

## **Press Statement**

**Embargo - Immediate**

### **Unions claim plans for prisoner rehabilitation are heading for chaos**

Unions representing probation staff say that Government plans to offer rehabilitation support to the estimated 45,000 prisoners released every year from short term sentences are in danger of failing to be delivered on time. The claim follows the receipt of information that a number of the providers of 'Through the Gate' (TTG) support services are short of key staff just weeks away from the contractually required 1st May launch date.

In a letter to senior managers covering the Bedfordshire, Northampton, Cambridge and Hertfordshire Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), one of 21 newly outsourced providers created under Justice Secretary Chris Grayling's Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) agenda, local Napo and Unison representatives have expressed their anger that, despite being under severe workload pressures and unfilled vacancies due to a recruitment moratorium imposed by the Ministry of Justice, their CRC has been asked by the private sector owner to release probation practitioners to undertake TTG work. It is understood that St Giles Trust, the charity contracted by Sodexo to provide the service, has so far failed to recruit sufficient staff.

The unions claim that it is 'untenable that the CRC has been asked to release approximately one seventh of its probation service officer (PSO) capacity, which they say would mean the temporary reallocation of approximately 600 probation service users for a six month period.

Napo General Secretary, Ian Lawrence said: 'We have now received reports from a number of newly outsourced CRCs in various parts of the probation network that hard pressed probation practitioners are being asked to fill the gaps. Our members are seriously concerned that this will leave existing clients, who are traditionally more likely to reoffend, without the requisite levels of supervision, which will expose the public to the risk of harm'.

He added: 'This raises serious questions as to how contracts were awarded to some private suppliers who have apparently failed to put the necessary plans and resources in place to deliver this important service.'

Napo has said that it intends to urgently raise its concerns about the situation with the Ministry of Justice and cross party politicians.

**Ends**