

## **Napo General Secretary urges new starters to join our pay and reunification campaign**

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018

**Napo General Secretary, Ian Lawrence, and National Chair, Katie Lomas, attended a new starters' conference in Birmingham today, which was organised by the Probation Institute.**

Here is Ian's speech....

Good afternoon and many thanks to the Probation Institute for this opportunity to speak with you today at this hugely successful event. Can I also wish you all the very best with your studies as you approach qualification and hope that you have acquired vital knowledge and experience during your time within the service so far.

With me is Napo National Chair Katie Lomas (a serving practitioner who well understands the challenges that our members are experiencing. Can I say how appreciative we are of the important work carried out by the Institute in what are incredibly testing times for anyone delivering Probation services in a Criminal Justice System. I make no apologies for saying that you have committed to an especially challenging career path but one that performs a vital public service in assisting clients and safeguarding our communities.

As Helen said earlier, I am the General Secretary of Napo an elected position covering a five year period and I am now six months in already to my second term.

My duties as the senior elected employee within Napo include the responsibility for assisting our members in Probation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Family Court Service. Typically, my work alongside elected Officers and Napo staff, involves high level interface with government ministers, the senior leadership of the Official Opposition and a multitude of cross party politicians and senior NPS/ HMPPS and MoJ departmental heads.

I am also the lead spokesperson for Napo in our regular contact with TV and media and, as part of the day job, I also have a negotiating role with the three CRC Contracts in Wales and the South West which keeps me well in touch with the issues being faced by our members.

Within the wider union world, I am on the Executive Committee of the General Federation of Trade Unions and I represent BAME workers from various unions as a member of the TUC General Council.

I will have a bit to say about Napo a bit later and why I hope you may consider joining us, and Katie and I will be pleased to try and answer any immediate questions that you may have, or you may contact either of us via [info@napo.org.uk](mailto:info@napo.org.uk) afterwards.

I wanted to focus on three specific issues which I hope will be of interest to you

### Firstly the landscape 4 years on from Transforming Rehabilitation

Whether or not TR is the much vaunted revolution that Mr Grayling said it would be, and I could use a variety of adjectives to describe it, there are a litany of problems facing staff wherever they work.

Within the NPS there are still staff shortages despite the efforts to encourage recruitment and enlarge the diversity base, staff are consistently telling us about the pressures of higher than expected workloads, the impact on their health and for those working in Approved Premises, the dreadful effects of the outsourcing of double waking night cover arrangements.

Additionally, we have major concerns over the OMIC project on which Katie Lomas leads for Napo.

Napo and our sister unions recently secured a pay settlement covering NPS staff which represented a long awaited breakthrough on pay modernisation, especially pay progression, where our hard work has helped to cut the time it will take you to reach the top of your payband from 25 years to 6. That achievement has not happened by magic its down to the long term campaign and sheer hard work that Napo has been part of.

On the back of this we are stepping up our campaign to return to genuine collective bargaining across the NPS and CRC's so that we have common standards of employment and rates of pay across the two arms of the service which will bring stability and certainty for staff.

So our message to the CRC Chiefs and the Government is simply: pay up now!

Pay up and bring an end to the scandalous situation where CRC staff are now second best in the pay stakes, pay up now for CRC secondees working in NPS Divisions who are doing equal work of equal value alongside their NPS Colleagues. And If you are working in a CRC then help us to spread that message and increase the pressure on the employers.

### On the back of all this, we think that there is now an incontrovertible case to reunify Probation.

Napo's position is that we want to see Probation back in public ownership where it belongs. In Wales, work is being taken back from the failing CRC into the NPS, and we are obviously saying that if this good enough for Wales its good enough for England too!

In the Oral evidence that I gave to the Justice Select Committee in March, (who have issued a highly critical report demanding improvement to which such as TTG support and Minimum Contact Specification), I said that Napo are committed to working with all politicians to see a community focused, desistance driven probation model, set free from the still Prison-centric HMPPS.

Alongside this priority is the work that will need to be undertaken to build a Competency Based Framework which formed part of the NPS Pay settlement, to strengthen the Professional aspects of your work and thats why Napo, along with the Probation Institute, are campaigning for a Licence to Practice.

All these issues become even more important as consideration is being given to what happens to the CRC Contracts in 2020 and why we are saying that this Government must not repeat the same mistakes again by remarketing the Probation service.

Look, let me be clear, Napo has always been opposed to the privatisation of public services, but I have gone on record before and will again, in saying that not all of the post-TR difficulties are the fault of the CRC owners.

It was not their fault that the CRC contracts were insufficiently structured and resourced from the outset, or the door being shut meaningful engagement with third sector providers and they're not to blame for a flawed PbR model.

Of course there are a few things some of them and this government are to blame for; but today my message is one of encouraging everyone with an interest to see how we can work with NPS and CRC Employers to ensure that where service improvements are needed we can try and work together. But that commitment must be matched by CRC owners to engage positively with the trade unions, especially on the issue of pay equity, and by them recognising the imperative to deliver safe operational models, and understand that people must come before profit, and why their hard working staff must be treated with dignity and respect

#### So what might that future model for Probation look like?

I mentioned the objective of freeing Probation from HMPPS control earlier on, but in Napo's view we need to campaign for a publicly owned model that embraces the concept of Community Justice.

One that builds on the key principle that its governance structures must be founded and delivered by people who understand the diverse needs of their communities: probation practitioners obviously, and the trade unions and professional bodies but also stakeholders such as the NHS, especially in the fields of mental health drug and substance abuse, the Judiciary, Regional and Metro Mayors, PCC's, local councillors, diversity representatives and those organisations in the third sector who are desperate to make a meaningful contribution to help reduce reoffending, but are currently denied the resources to do so.

Localism was the bedrock of the Probation Service before it became fragmented, and it should be the cornerstone of a new future which encompasses the proud traditions of your profession, one which engenders trust from our communities and does right by the clients it seeks to assist and redirect into making a meaningful contribution to society.

Its a big ask, but If you are on board with that campaign, I wish you all the best in playing a part achieving that transition.

#### Thirdly and finally: What is Napo and why be a member?

We are, as the title illustrates, a trade union and professional association for Probation and Cafcass staff.

Membership of Napo brings with it access to the Probation Journal and our recently relaunched and highly commended Napo Magazine and regular personalised weekly mail outs and my own Blog postings which seek to give you clarity on the issues that matter to you. These illustrate how Napo is doing its best to help you with issues relating to your employment and professional development. You will also have access to legal support depending on the circumstances and through our Napo Extra membership services you can also access a range of lifestyle discounts and financial advice.

More information and application forms are easily accessible on the Napo website but I am also grateful to the Institute for their help in making our material available alongside theirs and I urge you to consider joining both our organisations!

Finally, thank you all for your attention and I am sure that you will enjoy the remainder of today's activities.