





**JTU 10-14**

4th July 2014

Michael Spurr, Chief Executive

National Offender Management Service

7th Floor

Clive House

70 Petty France

London SW1H 9EX

Dear Michael,

**TR – Operational state of the NPS and CRC’s**

Given the developments being reported to us, the three Probation unions believe that we must once again formally express our serious concerns at the current operational state that exists following the imposed split of staff into the NPS and CRC structures from 1st June.

The sheer volume of empirical evidence from our members who are desperately trying to cope with what we can sadly only describe as abject chaos across the two arms of the service, leads us to the conclusion that notwithstanding our ongoing opposition to the TR agenda, it is simply unsafe for the Secretary of State to proceed with the CRC share sale process. Our view is based on the operational risk, the risk to the safety of the public and staff, and in addition, the failure by ministers to demonstrate that the sale of CRC contracts represents best value for money to the taxpayer.

The following is a summary of our key concerns but this is by no means exhaustive in terms of the magnitude of the problems:

* The continuing risk of harm to staff and members of the public which is directly attributable to excessive workloads, a flawed Risk of Recidivism Tool, and unrealistic case allocation. We continuously predicted this outcome prior to the unagreed staff assignment process being implemented.
* The emotional breakdown and high sickness rates being suffered by many staff who have been left in total chaos by the inept and unnecessary rush to split the probation service into two separate strands.
* Withdrawal of SDR facilities to Magistrates Courts and reductions in Court Reports due to increased case handling times and staff shortages
* Non allocation of cases and unavailable records due to ongoing ICT difficulties (NDelius)
* Estates relocations causing difficult journeys for clients which will probably result in appointments not being kept
* Insufficient consideration to the impact of the Target Operating Model in relation to the interface between Probation and Prisons.
* The confusion over the scope of the Lockheed Martin ICT contract (subcontractors ATOS) and its impact on ICT staff in NPS and the CRCs. As yet NOMS has failed to consult the trade unions over the implications of this outsourcing of former Probation Trust work

**Unions seek a halt to TR**

The above summary of the myriad problems that are plaguing the TR programme leads us to make a combined plea that senior NOMS officials and the Permanent Secretary must now advise the Secretary of State that the share sale process should be halted. This would provide an opportunity for the NPS and CRCs to work towards establishing a ‘steady state’ of operations prior to a later decision to award preferred bidder status to contractors, once the ‘Testgate’ 4 process has been analysed and it’s results made available for public and Parliamentary scrutiny.

It will not surprise you to hear that we believe that by halting the share sale process, an opportunity will also be created for the construction of a pilot scheme across one or two CRC CPA’s, so that a transparent and publically accountable evaluation can be conducted before further irreparable damage occurs to the Probation service and before more public money is spent on shoring up a bidding process that has simply lost all political credibility.

As always, the unions are more than happy to meet with you and the MoJ ministers directly to discuss our request.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Lawrence Ben Priestley David Walton 

**General Secretary National Officer National Secretary**

**Napo UNISON GMB/SCOOP**

CC: Dave Prentis, General Secretary UNISON

 Paul Kenny, General Secretary GMB

 Sharon Holder, National Officer GMB

 Frances O’Grady, General Secretary, TUC

Rt. Hon Sadiq Khan, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice

Edward Cooper, Slater and Gordon