

Press Statement

5 June 2014 - Embargo Immediate

Staffing chaos in Grayling's 'new look' Probation Service

Following the implementation of the Secretary of State Chris Grayling's Transforming Rehabilitation agenda, which came into practice on 1 June; the Probation Service is now split into a National Probation Service (NPS) and 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs). However, both organisations are in chaos. The situation is exacerbated by serious staff shortages, 500 vacancies across England and Wales, leading to unallocated cases and staff having to bridge the gap across the two organisations.

In an attempt to resolve the issue the Ministry of Justice is desperately trying to recruit new staff. This week an advert was placed in the Guardian looking to recruit Probation Officers from New Zealand and Australia currently living in the UK. The MoJ is offering to pay up to £27 per hour for anyone with 2 or more years' experience. However, this is a significantly higher rate of pay than existing staff in the service are receiving. Probation staff have endured a four year pay freeze. An officer with 10 years' experience is currently being paid approximately £17 per hour. Probation Officers in England and Wales undergo two years training which includes a BA in Community Justice, whilst their counterparts in New Zealand undergo just six weeks training.

Ian Lawrence, General Secretary for Napo, said: "this is an absolute insult to our members who are held in esteem by the rest of the world for their knowledge and skills. Historically New Zealand and Australia have encouraged Probation staff to relocate there so they can utilise their skills. For the Government to then offer a significantly higher pay rate to less trained staff in this country is totally unacceptable. If they had looked after their staff in the first place with decent pay we wouldn't have this shortfall. This is just adding insult to injury to a staff group that is going through immense stress trying to deal with Grayling's madcap so called reforms."

Ends

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