

## **Napo, General Secretary, Ian Lawrence's speech to Probation Institute Trainee Conference Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2018.**

Firstly, many thanks to the Co-Hosts in the form of the NPS and the Probation Institute for this opportunity and can I say how appreciative I am of the important work carried out by the Institute in what are incredibly testing times for anyone delivering Probation services in a Criminal Justice System that itself is beset by a number of major challenges.

As Helen Schofield said earlier I am currently the General Secretary of Napo an elected 5 year term position for which I am approaching another election shortly, so I am rather hoping that this is not the first and last time that I have the pleasure of addressing this conference.

My duties range between being the senior elected employee within Napo with responsibility for our members in Probation and the Family Court Service, typically my work involves high level interface with Government Ministers and the senior leadership of the Official Opposition and senior NPS and MoJ departmental heads

I am also the lead spokesperson for Napo in our regular contact with TV and media and I also have a negotiating role with the three CRC Contracts in Wales and the South West which keeps me well in touch with the types of issues being faced by our members.

Can I also wish you all the best with your studies as you approach qualification and hope that you have acquired vital knowledge and experience during your time within either the NPS or a CRC.

I will have a bit to say about Napo in a few minutes and why I hope you may consider joining us, and Tania Bassett our Press and Parliamentary lead is also here to answer any questions that you may have.

### So where next for Probation?

I make no apologies for saying that you have committed to an especially challenging career path but one that performs a vital public service in assisting clients and safeguarding our communities.

Having listened to Sonia Crozier explain that the NPS has been awarded an excellence rating, reminds me of the situation prior to the part privatisation of Probation under Chris Grayling's Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) for short, when probation was the holder of Gold standard awards prior to establishment of the NPS and CRCs.

I am grateful to Sonia Crosier for outlining the history behind TR and whilst Tania and I of course knew the answer to the earlier Quiz question about not being able to pilot a Revolution we couldn't quite bring ourselves to utter the answer.

I wanted to spend a few minutes focusing on three specific issues which I hope will be of interest to you

### The Post TR landscape

Well, whether or not TR is the much vaunted revolution that Mr Grayling said it would be, and you will gather that I could use a variety of adjectives to describe it from our perspective, there are a litany of problems facing staff wherever they work.

Within the NPS there are still problems over staff shortages despite the excellent efforts by Sonia and colleagues to encourage recruitment, and there are pay and pension administration problems, difficulties over Market Forces payments and the outsourcing of AP waking night cover arrangements. I also echo concerns over the OMIC project and the need to better support victims of crime.

And we need a less bureaucratic management structure in HMPPS and an improved interface between the NPS Divisions and the recognised Trade Unions.

There is also a desperate need for Probation pay reform and we await the Ministerial nod for negotiations to get underway soon, which means ending gender discrimination, decent pay rises for all and quicker movement up the pay scales. This must also apply to our members in Cafcass and PBNI.

We also need to return to genuine collective bargaining across the NPS and CRCs so that we have common standards of employment across the two arms of the service which will bring stability and certainty for staff and more scope for movement of staff across both parts of the service.

But while Napo's stated position is that we want to see Probation back in public ownership we will, as I said in the Oral evidence that I gave to the Justice Select Committee in March, work with all politicians for a community focused, desistance driven probation model, one which ultimately I want to see set free from the still Prison-centric HMPPS.

We must also strengthen the Professional aspects of your work and that's why Napo along with the Probation Institute are campaigning for a Licence to Practice across probation and prisons.

All these issues will be important as we start the run in to the serious consideration of what happens to the CRC Contracts and how we will need to learn the harsh lessons of the TR Experiment.

Look, let me be clear, I have always been opposed to the privatisation of public services, but I have gone on record before and will again, in saying that not all of the post-TR difficulties are the fault of the CRC Owners

It was not their fault that the CRC contracts were insufficiently structured from the outset, it was not their fault that TR shut the door on meaningful engagement with third sector providers and they're not to blame for a flawed PbR model.

Of course there are a few things some of them and this government are to blame for. But today my message is that of seeing how we can work with NPS and CRC employers to ensure that where service improvements are needed we can try and work together, but that this ought to be similarly matched by some CRCs engaging positively with the trade unions on the issues I have touched upon today. And by them recognising the imperative to deliver safe operational models, understand that people must come before profit, and treat their hard working staff with dignity and respect

So what might the future might look like?

I mentioned the objective of freeing Probation from HMPPS control but in Napo's view we need to campaign for a publicly owned model that embraces the concept of Community Justice.

A model that builds on the key principle that its governance structures must be founded and delivered by people who understand the diverse needs of their communities: probation, police, the NHS (especially in the fields of mental health and drug and substance abuse), the judiciary, regional and Metro Mayors, PCCs diversity groups and those organisations in the third sector who are desperate to make a meaningful contribution, but need the resources to do so.

Localism was the bedrock of the pre-TR Probation Service and it should be the cornerstone of a new future which encompasses the proud traditions of your profession, one which engenders trust from our communities and does right by the clients it seeks to assist and redirect into making a meaningful contribution to society.

It's a big ask, but I wish you all the very best in helping to achieve that transition.

Finally, what is Napo and why be a member?

We are, as the title says both a trade union and professional association for Probation and Cafcass staff. Membership of Napo brings with it access to the Probation Journal and our recently relaunched and if I may say excellent Napo Magazine and regular personalised mail outs on the issues that matter to you and it means that the union will seek to help you with issues relating to your employment and professional development. You will also have access to legal support depending on the circumstances, and through Napo Extra you can also access a range of lifestyle discounts and financial advice.

More information and application forms are easily accessible on the Napo website.