

PROBATION - NPS and CRC PAY UPDATE

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO THE NPS – NEGOTIATE NOW!

Napo is calling on all Probation employers to pay the incremental progression for the 2015/2016 pay year that is due to all members and is seeking urgent and meaningful pay negotiations early into 2016. The probation pay system is broken and any efforts to reshape or reorganise how and what staff do to support service clients in the NPS under the E3 project (see below), will be fundamentally undermined unless the pay crisis is recognised and addressed now.

OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS GROWING

Employers (NPS and CRC's) are already seeing low and uncompetitive salaries impact on recruitment and retention. In the NPS, SPO's complain of increased workloads as they take on HR responsibilities, made worse by higher sickness absence and unsustainable stress levels for PO's, linked to the obvious concentration on high risk cases against an unstable operating environment.

TR has made life in probation more complicated and less stable. Our members in the CRC's face the prospect of employers seeking to introduce job cuts and pay new recruits even less. The pay system is modelled on a bargaining system that no longer exists and lacks fairness and transparency. A new Pay and reward system is needed to help stabilise this situation and to bring some relief for staff. Resolving these problems isn't easy, but that can't be an excuse for Employers refusing to negotiate, and the longer the problem is left then the more expensive and difficult it will be to resolve.

E3

In the NPS, NOMS have opened up discussion with the unions about their intention under E3 to change what staff do and how they do it. Napo will be fully engaging in these talks and know that critical issues around grade boundaries, workloads and accountability are already being identified. These can't be addressed without assessing the short, medium and longer term impact on pay. Pay cannot be divorced from E3.

LET'S START SORTING OUT THE MESS!

Napo does not claim that there are any easy answers to problems that have built up over many years during the Pay 'Ice Age'. The current system was introduced in 2006 with an expectation on all sides that quick pay progression would be achieved prior to the Pay Freeze in 2010 which brought a halt to the improvement process.

If something is not done to try and sort out this situation it will get worse. The costs of addressing unfairness and inequality between staff could rise. Staff morale will be damaged even more, impacting further on recruitment and retention difficulties across the service. With scheduled National Insurance increases already announced to come into effect in April 2016, this would mean most probation staff actually taking home less money!

**Napo – Your Independent Professional
Voice at Work**

Napo members know that a long term, sustainable solution will require:

- Over-arching pay reform with a transition period that is consistent and transparent and provides a sustainable pay and reward system.
- Incorporating solutions to grading and workload issues, meaning shorter pay scales founded upon a fair and credible assessment of what people do, supported by consistent and fair job evaluation at every grade across employers and working environments.
- Competitive and sustainable rates for the job that attract and retain staff with the skills, knowledge and expertise to do the complex and varied work required across probation.
- Supporting professional standards, with independent oversight and accountability, supporting Napo's call for a probation wide licence to practice and independent oversight of all probation training.

In recognising that no-one has all the answers to how we address these aims Napo is also committed to consulting members and involving you in shaping the outcomes, as we have done already by seeking volunteers to participate and advise us in the E3 programme.

Whilst we negotiate how to meet these challenges Napo are calling for:

- A minimum 3% award for 2015-16 to start to address the morale sapping impact of the Pay Freeze and start to convince staff and those thinking about probation as a career that employers are serious about addressing the problems.
- Additional Treasury funding and approval for a multi-year settlement to address problems that have built up over years.
- No punishment pay – the MoJ uses a relative performance pay model that is widely discredited in the public and private sectors as inequitable, bureaucratic and divisive. Tackling pay inequality by seeking to label poor performers is unthinkable in probation.
- Recognition that all pay is now pensionable – including all overtime and sessional work since the introduction of the new LGPS “all earnings” rather than final salary scheme, to minimise any risk of discrimination claims.
- Guaranteed protection and funding for contractual buy-outs as needed against any new proposed pay ranges.
- Incorporating other biases against probation staff compared to civil service colleagues in prisons and courts, such as harmonising to civil service maternity and paternity arrangements.
- Open and transparent joint monitoring of workloads to inform negotiations.

Look out for more Pay Updates in 2016. Napo wants to hear your thoughts and ideas so please email these to info@napo.org.uk or attend a Napo Branch or workplace meeting near you!

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