

Issued: (Version 1)

Indicative pay ballot Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Offer

Is 4% a fair or good pay offer?

No! [Our current pay claim explains why.](#)

Our pay has fallen way behind the increase in the cost of living, as well as pay in comparable sectors. How is it fair that this pay offer won't even do enough to match Probation workers' pay with others in HMPPS, the Ministry of Justice or the wider Civil Service? What financial incentive is there for people to stay in Probation when they could get thousands of pounds more for doing a similar job elsewhere?

There's a useful table that shows how much our pay was worth, adjusted for inflation, in 2010, compared to now included on the final page of the FAQs

Is there parity between this offer and the Prison Service's offer?

We've seen some attempt to claim that 4% is as good as what Prison Service staff received for this financial year. Even if that is true, parity for this year doesn't mean much when we've consistently received less for the past 14 years. 4% instead of the 12% we asked just maintains the inequality in HMPPS between our pay and Prison Service staff.

Why has the offer taken so long?

That's a question only the employer and Government can answer. Napo have done all we can to force the production of a pay offer at the earliest possible point – including moving to a formal ballot on industrial action over last Summer – so our members could vote on whether to accept or reject it.

- 1) The Probation Trade Unions submitted our pay claim for 2025-2026 in January 2025.
- 2) HMPPS refused to begin substantive pay negotiations until the Government issued the Civil Service Pay Remit in late May 2025.
- 3) Negotiations ran from late May and ended in late June 2025, when it was clear that HMPPS needed to submit a 'flex case' to the Cabinet Office and Treasury to get more money to put towards a pay offer.
- 4) In addition to other meetings with the Minister responsible for Probation, we met with the previous and current Lord Chancellors on the 23rd of July and the

17th of November 2025. From late June 2026 to mid-January 2026 we also took every opportunity to press HMPPS leaders for the production of a pay offer.

- 5) Pay negotiations resumed between the trade unions and employer on the 20th and 21st of January 2026.
- 6) The Pay Offer was received on the 22nd January 2026.

The Probation Negotiating Committee met on the 22nd of January 2026 to consider the employer's formal written pay offer – the first of this entire process – which was received earlier that day. The unanimous decision was to recommend the rejection of this pay offer in the indicative ballot of Napo members.

The indicative ballot on the pay offer for Napo members commenced on the 4th of February 2026.

Does the pay offer include expenses?

No, travel and subsistence are separate to this pay offer. The reference to increase in "Allowances" in the pay offer refers only to annual payments for London Weighting and Prison Supplement as well as the hourly Standby Allowance rate.

The employers pay calculator shows an 8% uplift for those not at the top of the band and a 4% for those at the top. Have they included the progression pay?

Yes, the employer's calculator includes money you have already received from previous negotiations, albeit several months later than you should have.

Napo have been clear with our members – you're being asked to vote on a pay offer of a 4% increase to pay band/points and allowances because that is all that is on offer. Anything else is propaganda, pure and simple.

Should we just accept this and move on to next year's pay?

No. We think that accepting this poor offer will only encourage the employer to keep offering below inflation pay rises to hardworking Probation staff. We don't think that accepting this offer and moving on to next year's in the hope of something better (especially when we are unlikely to see a new Civil Service Pay Remit until well into 2026) will help us in future negotiations.

Because of my circumstances I want to accept the pay offer, should I vote or not?

Yes, you should vote. There are many members who have contacted us to say that despite their personal circumstances they acknowledge the need to take a collective stand now against this insulting pay offer. Napo is a member led, democratic Trade Union and we want to hear your voice and know your views. Also, the employer will make assumptions about those who haven't voted so while we are recommending that members reject this offer, if you would like to accept it, then it's very important that you cast your vote.

What happens next?

Can the offer be withdrawn or lowered as suggested in the staff call?

The first the trade unions learned of this was when the announcement was made by the employer's representatives in the all-staff call about one of the possible scenarios if the trade unions. Having discussed this with other trade unions who represent members in the Civil Service it seems this would be an unprecedented move by a Government Department. It's also difficult to see how HMPPS would be able to justify the withdrawal of an offer it claimed was "good" and "fair".

We've urgently raised several questions with the negotiating team about these comments and are awaiting their response, which we'll share with members as soon as possible.

In the staff call the employer implied that if the offer was rejected it would take another year to negotiate a new one?

We think this response from the employer is irresponsible. While it's impossible to offer any timescale for what HMPPS and the wider Government decide to do in response to this pay offer and speculating on this has been taken by many members as fear-mongering.

What we have control of as a trade union is what we do though, and its important members remember what collective power we have.

If we have a high turnout, and a high proportion of members voting to reject the pay offer that sends an undeniable message to HMPPS and the Government about how seriously they need to take us.

Napo's Probation Negotiating Committee will meet on the afternoon the ballot closes to decide on all options available to us, including the process of moving quickly to a further ballot on industrial action.

What are the timescales if we reject?

The Probation Negotiating Committee will meet on the afternoon of Friday the 27th of February 2026 to consider the result of the ballot and agree on our next steps as a trade union, including the process of moving quickly to a further ballot of Napo members on industrial action in the event of a rejection of this pay offer.

If the employer and Government have taken a reasonable and responsible approach to this ballot period, and if they all value us as much as they claim they do, they should already have a contingency plan in place to make an improved pay offer within days to avoid the prospect of imminent industrial action.

If we vote to reject the 4% offer can the employer give us it anyway, pending negotiation of a final agreement?

No, as Napo are currently in a trade dispute with the employer, and one of the issues involved is pay (with the other being workloads).

Even if they could do that what would be the benefit to the employer of engaging in further negotiations with the trade unions after they've imposed a pay award? And how much weaker would our negotiating position be in this case?

What is happening to the 2026-2027 pay claim and will a rejection affect this?

HMPPS have been clear that they will refuse to begin formal negotiations until they receive the Civil Service Pay Remit for the next financial year (2026/27). For the current year this was received in late May 2025, though it has been later in previous years.

The trade unions can continue work on their next pay claim, including accessing workforce data from HMPPS to inform the claim as we're entitled to, prior to this being submitted in the future. As members would expect we're currently focused on as high a turnout in this ballot and having as many members as possible vote to reject, and then after the ballot closes what our next steps will be as a trade union.

Our Sister Unions

What are UNISON and GMB/Scoop doing?

Both are undertaking an indicative ballot of their members, commencing and closing on the same dates as Napo's. UNISON are advising their members to reject this offer, GMB/Scoop are not advising their members either way.

What happens if we reject the offer but other unions accept?

The membership of all three trade unions need to have voted to accept a pay offer before it can be paid to the workforce.

Other

Why is this ballot electronic but the last one was by post?

This is an indicative ballot which we can legally undertake online. By law ballots where we are asking members if they are prepared to take industrial action must be undertaken by post.

What are we doing to get the interest of the press?

Napo has frequent contact with a wide range of media outlets, including TV, radio, newspapers and online news sites. However, the decision of what items to focus on is an editorial decision which we have no control over. The decision about which quotations to use – e.g. when we talk about staff safety and pay, is the journalist's and not ours. We will continue to use all our media contacts to support our campaign.

The highest pressure on HMPPS and the Government will not come from the media, but will come from the strongest rejection of this inadequate pay claim from our members.

How much has our pay fallen behind the cost of living since 2010?

(Credit: West Yorkshire Branch, Napo)

Comparative Probation Pay Since 2010 (Bands 1 to 6)

The green column represents the inflation-adjusted salaries required today, to maintain the same purchasing power that your salaries had in 2010

	2010/11 Actual Pay Figures	2024/25 Actual Pay Figures current real-time pay pending pay deal	2010/11 pay equivalent in December 2025 Retail Price Index (RPI) * inflation figures (to nearest £)	Proposed 4% pay offer for 2025/26 to be backdated to April 2025	2026/27
National Minimum Wage (NMW) (rounded up to nearest £)	£11160 in April 2010, rising to £11410 in October 2010	£22011 in April 2024, rising to £23493 in April 2025		£23493	£24455
Band 1 **	£14464 to £17072				
Band 2	£17245 to £21301	£22320 to £25210 <i>Min removed due to NMW increase</i>	£31789 to £39266	£24180 to £26218	TBC, however, Band 2 Min will need to increase to meet new NMW
Band 3	£21821 to £27102	£26475 to £31650	£40224 to £49959	£27534 to £32916	TBC
Band 4	£28750 to £35727	£35130 to £42000	£52997 to £65858	£36535 to £43680	TBC
Band 5	***£34677 to £39424	£44100 to £46000	£63923 to £72673	£45864 to £47840	TBC
Band 6	***£39037 to £46650	£48305 to £52935	£71960 to £85994	£50237 to £55052	TBC

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