

Facts Aren't Myths

This Wednesday saw the publication of an article on the HMPPS Intranet titled “Probation pay: myth busters”.

This is our response.

Fact no. 1: The Competency Based Framework (CBF) is separate from the pay offer.

HMPPS seem to be confusing, either accidentally or on purpose, the fact that because the two “very separate” processes of incremental progression and a pay award are paid from the same pot of money they can spend on wages that they are the same thing. They’re simply not and Napo members and the wider workforce can see that they’re not.

Incremental progression through the Competency Based Framework (CBF) **is** separate from the current pay offer, as it was to previous pay offers/awards.

And it’s not just the trade unions saying that, HMPPS have said that too.

In a Frequently Asked Questions document on the CBF, published in February 2024, the employer helpfully set out these two questions and answers on the subject: -

“...

Question: Is CBF ending at the end of the pay deal, or will it continue afterwards?

Answer: From April 2022, CBF is the sole process Probation Service staff will use to progress through the points in their pay band. **Although its introduction coincided with the pay deal, it remains separate from that pay deal** and WILL continue past the end of the deal.” (bold emphasis added by us)

...

“Question: What is the plan for after October 2024 in terms on Pay Progression as CBF was introduced before the impact of Covid / Brexit / Ukraine war etc and is not in line with inflation or the cost-of-living crisis?

Answer: **Although CBF was introduced at the same time as the multi-year pay deal, the two are very separate.** CBF is now and will continue to be the process for staff to move through their pay points, continuing after the end of the 2022-2025 Multi-Year Deal...” (again, bold emphasis added by us).

...”

HMPPS not only wrote the above but were subsequently reminded of these two questions as they formed part of the joint trade unions evidence in a dispute heard in September last year – a dispute that’s progressing to ACAS as, we believe, they have reneged on an earlier agreement to pay incremental progression to those eligible from the start of each pay year.

The formal pay offer submitted to the trade unions is for a 4% increase to all pay points/bands and allowances (London Weighting, Prison Supplement and Stand-by). Incremental Progression isn’t on the ballot; those eligible to receive it this year were paid it months ago so why would it be?

Fact no. 2: Probation staff did receive just 1% in ‘cost of living’ pay increases from 2010 – 2021

(For clarity, here we’re dealing with HMPPS’s ‘Myths’ 2 and 3 together)

While one part of HMPPS’s ‘Mythbusters’ propaganda discusses a period between 2018 and 2021 the real picture is even worse for Probation staff, including in comparison with other sectors and occupations, when it comes to ‘cost of living’ pay rises of just 1% between 2010-2021.

Again, HMPPS are aware of this as we’ve shared the table below with them more than a year ago in the original pay claim. We’ve made clear – time and time again – that this refers only to ‘cost of living’ increases in Probation and elsewhere.

((Insert Table 4 from Page 10, with footnotes from the Pay Claim document))

During that time the cost of living rose by **81%** (as determined by calculating inflation using the Retail Prices Index, or RPI, as recommended by the Trades Union Congress).

Thanks to colleagues in Napo's West Yorkshire Branch, who developed the table below, it's possible for members to see what Probation pay would look like for those of us in Bands 2-6 if our pay had kept up with that measure of inflation over this period – shown below in the column '2010/11 pay equivalent in December 2025'.

Comparative Probation Pay Since 2010 (Bands 1 to 6)

The green column represents the inflation-adjusted salaries required today, to maintain the same purchasing power that your salaries had in 2010

	2010/11 Actual Pay Figures	2024/25 Actual Pay Figures current real-time pay pending pay deal	2010/11 pay equivalent in December 2025 Retail Price Index (RPI) * inflation figures (to nearest £)	Proposed 4% pay offer for 2025/26 to be backdated to April 2025	2026/27
National Minimum Wage (NMW) (rounded up to nearest £)	£11160 in April 2010, rising to £11410 in October 2010	£22011 in April 2024, rising to £23493 in April 2025		£23493	£24455
Band 1 **	£14464 to £17072				
Band 2	£17245 to £21301	£22320 to £25210 <i>Min removed due to NMW increase</i>	£31789 to £39266	£24180 to £26218	TBC, however, Band 2 Min will need to increase to meet new NMW
Band 3	£21821 to £27102	£26475 to £31650	£40224 to £49959	£27534 to £32916	TBC
Band 4	£28750 to £35727	£35130 to £42000	£52997 to £65858	£36535 to £43680	TBC
Band 5	***£34677 to £39424	£44100 to £46000	£63923 to £72673	£45864 to £47840	TBC
Band 6	***£39037 to £46650	£48305 to £52935	£71960 to £85994	£50237 to £55052	TBC

Fact no. 3: One year of parity with the Prison Service is no good, it just maintains unequal pay

HMPPS's Myth 4 spoke about claims that "prison staff saw a pay increase of 10% for 2025 to 26". While they weren't clear who that's attributed to it does give us the opportunity to challenge some comments we've seen about this pay offer and the award to the Prison Service this year.

Napo are aware that some HMPPS 'leaders', including in Regions, (some of who are covered by a different pay structure, one that includes performance-related pay bonuses linked to our work), have tried to sell this pay offer on the basis that it's the same 'cost of living' increase as that provided to workers in the Prison Service.

As we've indicated in the first table above, the problem with that is that one year where a 'cost of living' pay offer is the same between the two Services just keeps us as the very poor relation. Napo members working in some roles in HMPPS, doing the same work as our Prison Service colleagues, receive thousands of pounds less in their wages. That won't change with this pay offer.

What Next?

Vote. We are stronger together and every member's voice counts.

Our recommendation is that this is a disrespectful pay offer that should be rejected.

HMPPS's senior 'leaders' can be under no illusions about the wave of anger and disappointment this pay offer, and their attempts to sell it to us, have provoked across the Probation Service. Rather than patronisingly telling us what a good offer they've delivered, or attempt to address non-existent myths, wouldn't their time be better spent urgently working with others in the Government to produce a better pay offer?