

AGM 08/2017

COMPOSITE MOTIONS

Composite A – Motions 10 + 11: Computer Says ??????? / HR privatisation

This AGM believes that the privatisation of HR posts in the NPS and absorption into "Shared Services" have led the NPS into a quagmire of chaos. AGM expresses its concern over the failure of Shared Services Connected Limited (SSCL) to consistently provide accurate HR and payroll support for staff employed by the NPS. SSCL has never been fit for purpose. Since the transfer of staff to the NPS, there have been numerous issues arising from call handlers' inability to apply the correct legacy policy to queries. The Single Operating Platform introduced in February has exacerbated these issues, to the point where staff aren't being paid correctly and in some cases aren't being paid at all. Queries and complaints go unresolved and it has recently emerged that employer pension contributions aren't being collected correctly. The long term implications for our hard working members could be severe.

Conference therefore resolves to support the Probation Negotiating Committee – and the Officials through TU Engagement – to hold HMPPS to account for these failures, to ensure that mistakes are rectified at the earliest possible juncture, and for staff to suffer no detriment – financial or otherwise. SSCL is not fit for purpose and this conference therefore, supports a call for the creation of a separate HR system for NPS staff which reflects our needs. Napo will campaign to bring HR back into the NPS at the earliest opportunity.

Proposer: Staffordshire West Midlands Branch
Seconder: Mick Hooson/Urfan Amar

Composite B – Motions 13 + 14 + 15: PSRs

This AGM has seen the lowering of standards regarding the quality and accuracy of Pre Sentence Reports since the push to on the day delivery. This AGM expresses its serious concern about the rapid way in which PSRs have been affected by the 'Simple speedy justice' agenda and E3 operating model. Arrangements under a "Simple Speedy Justice" initiative have resulted in requirements being agreed with "stakeholders" to produce reports in one hour.

Such a timescale is unrealistic and unsafe. It shows little understanding of the assessment processes for informed judgement and compromises professionalism. To complete an interview, undertake necessary checks, include information from other agencies such as the police and social care, use “diagnostic tools” appropriately and compose an assessment in a rushed environment in the space of an hour, generates considerable and unnecessary pressure that contributes to heightened stress levels and is un conducive to diligent practice necessary for justice. Limited information in a PSR increases the likelihood of unduly lenient or harsh sentences or lack of a relevant accredited programme, particularly with domestic abuse perpetrators. This AGM believes report writers are being de-skilled and placed in untenable situations when they have to produce reports without access to salient information.

The template is unfit for purpose due to it being poorly designed and unwieldy and not compatible with assistive technology. The character restriction also compromises the author’s ability to fully report on relevant issues. We believe this devalues our professional reputation and places our staff and the public at risk.

This AGM calls for our National Officers and Officials to:

- campaign vigorously for on the day reports to be reviewed and a return to quality and accuracy;
- gather information from sentencers about the value of the reports currently provided;
- gather information from members in the CRC and NPS about cases where there are concerns that short reports have contributed to inappropriate sentences/risk assessments;
- challenge guidance contained within the E3 operating model and PI 4/2016 that is not detailed enough in stipulating when full reports should be written and increases the number of oral reports/SFRs;
- argue to re-introduce compulsory but meaningful gatekeeping to mitigate against bias in respect of protected characteristics;
- raise these concerns urgently with the Ministry of Justice with a view to more sensible and realistic proposals being agreed centrally.

Proposer: South Yorkshire Branch

Secunder: Napo Cymru

Composite C – Motions 30 + 31: Action on bullying and harassment

This AGM believes the current policy and practice surrounding action on bullying and harassment within all probation employers and Cafcass to be inadequate, ineffective and inconsistent.

We instruct the Officers and relevant committees, particularly the Health and Safety Committee:

- to review all policies and practices currently prevalent;
- to submit a comprehensive, separate draft policy to HMPPS on Dignity at Work;
- with Cafcass to express concern at the apparent lack of will to enforce existing policy on bullying and harassment in the workplace;
- with all employers to evaluate the effectiveness and consistency of policies and to express concern that bullying and harassment (and any discrimination arising from) should be dealt with very seriously.

All policies and procedures should incorporate robust measures to deal with harassment, violence and threats to staff from service users.

Proposer: Kent Surrey and Sussex Branch
Seconder: Esther Barton/Carole Doherty