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Union welcomes return of all Probation services to public ownership

Napo, the largest trade union representing Probation staff in England and Wales, today gave a massive welcome to the Lord Chancellors announcement that all Probation services are to be restored to public ownership and control.

The decision follows last year's reversal of Government policy which determined that 80% of probation work would transfer to the National Probation Service by June 2021. It also signals the final termination date (25th June 2021) for the existing Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) contracts which came into effect in 2015 and were originally expected to last for up to 10 years.

Napo General Secretary Ian Lawrence said: 'Our members across the whole of Probation, and especially those who have been working tirelessly against the odds to maintain services in the private sector, will breathe a huge sigh of relief that Napo's relentless campaigning has at last helped to bring certainty over the future of the service. Ministers have taken a courageous decision to fully reverse the earlier reforms that we opposed from the start and which have also been widely and continuously criticised by Parliament and HM Inspector of Probation. We will now be urgently engaging with Ministers and employers to ensure that all staff currently working in a CRC are guaranteed a future offer of employment in a publicly owned Probation service.'

The new plans will see the National Probation Service take full responsibility for Sentence Management, Interventions and Programme delivery with Third Sector providers being commissioned to offer additional support services for Probation clients. This broadly mirrors the arrangements that existed prior to the Transforming Rehabilitation reforms several years ago.

Napo National Chair Katie Lomas said: "The change in policy is welcome news. Now it is time to rebuild the Probation service and Napo will be pushing the Minister to ensure that there are adequate resources to do so. It is also vital that the third sector are able to genuinely engage in order to provide specialist local services that are critical to a Probation service that responds to the needs of communities and clients.

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