for a discussion about how they can support our union's demands for decent funding for probation and Cafcass.
- To encourage Napo members to stand in elections, linking up with other trade unionists, to campaign for our union's policies.

This motion was **not carried**.

36. PROFESSIONAL AND TRAINING – Calculate my age and then recalculate my workload

Proposed by Keith Stokeld (Staffordshire West Midlands Branch) and seconded by Steve Kelly (Staffordshire West Midlands Branch).

Napo has, with its longstanding campaign on workloads, sought to highlight the impact of the unreasonable demands placed on staff across all grades. None of the measures, such as Reset, reordered priorities, E3 (Effectiveness, Efficiency and Excellence) and changes to the risk criteria, have slowed down the relentless pressure on staff delivering high quality work.

Those, not constrained by circumstances, are rightly choosing, in an atmosphere of low pay and high workloads, to join those older members who left during Transforming Rehabilitation (TR).

The Probation Service needs to seriously address the impact of workloads on all its staff but especially on those of a certain age, whose health and stamina are seeing an increasing number of staff catapulted down the exit chute of sickness absence and capability.

It is time to respect the experience and knowledge linked to time served, not to penalise staff who need more time to deal with IT, assimilate information and deliver high-quality work.

This AGM calls for further consultation on additional workload weighting on a formula consistent with age and experience for all tasks and with it an adjustment in workloads. The formula should also consider protected characteristics and underlying health conditions.

This motion was **not carried**.

37. CAMPAIGNING – Collaboration with Research towards a localised Probation Service

On behalf of Napo Cymru proposed by Su McConnel and seconded by Adele Parry.

The shambles that was Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) was badly overhauled to create a civil service Probation Service, subsumed by the Prison Service in HMPPS. Napo, leading commentators and experts, not least experts on the coalface - our exhausted and valiant members - distinguished academics and the inspectorate are all calling for Probation to be a locally embedded service, closely connected with Courts.

Napo Cymru has worked collaboratively with the Welsh Centre for Crime and Social Justice (WCCSJ), specifically its Welsh Probation Development Group, for some years now, modelling the good practice of enmeshing academic research and professional practice in its work.

While this work has encompassed consideration of a future devolved Probation Service, it is very applicable to both England and Wales in establishing evidence-based models of Probation, true to its identity and potential.

Napo will work in collaboration with the WCCSJ Welsh Probation Development Group in investigating models of Probation governance and practice that encompass localism and decentralised control. Napo will publish and promote the findings of this collaboration.

This motion was **carried**.

38. PROFESSIONAL AND TRAINING – Proper Structure and Accountability for Trainee Learning

Proposed by Matthew Pickles (South Yorkshire Branch) and seconded by Claire Patterson (South Yorkshire Branch).

This AGM notes that there are huge variations in the training experience and seeks to prevent this. This AGM believes that:

- trainees require a clear, accountable training plan to ensure they gain the skills and experiences necessary for their role;
- trainers and managers must have defined responsibilities for providing learning opportunities, rather than leaving development to chance;
- trainees should be able to track their progress and identify gaps in their learning.

This AGM resolves to:

- campaign for a nationally agreed structure for PQiP and PSO trainee learning that sets out required core experiences;
- ensure trainer accountability for delivering these opportunities;
- support tools for trainees to monitor their own development, making training consistent, fair and effective across all regions.

This motion was **carried**.

39. PROFESSIONAL AND TRAINING – Excessive Training

On behalf of South Yorkshire Branch proposed by Sarah Wake and seconded by Claire Patterson.

This AGM notes the substantial increase in training expectations for probation staff. Training and development are crucial to a professional organisation and go to the heart of Napo values. The amount of training currently required dilutes learning and means practitioners see it as a tokenistic, tick box exercise that detracts rather than enhances practice.

Furthermore, the time taken to complete training expectations as well as enforced office shut downs, greatly outweighs the time allowed by workload measurement, particularly for part time staff.

This AGM calls on the employer to:

- urgently review the amount of training being required of staff, including the frequency of repeat learning;
- prioritise training into a meaningful and achievable package that truly differentiates desirable from essential learning.

This motion was **carried**.

40. NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Using AI to Free Up Time and Refocus on People

Proposed by Matthew Pickles (South Yorkshire Branch) and seconded by Claire Patterson (South Yorkshire Branch).

This AGM notes that practitioners spend a significant proportion of their working hours on repetitive administrative tasks such as drafting reports, updating case notes and completing forms. While essential, these duties often reduce the time available for direct engagement with people on probation, which is central to effective risk management and rehabilitation.

This AGM believes that:

- Ethical and well-regulated use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools could streamline routine administrative processes without replacing staff.
- AI could assist in drafting documents, auto-populating forms, and reducing duplication, with practitioners retaining full responsibility for final content.
- Freeing practitioners from unnecessary admin will create more time for meaningful, relationship-based work with people on probation, supporting rehabilitation and public safety.

This AGM resolves to:

- Campaign for the introduction of ethical AI tools across the Probation Service to reduce administrative burdens.

- Ensure AI implementation safeguards jobs, maintains practitioner oversight, and protects confidential data.
- Promote the principle that technology should make our jobs more human - allowing more time for building trust, supporting change and delivering quality supervision.

SATURDAY 18th OCTOBER

41. QUORUM

The meeting was not quorate.

42. CLOSURE AND THANKS

Ben Cockburn, National Chair, gave the closing address. He thanked all those members attending both in person and online; Steering Committee and all the Stewards; the Monitors; the Napo AGM Organising Team and all the other Napo staff who are not present at Conference but assisting throughout; the staff at the Winter Gardens, Eastbourne; Rock Warehouse; stall holders; the Edridge Fund; the Officers and Officials and all the speakers at Conference. Ben noted that this AGM will be the last for Tony Mercer as a member of Steering Committee and thanked him for his service. Jeanne Peall was invited to make further comments and thanked Tony for all his work for Steering Committee. Tony accepted his leaving gift and addressed conference.