

NQ8

Napo Quarterly

December 2017

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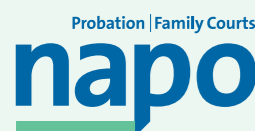
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Napo HQ Office hours during the festive season
Napo HQ will close Wednesday 27 December and reopen Tuesday 2 January 2018.

Staff at HQ would like to extend Season's Greetings to all of our members and wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year.



Published by Napo
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London SW11 1NY
www.napo.org.uk

News round-up

In case you missed it

Nottingham's East Midlands Conference Centre played host to Napo's AGM in October.

You can catch up on the highlights by taking a look at the special edition magazine:

www.napo.org.uk/napo-quarterly

Podcasts of the two day conference can also be found at

www.NQOnline.org/podcasts

ViSor and Napo's position

In June the NPS published the final version of the E3 phase 2 operating model which incorporates a need for NPS OM staff to use ViSOR for work with those clients who fit the criteria (estimated to be around 80-90% of the caseload). This now means that ViSOR vetting is being introduced for those staff.

ViSOR is a Police owned system that records information about clients who pose a risk of sexual or violent offending. The principle of sharing information with the Police via ViSOR has been around for some years but vetting was previously limited on a role by role basis rather than a blanket expectation. The vetting standards are different from the ones that staff go through to be employed in the NPS, they include an assessment of vulnerability to corruption and links to criminal networks.

Information is gathered about people close to you and about your financial situation as well as your own details. Because the vetting incorporates information about others close to you the results cannot always be shared. For example if you fail the vetting due to a concern about someone close to you the Police cannot share the information about the third party with you as this would be a breach of that person's privacy.

During the consultation on the extending of ViSOR use, Napo raised a number of concerns about the impact of vetting as well as practice and workload issues. We received some assurances from the employers

Now that the vetting is underway it is understandable that members have some concerns and it is regrettable that we have had reports that in some instances senior managers have not handled the introduction of a potentially difficult change in a more sensitive way.

We have already received a number of queries on vetting, and have prepared some FAQs that can be found at <https://www.napo.org.uk/visor-faqs>

If you need further advice and support around this please contact your local Napo rep who will liaise with their National Link Officer.



Ever thought of becoming a family courts magistrate?

London will be one of the first regions to recruit magistrates directly to the family court in a new initiative being introduced across the country.

The need is most urgent in the west London family court and the Croydon Family Hearing Centre.

The volume of work in family courts in London is high and magistrates can expect to sit on average 25 days per year (minimum 13 days), plus attend an additional training programme which will last a minimum of seven days in the first year. Magistrates are encouraged to be flexible in the locations they sit and commit to the minimum sittings required.

Twenty magistrates will be recruited initially so the process can be tested and evaluated. If the number of candidates required has already been reached, your application will be put on a wait list until the next round is open.

For more information please email London.drfamily@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk

Napo's general secretary shares his views on the future of the union

NQ closes out the year with an in depth interview with Napo's general secretary, Ian Lawrence. Ian, who plans to stand for re-election talks about conquering challenges, defending diversity and why investing in the future is vital for the survival of the union

It's fair to say that Napo has faced some extraordinary challenges since you started as general secretary, what's your view on these?

I could write a whole book on some of them! My appointment as acting general secretary immediately followed what was an especially difficult time internally for Napo which, as a number of ex-members have told me, caused Napo reputational damage.

After being elected as general secretary I was headlong into our campaign against Chris Grayling's disastrous Transforming Rehabilitation proposals. This involved industrial action, in which Napo stood alone you will remember, and an attempt in the High Court to overturn Chris Grayling's idealism which cost a lot of money and could have bankrupted Napo had we not taken the legal advice that we were given just days before the Judicial Review hearing.

That latter decision was amongst the hardest I have ever been part of at any time in my career, but it was the right one despite it being obviously unpopular. My wider responsibility was to ensure that Napo could continue to do what it has done throughout its history as the beacon for professional standards and a union that has done its best to help its members collectively and individually.

The split of the Probation service in the run up to TR was a pretty grim time for members as it was deliberately engineered by Government and senior MoJ people who saw our collectivism as a serious threat, to sap away the resolve of members.

Soon after TR implementation came Grayling's cynical attempt to ruin Napo

financially by the removal of subscriptions at source (check-off) where we had to invest huge amounts of time (and more money of course) to run the direct debit campaign. More recently we have had the introduction of E3 in the NPS to contend with, where we have struck a 'no redundancy' agreement; one of very few unions to achieve that in the current climate.

Add to all this the disgraceful treatment of public service workers under the government's austerity measures and it adds up to some pretty testing challenges. But we are here: still standing, still fighting for what we believe in and defending the terms and conditions for our members wherever they work. The Napo team here at Falcon Road are engaging daily with 24 employers and it's a tough operational landscape for us while we step up the ongoing media and political campaigning for the restoration of the probation service back into public ownership. I believe that will happen but I cannot predict when that will be.

I will also admit that at times Napo has been perceived as slow to react to some of the big issues and that's not for want of trying but mainly because we haven't had the resources to do things we should or would like to have done as quickly as everyone would have wanted. That's why we are confident that Napo's strategy for growth will address some of our infrastructure and resource issues. This includes introducing new IT and looking at how we can offer practical support and development to help our hard pressed local reps on the ground who are themselves obviously facing difficulties with cuts to their facilities time and

copied with the same workload pressures of their colleagues.

We also need to restore visibility of Napo's work on behalf of our members across NPS, CRCs Cafcass and PBNi. There are a whole host of reasons why Napo is not as visible as it used to be. But let's face facts, on top of a huge increase in remote working as experienced particularly by our family court section membership, the TR programme has seen nearly 2000 staff leave the probation service, many of them long standing and highly capable Napo members and activists. We have had to shift our focus to identifying and training new reps, improving our personal and collective communications in a way that better engages with our members and potential members, and using our relatively positive financial position to invest wisely and, where needs be, spend to grow.

I also don't run away in the face of criticism. It comes with the job and I fully recognise that some Napo members have been unhappy about the way in which we have faced all or some of the above issues. Apart from pressing a non-existent button marked 'B', I have yet to see a cogent case made anywhere that different approaches would have brought a different outcome to the issues we've been talking about. Make no mistake; these are issues which might have sunk other unions with less backbone than Napo.



What do you see as the key priorities for Napo members as we head towards 2018?

Members have made it absolutely clear that they want us to focus our efforts on tackling the pay freeze and that's why it is top of the priority list.

Whenever I meet with members up and down the country, a recurring theme is the daily struggles to make ends meet. Independent analysis has shown a huge disparity in pay between probation officers and their contemporaries in other fields. This cannot continue – not only is it demoralising for those whose hard work is not being adequately compensated, it also means we run the risk of losing highly qualified and experienced practitioners to other industries willing to pay them what they're worth.

I'm confident that any breakthrough on long term pay reform that we are able to secure in the NPS will have a positive knock on effect for those working in the CRCs and PBNi as employers will be under pressure to follow suit.

In terms of CAFcass pay, the funding streams are different but that does not lessen our priorities here in any way whatsoever.

The public sector pay cap is a disgrace. I am still hoping that the TUC will galvanise its affiliate unions in 2018 to launch a concerted campaign. I will make sure that Napo is part of any action – including industrial action – to heap pressure on this deeply unpopular minority government.

We also have to continue to raise awareness of the Transforming Rehabilitation debacle. It has been a long, slow grind to get politicians, media and the general public to really understand the implications of TR. But now we have the BBC inviting us to contribute to documentaries on the failings, the Justice Select Committee calling on our expert evidence, and of course the general public taking an interest in this policy that could, and arguably at times has, put their safety at risk. Rehabilitation must be a core principle of reducing reoffending as well as the imperative to reduce prison numbers – especially those pertaining to the HMP estate for Women prisoners.

I have never been under any illusion that the campaign against TR would be a stroll in the park – and I can admit it was at times frustrating and disheartening to feel like we were just coming up against brick walls. But it feels good to know the tide is finally changing. I've managed

to cultivate positive and productive relationships with Labour front benchers who are committed to restoring the probation service to public ownership, and have been in talks with Jeremy Corbyn and Richard Burgon, shadow justice secretary, to discuss how a Labour government would make this a reality.

Finally we need to progress the strategy for growth plan in a way that moves Napo forwards, and consultation plays a key part in this. We will be running members' surveys, engaging the National Executive Committee in a transparent way, and of course as you would expect of any good employer, we will be fully consulting with the Napo staff group about the potential impact any changes may have on them.

As one of the few senior trade union leaders to have emerged from the BAME community in recent years, what's your view on how to increase diversity in Napo?

I have held a number of posts across four trade unions in my career and whilst Napo is by far the smallest of those I have been privileged to work for, our standing in terms of the percentage ratios for diversity of membership and active representatives (especially women members) is well up there compared to most unions.

Our work on the professional agenda such as the Family Court Professional Conference, The Forum (formerly PSO Conference), the 'Prevent' strategy seminar we held last year and our excellent relationship with the Probation Journal editorial team are evidence of our inclusivity on the vocational issues. But am I satisfied that Napo has achieved the right balance in our demographic structures of members from the traditionally underrepresented groups? The answer is no, not yet.

Is it racism that stops BAME members coming forward? I seriously hope not. It seems an awfully long time ago when in another trade union I was the recipient of a so-called joke at a meeting of their national executive committee that had clear racial connotations, and I would hope those days are gone for good. But it was only eight years ago that I was berated at a Napo NEC after being appointed as an AGS for being another 'middle-aged white man' (I was neither middle-aged nor 'white' actually) but it seems that preconceptions take some time to disappear.



Because of my past experiences, it is important to me that any initiative Napo launches to increase inclusivity doesn't appear tokenistic. I was proud to be invited to the inaugural event of Napo's Black Members Network, but would really like to see this develop into a body that encourages wider interest from our BAME members across the union. It needs to become a place where individuals can feel both safe and empowered to talk about issues that are relevant to them. It should also be the place where issues are flagged for the wider membership to get behind and stand in solidarity with.

But diversity isn't just about race. It's about having structures in place to support all sections of membership with specific interests or needs. LAGIP used to be the place for LGBT+ members to discuss issues of importance that were fed into the wider bargaining agenda.

I want to see more involvement in our representative structures from our members who have a disability so that we can have regular dialogue about the work that we undertake in national negotiations on important issues such as Assistive Technology.

We do however have success in the representation of women across our structures. Given the demographics of Napo where female membership runs at 70% of our total membership, it's absolutely right that women make up the majority of the National Officer Group and that we have processes in place at NEC level for example to ensure that there are opportunities for sharing in leadership responsibilities.

The Women in Napo initiative (WIN) is another success story that has played a huge part in encouraging member engagement and has provided another route through which new activists and national leaders have emerged and it has enriched this union.

I'm open to feedback and suggestions on how we could make sure that more members feel included in the union,

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particularly as we are currently reviewing the way we engage with members.

Napo's membership has stabilised but union density across the public and private sector has declined. What part can Napo play in a recovery strategy?

TR and the end of check-off dealt Napo a massive blow in terms of membership. Yes our numbers took a hit, but we have thankfully been able to stem the flow and our figures have stabilised over the past few months.

That said, our next aim is to increase our density across all of the probation employers and in the family courts. This isn't going to be an easy task – all unions are suffering, with the TUC recognising a decline in union density across the board.

It is going to take some creative thinking and will require all hands on deck if we want to be more than just stable and actually move towards growing the union.

It is absolutely vital that there is Napo training for reps and members who want to become reps. We are also working out the details on the best way to deliver coaching and development opportunities for branch activists and other members who would also like to step up to the plate.

Technology has limited the way we can communicate and engage with members and potential members which is why I put in a successful bid to the NEC for resources to be available for a communication and ICT strategy that will remove many of the barriers and frustrations faced by both members and staff at HQ. I believe that if we can make it easier to facilitate two-way dialogue, HQ will be more equipped to serve members; and members will better respond to calls to action and throw their weight behind campaigns either by attending protests or rallies, or in other non-traditional ways of raising awareness such as online campaigns through social media.

Napo has always been fortunate enough to have dedicated activists with a wealth of experience under their belts. But we do need to acknowledge the fact that many of them will be approaching retirement, or quite frankly, left exhausted by TR. It's important that we start looking to younger members who can help support the knowledge we already have on board, but also add a fresh perspective on how we as a union, approach things.

My work with a number of general secretaries via the TUC and GFTU means that I am always exploring best practice. Given that we are so small in size compared to other major players, I am proud that we have won considerable respect and results where others haven't been able to because of our campaign efforts.

You have made it clear that you are putting yourself forward for a second term as general secretary, how committed are you to the job?

Look, I believe in this union, its members and all the values that we collectively stand for. I am just as fired up now as I was when I joined a trade union at 16-years-old and became office rep.

To work for a trade union and become its general secretary is an honour and a privilege. I am massively grateful to our members for the support and loyalty they've shown to Napo in what have probably been the most testing years in our history, so I have no intention of running for the covers.

I decided to make my position clear about my hopes for a second term so that I can crack on with important work for members rather than get embroiled in constant speculation about my future intentions. There will be a selection process and if sufficient candidates emerge from that to take part in an election then so be it. But if that is the case, then nobody should be in any doubt that I will do my best to win it. At the end of that process it will be the will of the members that count.

You mentioned commitment, so let me say that my upbringing taught me the virtues of hard graft and belief in the members who employ me. It's quite reasonable for those same members who are facing tough times at work to expect their staff at HQ to be doing their best on their behalf, and take it from me that's what the Napo team here do every day.

As I said at the AGM, it's not just about working for our members across 24 employers but it's about working with them to achieve the respect and dignity they deserve. I will do all I can to ensure that members are paid fairly for what they do and are recognised for the superb professionalism they bring to their work.

Leadership is also about encouraging members to become more active in their union and fulfil their potential in terms of leading others, and I have a long track record of success in this respect across all the trade unions that I have worked for.

My priority, if I am re-elected, is to work with the lifeblood of this union – members and activists – to increase our membership density and improve on the way we all communicate with each other. It's also imperative that relationships and partnerships are cultivated and maintained with new and existing allies within the criminal and family justice sphere. I'm hopeful that with hard work we can improve our finances and ideally be in a position to reduce our subscription rates, then that will be a huge achievement. All of this will help Napo move into the next stage of its proud history and give our future generation of leaders a firm base to work from.

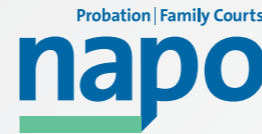


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TUC 150th Anniversary

Recently, a McDonald's worker at the Crayford branch was left homeless due to poor pay and conditions. Meanwhile, public sector workers have suffered nearly a decade of pay freezes and cuts, leaving fire fighters down several thousand pounds in their pay packets. Both stories represent stark evidence of the challenges facing working people today and remind us that the role of unions in campaigning for decent working conditions and fair pay has never been more important.

In 2018, the TUC will celebrate 150 years of standing up for working people. The 150th anniversary – #TUC150 – is a chance to celebrate the TUC's proud history and reach out to a new generation.

The actual anniversary falls in June 2018, so that will be the focal point of their celebrations. And the anniversary activities will continue when the TUC Congress goes back to Manchester in September, where the TUC first met in 1868. But all year they will be sharing content and talking about building stronger unions – and that's where you come in.

The main anniversary project will be 150 stories for 150 years. The TUC will capture 150 inspiring trade union stories

and share them widely on social media and at events through the year. The stories will represent the TUC regions and nations; reflect the diversity of its movement and its wide-ranging work.

#TUC150 will provide a way to involve you as union members in organising campaigns and growing its membership, winning key campaigns and securing new recognitions. As part of that, the TUC will train a cohort of 150 new reps by Congress 2018 and will launch a pilot trialling new ways to organise young workers. The Royal Mail is producing a commemorative stamp sheet and a civic celebration is planned at the Speakers House in Westminster. And as the TUC was founded in Manchester, TUC North West will be organising a programme of local events.

All the key information about #TUC150 will be at tuc.org.uk/TUC150.

#TUC150 is about looking forwards, not backwards. Its prime focus is the future of the trade union movement.

In 2018, the TUC will celebrate 150 years of standing up for working people



“...the role of unions in campaigning for decent working conditions and fair pay has never been more important”

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Forum Conference

After a brief hiatus, the *PSO Conference* has returned. Rebranded as *The Forum*, the biennial conference is now open to anyone employed in probation grades one to three.

The inaugural conference under the new arrangements was held on 24 November in London at the NUT headquarters in the marvellous Mabelton Hall. In the morning session, we heard from a number of expert keynote speakers: Helen Schofield from the Probation Institute; Yannick MacKenzie from the National Probation Service (NPS); and our very own, Ian Lawrence general secretary at Napo. Each of the keynote speakers gave an engaging strategic overview on the current situation in probation from the perspective of their respective organisations.

Helen Schofield is the current acting chief executive at the Probation Institute. Helen is no stranger to Napo as she has been both a national officer and national official of the union with a responsibility for professional practice and training. In her speech, Helen raised the importance of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as the means by which professionals maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills. She also made the case that a regulatory structure should be aligned to a Probation Register and made the case for the need for a register and a Licence to Practice.

Yannick Mackenzie is a deputy director at the NPS responsible for delivering effective probation practice that is recognised as high quality. Yannick was instrumental in setting up



and implementing the E3 (Effectiveness, Efficiency and Excellence) operating model for the NPS. Yannick focussed his contribution on the important role of PSO and admin roles in the NPS and the training opportunities available with a particular emphasis on admin roles.

Ian Lawrence as the final keynote speaker gave a rousing speech about the many problems across the probation landscape and putting forward what Napo is doing to address the issues and making the point that the taxpayer cannot be asked to continuously fund failure. He argued that because of Transforming Rehabilitation probation training and professional standards are seriously suffering, with major concerns about the effectiveness of training, how



accessible it is, and whether the perennial quest for cost savings has overridden quality. He set out that Napo supports a national license to practice to combat the threat of becoming “de-professionalised”.

Immediately following the keynote speakers, the conference moved onto the panel discussion. The panel consisted of: Julia Summerfield, chief operating officer, LAURUS Development; Catherine Fuller, head of professional skills and recognition, NPS; Alex Osler, director Essex CRC (Sodexo); and Katie Lomas, national vice chair, Napo.

Each of the panellists gave a five-minute presentation on the discussion topic “professional training in a changing landscape.” This was followed by a lively discussion with a number of questions from the floor on some of the key challenges for frontline practitioners taking up training opportunities.

Two of the key themes that arose from the discussion concerned the restrictive nature of the PQiP qualification and that it was not open to all job roles and the inadequate learning time and protective caseloads that has historically been given to learners on probation training.

After lunch the conference broke out in to workshops. There were three workshops covering the issues of role boundaries; applying for the PQiP and dealing with stress at work.

Katie Lomas and Ikki Bhogal (NEC black rep) were the facilitators for the role boundaries workshop. They looked at the current situation in probation across both the NPS and CRCs and put this into context with the Napo role boundaries guidance and the reality of frontline practitioners’ experiences. The workshop

provided the first opportunity to review and look to update the role boundaries document post TR. The findings from the workshop will be taken up by Napo’s professional and training committee so that it can inform the review of the Napo role boundaries documents and be updated accordingly.

Given the current situation regarding workloads across both the NPS and CRCs, Thompsons Solicitors gave a timely briefing on stress at work and the legal remedies available to members either via a personal injury at work claim or a discrimination employment law claim based on the Equality Act 2010. The briefing covered the legal framework and the conditions that must be met to pursue a successful claim through the courts. It also gave members advice on what action to take to protect themselves at work.

The final workshop was delivered by Sheetal Moore and David Fallows from the National Probation Service. They looked at the recruitment process for PSO and PO roles and what learning and development pathways are available for PSO and PO roles. The workshop provided an opportunity for members to familiarise themselves with the competency based approach used in the recruitment process and better understand how the assessment centre process works and how the training is delivered.

The feedback from members at the conference was overwhelmingly positive. Napo would like to thank all the speakers and the members who gave up their time to be at the conference and for making the event the success that it was. These events are important because it provides a space for reflection and discussion on the issues that are important to members. The *Napo Forum meetings* and the *Forum Conference* are essential to achieving this aim. Going forward we still have a lot of work to do including reaching out to admin members and encouraging them to attend Napo events.

If you are a PSO or an admin member then *The Forum* is the place for you to raise the issues that you think are important. If you would like to get involved, please get in touch with me at rsingh@napo.org.uk. Make sure your voice is heard look out for dates of future meetings and please come along and join the conversation!

RANJIT SINGH
NATIONAL OFFICIAL



The Civil Service Pensioners’ Alliance (CSPA) is recognised by the Cabinet Office and other Government Departments and Agencies as the body that represents all retired civil servants. CSPA lobbies and campaigns on behalf of all pensioners through such affiliations as the Public Service Pensioners’ Council and the National Pensioners’ Convention on such issues as the value of the State Retirement Pension, Universal Pensioner Benefits, social care and health service provision.

Through a joint exercise in cooperation with the Napo National Executive Committee, Napo retired members are being invited to join the CSPA, to not only participate in a wide range of membership benefits and services which include a highly competitive annual travel insurance scheme, but also to participate in the Alliance’s lobbying and campaigning agenda.

NB: CSPA membership costs £24.00 per annum for single membership or £33.60 for joint membership. For the first six months however Napo Retired members are being offered free membership of the CSPA.

Further information about joining can be obtained from the CSPA as follows:
Mike Duggan, General Secretary, CSPA Head Office, Grosvenor House, 125 High Street, CROYDON, CR0 9XP
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