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Ministers under the microscope: Grayling and Wright quizzed on TR

On 4 December the Justice Select Committee questioned Secretary of State for Justice, Chris Grayling, and Justice Minister, Jeremy Wright, about the Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) agenda and their proposals to privatise the Probation Service.

The Committee asked the Secretary of State how his radical reforms will be implemented given his own Minister's 'Risk Register' which outlines serious concerns that the implementation of the reforms could have a significant and dangerous impact on service delivery thus putting the public at risk. Mr Grayling said he refused to publish the register as it was simply an internal document that highlighted potential risks if the process wasn't carried out properly. However, when asked what he had done to mitigate these risks he was unable to give any concrete examples. He also admitted that the register had not been reviewed and therefore could not evidence that these potential risks had been reduced.

Our thanks to John McDonnell MP who would not give up on the issue that the public could be at risk from TR if operational

delivery was damaged, saying:

- 'you seem to have made light of your own departments assessment'
- 'what measures have you taken to mitigate the risks?'
- 'if you've addressed the concerns, what are the scores now? Have your officials revisited the BRAG scores and what are they now?'

Neither minister was able to give an adequate answer to these questions; and the committee grew more and more concerned that this issue was not being addressed.

Napo sources tell us that the register has not been reviewed for fear of it being leaked again. Does this mean the risks are still very real and a review would simply draw attention to them again?

Offender Rehabilitation Bill

The Offender Rehabilitation Bill seeks to bring in legislation that will give all prisoners serving more than one day in custody and less than 24 months custody an automatic 12 month licence period of supervi-

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Campaigning – the next steps

Napo at present is facing two very critical challenges. The first is the government's insistence that it can use the Offender Management Act 2007 as a vehicle for privatising two-thirds of the service. The second is the Offender Rehabilitation Bill which is paving the way for private sector supervision of those serving less than 12 months.

With regard to the OR Bill, Committee Stage in the Commons ended on 3 December and the latest intelligence is that Report and Third Reading, which are the last stages in the Commons, will occur in the early New Year. In theory there needs to be 14 clear days between Committee and Third Reading and Parliament rises on 19 December; so it is very tight

Lords' amendment

After that the Bill returns to the Lords. The Lords passed an amendment saying that privatisation and reorganisation of Probation could not happen unless there was a debate and affirmative vote in both Houses of Parliament. That has now been struck down by the Coalition. The Lords may try to put that amendment back into the Bill. They may also support an amendment which states that privatisation can only occur after there has been a successfully evaluated pilot. It is then possible that the Bill will transfer quickly from Chamber to Chamber whilst the strategists and Whips try to agree a compromise. This is known as 'ping pong'.

Targeting LibDems

I am pleased to have been asked to provide consultancy support for Napo at this critical stage of its campaign against Transforming Rehabilitation. As a priority, during the next few weeks, Napo will be targeting Liberal Democrat MPs in the House of Commons

and then Labour and Cross Bench Lords in the House of Lords, to try to neutralise as much of the damage as possible.

Appointments have now been made to most of the 21 CRCs and to senior positions in the NPS. These posts will be operable from 1 April 2014. Many senior members of staff will take voluntary redundancy the day before. The existing contracts are expected to last until the tendering process is complete. This was originally intended to be early October 2014, but appears to have slipped now to early December 2014.

Lobby your MP

Continuing to lobby all 57 Liberal Democrat MPs between now and the commencement of the tendering process in the spring of 2014 is absolutely essential. There are signs that some Liberal Democrat MPs are very

unhappy with the speed of the proposals, and even the proposals themselves.

Napo, centrally, will take responsibility for lobbying the Lords, who clearly don't have constituents; but if any members do happen to have contact with members of the Upper Chamber they are advised strongly to make contact and use Napo lobbying material.

Briefing

MPs rarely consider matters until they are upon them. Napo has done well in its months of preparatory work and the writing of briefings. But the majority of MPs will only be concentrating their minds on both the OR Bill and privatisation now. That process of will accelerate in the new year; that is why continuing lobbying is of great importance.

Harry Fletcher

From the frontline

Northumbria Branch members took to the streets of Berwick upon Tweed in November, to leaflet about the probation privatisation plans and to ask people to sign a petition addressed the local Lib Dem MP Sir Alan Beith, who is also Chair of the Justice Select Committee.

The branch got a very positive response from the people of the town who were almost unanimously opposed to the government selling off Probation and shocked that their local Probation Trust is about to disappear. The petition collected over 200 signatures in just two hours, including that of a local Conservative councillor and of Baroness Quin, a long-time supporter of Probation and a Northumberland resident.

The branch was so encouraged by the

reception that they plan to have a stall in Berwick for a full day in December, to ensure that even more people in the area know what is happening and what the consequences will be for their community – and also that their local MP is in a position to really do something about it.

Megan Elliott, National Vice Chair



Ministers under the microscope: Grayling and Wright quizzed on TR

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sion. Whilst the need to work with this group is welcomed by many in the justice sector, there are growing concerns about the model that will be used to do so.

Currently the Probation Service evidences that it reduces re-offending effectively and believes it could do so if it worked with this group of offenders. There are a number of projects around the country where probation trusts have set up schemes to work with the under 12 months' custodial group. However, the Minister dismissed these projects saying that it was not acceptable to

'have a postcode lottery in sentencing' with interventions being determined by which area a person lives. However, this is exactly what will happen in the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs).

Staffing issues

Elfyn Llwyd MP asked how staff are being affected by this process and the breakdown in negotiations with the unions regarding the process of staff transferring from the current 35 probation trusts to the National Probation Service (NPS) and the 21 CRCs. Grayling said that the negotiations had reached agreement two to three weeks ago

but that the unions then reneged by bringing unrealistic demands to the table.

However, Elfyn Llwyd was able to produce a memo from the last negotiating meeting which revealed that in fact the MoJ undermined the previously agreed terms. However, this was absolutely refuted by all three unions who have all made very robust responses.

Tania Bassett

Watch the Justice Select Committee evidence session on Parliament TV at <http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=14380>

Supervision of short sentence prisoners

Napo is continuing to press its argument that Probation is best suited to supervise those serving 12 months or less, following their release from prison.

Amendments drafted by Napo were put down at Committee Stage of the Offender Rehabilitation Bill, and will return for Third Reading. They state that the Probation Service is most aptly suited to supervise this group of offenders and the briefings supporting the argument compare the reoffending rates of 58.5% for those serving 12-months or less who get no Probation supervision, with those for the one to four year and four to 10 year groups, at 36.2% and 30.7% respectively. This strongly suggests that Probation would be well placed to deliver the supervision of short term prisoners in an effective and economic way.

Probation would also have the power to discharge orders at the half-way point for good progress. This would save the taxpayer money. It has been suggested by Napo to parliamentarians that the voluntary sector be used to provide programmes such as those dealing with literacy and substance abuse in proper partnership with Probation. The arguments will continue until the Bill becomes law.

Harry Fletcher



Ministers Grayling and Wright on a visit to Pentonville prison.

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Evolution not revolution

'Having witnessed the Ministers' evidence, and having regard to other matters, I believe that everything is still to play for'. Harry Fletcher offers the following reflections on Chris Grayling's performance in front of the Justice Select Committee.

Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling, was called to give evidence by the Justice Select Committee today, 4 December, on his 'Rehabilitation Revolution' and plans to privatise up to 70% of the probation service.

Surprisingly he stated on five occasions that his transformation agenda was all about 'evolution' not 'revolution'. I am unaware of him using this term before.

On several occasions he said the timetable was not set in stone and that all cases did not have to be reallocated and assessed by 1 April 2014. Again I am unaware of this being said before.

The Minister added that 2014 would be used to test and monitor the new shadow arrangements. He also said that next year would be the opportunity to ensure that the transfer to the private sector would be carried out smoothly.

Silence on preferred bidders

Grayling was quizzed in some detail by MPs John McDonnell, Elfyn Llwyd and Jeremy Corbyn (see front page article). He also

refused to give the names of the 35 companies and consortia who are the MoJ preferred bidders for probation work. However I believe that the bidding list might include Capita, A4E, Carillion, GEO, Delta, Sedexo, Stonham Housing, G4S, Willowdene and eight Mutuals made up of consortia of probation and the private and voluntary sectors. It was also evident from the Minister's answers that the original timetable had slipped and handover to the private sector is now set for December 2014.



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Grayling was asked many other questions including what would happen if consortia members split or fell out. The answer appears to be mediation or retendering. He was asked what would happen if there was insufficient market interest in some areas? He seemed to say that if that happened then the NPS would do it. He insisted that the whole exercise was about quality not cost.

When asked about comparisons with the failures of the Work Programme and Payment by Results Grayling was insistent that the Probation Change Programme was much less complex and would be easier to administer.

He was asked whether the split between public and private would be 30/70, or would it be nearer 50/50? He answered that there were differences between the financial and the people split and that this was still being worked on.

Annual Report

Napo's Annual Report for 2012-13 has now been published and can be downloaded from the website www.napo.org.uk

If you would like to receive a printed copy just contact Annoesjka Valent at Napo, 4 Chivalry Road, London, SW11 1HT – telephone 020 7326 9982 or email avalent@napo.org.uk



Ian Lawrence writes

Courage in the face of adversity

As the world says bon voyage to Nelson Mandela, it's worth reflecting on just one of his many attributes compared with the attitudes displayed by some senior figures in the Conservative Party (one still alive and one fairly recently dead) who in the halcyon days of their youth never had a decent word to say about the man; and their support for those who proclaimed that he was not only a terrorist but one who should have been hung.

Perhaps Mandela might at least once, have harboured the same thoughts about those who sentenced him to a quarter of a century behind prison bars; but if he did it never showed once he was eventually released.

It's a pretty impossible task to add much more to the many eulogies that have already been expressed about him; yet the one thing that has always inspired me is the sheer courage that he displayed when it would have been all too easy to throw in the towel and accept the fate that others had imposed upon him.

A read across to the campaign of intimidation and disinformation being waged against Probation by Chris Grayling and his still ever growing army of civil servants, spin doctors and now we hear in addition, Ernst and Young Consultancy (who the Taxpayer will subsidise to the tune of around £1000 per day per consultant so that they give the answers that their paymaster wants to hear), is creating massive despondency and outright despair judging by the feedback we have been receiving.

The great man to whom we now bid farewell, probably never knew about our probation service, but drawing down on just an ounce or two of his fortitude and resolve ought to encourage us all to stand firm in the face of persecution.

That letter and what you think about it.

Here are a summary of two of the many responses that have come my way following the 'Comfort Letter' issued by Grayling to all Probation staff last week. From Northumbria Branch member Keith Stafford:

'Probation staff on a day-to-day basis, come into contact with the horrors, the grief, the sadness, the hopelessness, the despair, of our society. They do their work without complaint, quietly, professionally, and with high levels of professionalism.'

- Do probation staff have very high moral values and beliefs? Oh yes.
- Do probation staff possess high levels of professional ethics and principles? Oh yes.
- Are probation staff dedicated, trustworthy, and conscientious? Oh yes.
- Do they possess a spirit and desire to assist, advise and befriend to facilitate people to rehabilitate? Oh yes.
- Are they effective in their work and is this supported by empirical evidence and research? Oh yes.
- Do probation staff take their public service seriously? Oh yes.

TR is not an evolution, which by definition takes over many years. This is a fast track destruction of a world renowned service that works. Political vandalism of the most vicious order.

Oh yes Mr Grayling, that's why probation staff are upset. Being pro-social and motivational is what every member of probation does in their daily lives. Possessing a sound moral compass to demonstrate to service users that the notions of honesty, trust, respect and integrity are valued by our society, not greed, not envy, not lies, not dishonesty, not selfishness.'

And this from a retired Napo member: 'I am long retired (1984), so reading in Horror the ideological attack being made, introducing the 3rd sector. I will write to my MP and do my best to attend any protests in my local area. Wishing you all the best in your struggle. I agree there must be light at end of the tunnel surely no government would take such a risk with public safety. Continuity is so important to life sentence prisoners. The MoJ must be our natural allies, as they will clearly see the public danger. All the best in your campaign.'

Napo still here and they had better believe it

Yes, events over the last fortnight have been pretty bleak but there is little room for



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our opponents to become even more smug than normal. Elsewhere, you will see how our parliamentary and political campaign is progressing and how we are exploring every available avenue in terms of the potential for a legal challenge as Unison belatedly but welcomingly join the dispute. Napo members are made of hardy stuff; they need to be do their job and go about facilitating the positive changes that can be

made to people's lives; a skill that Grayling intends to sell off like some common commodity.

As we hear more and more news about the myriad problems that threaten to engulf this TR project and the serious doubts that there will even be a commercial market in place by the end of 2014, it's as good a time as any to remind ourselves that bigger schemes than this, sponsored by politically more astute politicians than this Secretary of State, have come a cropper before.

Seasonal greetings

Whatever your faith, or not as the case may be, I want to take this opportunity as we approach the winter holiday to thank you all for your continuing support for Napo and for that which you have shown to me personally during a year which has tested all of us to the full.

Enjoy the rest alongside your family, friends and loved ones and let's return in 2014 with a renewed spirit of resistance in defence of all that we hold to be true and believe in.

Follow Napo

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- www.facebook.com/NapoHQ
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- NapoNewsTV
- www.napo.org.uk

Xmas and New Year

Napo head office will be closed from Tuesday 24 December until Thursday 2 January.

Napo Officers and Staff wish all members a happy festive break and a campaigning 2014.



'Outsourcing of Probation Service work – gender and union effects'

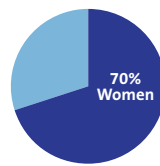
In late November Megan Elliot (Napo Vice-Chair) and I met with Professor Gill Kirton from the School of Business and Management at Queen Mary's University, to discuss a collaborative PhD research project Gill is currently bidding for entitled 'Outsourcing of Probation Service work – gender and union effects'.

The research will investigate the gender and union effects of outsourcing of Probation Service work as it unfolds over the next three to four years, and will involve the close collaboration of Napo in both the design and execution of the research.

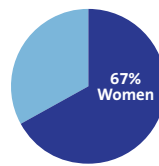
We won't know until early in 2014 that Gill's project will get the go ahead, but if it does Napo's involvement will be ratified by the Officer and Officials group.

The proposed research

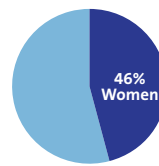
Probation work is now highly feminised, of the main roles probation officer and probation service officer they are 70% and 67% women. There has also been increasing feminisation of senior levels, with women now comprising 46% of Chief Officers, 54% of Deputy Chief Officers and 57% of Assistant Chief Officers. Just a few years ago men dominated these grades. There are concerns around gender dimensions of work-life-balance, work overload, stress and the availability of flexible work arrangements as well as their effects on career trajectories. With regard to work content, academic work has highlighted concerns about the possible specific adverse effects on women of working with high risk offenders and the lack of training and support provided. Therefore, it is likely that if the outsourcing of probation work goes ahead it will have a range of gender effects.



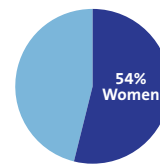
Probation officer



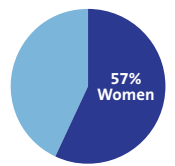
Probation service officer



Chief Officer



Deputy Chief Officer



Assistant Chief Officer

Timescale of research/PhD

The studentship will be advertised in early 2014 and will start in October 2014, and will be supervised by Gill Kirton.

The student will interview selected national officers and officials and branch officers and have interviews/roundtable discussions with branch members. There will also be agreed access to selected Napo branches around the country for detailed case studies of the gender and union effects of privatisation. The student will also attend AGM and WiN conference, and will provide an interim report to Napo on key issues identified for further in-depth research, the finishing and thesis submission will be in 2017–18.

Of course the best case scenario for us is that this project does not go ahead - as there will be nothing to research if privatisation does not proceed. But if our campaign against privatisation is not completely successful, our involvement in the project will be a great opportunity

enabling us to analyse the impact of privatisation on our women members both in relation to their probation and trade union work.



Women in Napo conference 2013.

Calendars

Napo 2014 wall calendars (A2 in size) will be available before Christmas. To order your copy, just email info@napo.org.uk, telephone on 020 7223 4887 or drop a line to Napo Calendar, 4 Chivalry Road, London, SW11 1HT



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- Free will making service

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Probation restructuring: the main concerns and the case for a pilot

For Committee and Report Stage of the Offender Rehabilitation Bill in the House of Commons, Napo produced a detailed paper arguing that the piloting of the privatisation process was essential if disaster was to be averted. A shortened version of that briefing is produced here. The fuller version can be downloaded from the Napo website www.napo.org.uk.

Governments of all persuasions have a recent history of piloting new measures in the justice system before considering any national roll-out. These include pilots of the payment by results scheme at HMP Peterborough and Doncaster; pilots of drug reduction schemes; pilots of satellite tracking; pilots of the domestic violence 28-day prevention order; of Jane's Law and many more. In contrast the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) is rushing through its 'Transforming Rehabilitation' plans, to restructure and outsource 70% of the Probation Service's work, to an alarmingly aggressive timetable.

The proposals are risky, complex, totally untried and uncostered.

Major restructuring

The restructuring of the Probation Service to allow for competition will require the reallocation of up to 250,000 offender cases; the establishment of 21 new government companies; the transfer of 18,000 staff to new employers; the reallocation of 500 premises; and the reengineering of some

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Save Probation

2,000 ICT packages to enable operation of the new entities. The operational split is to be effective from April 2014. The structural split is to be completed by autumn 2014, when all staff will have been transferred to either the new public sector probation service or the new private companies.

Substantial risk

This programme - to this astonishingly tight timetable - is fraught with problems. The MoJ has carried out a risk assessment, but it has not published it. Napo understands that this assessment, where a score of 20 indicates 'significant detrimental effect that has roughly an 80% chance of occurring', shows that a disturbingly high number of the risk areas assessed hit the 20 mark. Not least of these is the risk 'that insufficient participation by the market in competition leads to failure to secure value for money bids for 'at risk' elements of reforms'. Napo is led to understand this has significantly increased and that in certain of the areas to be contracted there are currently no expression of interest.

Staff transfer

The reallocation of the 18,000 staff is a massive and complicated task. The process that is currently being rushed through involves the 'automatic assignment' of staff working in discrete operational functions and the seeking of 'expressions of interest' from other staff whose work is spread across functions.

Staff are being asked to agree to

transfer when they don't know who their employer will be, what their terms of employment will be, where they will be located, what their job description will be, or what size of caseload they will have.

There will also need to be some form of appeals procedure for staff who wish to challenge the decision, which will delay the timetable. In addition staff have the right to be consulted on areas such as changes in working practices, job functions, work location or redundancies which the existing or new employer expects to make as a result of the transfer.

The MoJ has said that following the first round of staff allocation further 'sifting' will take place to achieve the required balance of staffing. Details of this process are not fully known but are likely to involve a decision being made based on an individual's work over the

previous six month period. But this again is highly complex and must not be rushed, as the stakes in terms of public safety are too high.

Caseload split

To further complicate matters the 240,000 offenders currently looked after by probation trusts will also have to be split. The proposals are that medium and low risk offenders will be supervised by the 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), to be bid for and privatised in autumn 2014; while the remaining National Probation Service will supervise high and very high risk offenders. The ministry has come up with a risk allocation tool, which is a mixture of the Offender Group Reconviction Scale (OGRS) and the Offender Assessment System (OASys) to effect the split, but again this has not been piloted.

To make matters even worse there is confusion about what constitutes medium risk. Napo estimates that half of the 150,000 cases that are likely to be privatised are medium risk. This group includes individuals who have been convicted of violence,



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sexual matters, burglary, domestic violence and some known gang members. In the MoJ's definition someone is only placed in the high risk category if it is assessed that a further offence could happen at any time. If they appear to be stable they are classed as medium risk. But risk levels can change on a daily basis. For example: someone convicted of domestic abuse enters into a new relationship; there are issues over access to children; the offender's use of alcohol increases; they are faced with financial problems - all of these could act as triggers causing risk levels to rise very rapidly. Once again the complexities around risk suggest that a pilot would be the best way forward.

Other concerns

There are also many other concerns about the proposals:

- Potentially offenders will be passed back and forth between agencies and at the worst possible time when they are in crisis with increasing risk.



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- Information of a highly confidential nature will be open to huge numbers of different agencies – the scope for information being misused or lost is therefore massive.
- Local accountability and immensely important local partnerships risk being lost.
- Private sector companies supervising offenders would be responsible for breaching them if they failed to comply with their order but it would be the responsibility of the public sector to prosecute them in court.
- There are real concerns that domestic violence perpetrators and their victims will be dealt with by the private sector, and worries about whether this will be a priority for the companies.
- The element of payment by results also causes concern. There is no information available on how payment by results will work or indeed any evidence that it will work.

There are also grave concerns about the ability of the prospective companies to carry out the work properly. We already know from the first private contract in London for Unpaid Work that workshops have been shut down; that the private sec-

tor has a poor record in dealing with queries (and even answering the phone); that supervisors have not turned up to placements; and that some offenders have done more, or less, hours than those ordered by the court.

In summary this is a highly complex, controversial, potentially dangerous reor-

ganisation. The proposals are completely untested. They also do not appear to have been costed. Indeed the government's own risk assessment acknowledged that financial risk cannot even be assessed because of the lack of baseline information.

The evidence for

piloting this measure first before a national roll-out appears overwhelming. Changes being rushed through risks public safety compromises and have the potential to have a massive negative impact on public protection.

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Contact your MP

Napo is urging ALL members whose MP is a Liberal Democrat to contact them urgently and before the start of the New Year if possible. The Offender Rehabilitation Bill ended its Committee Stage in the Commons on Tuesday 3 December. The latest intelligence is that Report and Third Reading, which are the last stages in the Commons, will occur in early January.

The priority now is to lobby ALL 57 Lib Dem MPs between now and the commencement of the tendering process in the spring of 2014. This campaigning action is crucial.

Write to your MP using the link from the Napo website <http://www.napo.org.uk/about/probationunderthreat.cfm> with the following request for a meeting.

I would be grateful if we could meet as a

matter of urgency to discuss the Coalition's plans for the future of the Probation Service. As you may be aware the government is planning to contract out up to two-thirds of the Probation Service's work to the private sector. I and my trade union, Napo, have real concerns about the proposals, which we believe are being pushed through with unnecessary haste and in a way that could compromise public protection. We have many other concerns and I would be most grateful for the opportunity to meet with you to explain these. I look forward to hearing from you.

A briefing is also available to download from the website or you can email Kath Falcon kfalcon@napo.org.uk or telephone 020 7326 9981 for more briefing material to take with you if you secure an appointment. Please also provide feedback.

From the Chair

There are two rules in politics which seem particularly apt at present. Never put all your eggs in one basket and never show all your cards at once.

Eggs first, there will be as many ideas about campaigning as there are Napo members. Some favour parliamentary campaigning, others a strong media presence. Some opt for legal challenges and others for industrial action. Clearly we have to do all of them and they will wax and wane in prominence. We will be gearing up for strike action early in the New Year and there will be legal challenges. Parliamentary Questions are going in at rate of knots and branches have been issued with guidance on local campaigning and targeting MPs. I've been asked loads of questions about Judicial Review but have to remain tight lipped for now (see rule number 2). If that feels a bit frustrating, I hear you, but hang in there.

Impeccable timing

With impeccable timing, the Secretary of State is instructing Probation Trusts to determine our fate over the Christmas period. His performance before the Justice Select Committee was an interesting departure from the Ministry's previous line. Chris Grayling insisted that nothing will change on 1 April 2014. Not sure I quite agree with that. The prospect of working alongside colleagues, half of whom have been privatised, is not something anyone relishes.

Like many of you, I will also receive a letter asking me for an expression of interest and information on how to appeal. But I don't really know what I'll be expressing an interest in. What would I appeal exactly?



We have no idea about life in the NPS or CRC or even who the employer is. To put it simply we are being treated with utter contempt and that makes me feel aggrieved. So, as an employee of London Probation Trust, I have registered my grievance and would encourage everyone to do the same. I don't plan on being silent or compliant as the MoJ seeks to get rid of our Service.

There's a good joke doing the rounds on twitter: How many Probation Officers does it take to change a light bulb? None: we'd encourage the light bulb to change itself. Following that logic, I suppose Serco would tag the filament and overcharge, Carillion would rub it in tarmac, G4S would deport it and Atos would declare it workshy. Slightly weird (but very true) analogies aside, these

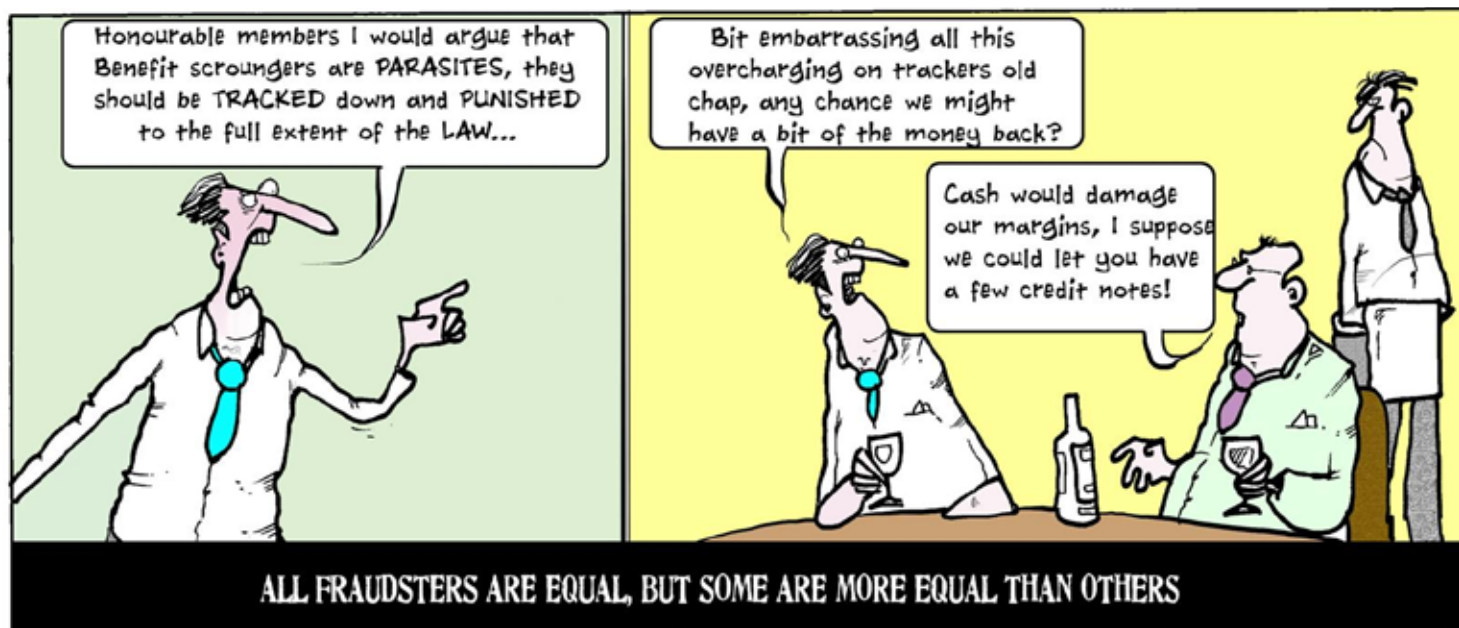
are some of the organisations wanting to try their incompetent hands at complex probation work. If the worst comes to the worst then what is there to safeguard the profession and its values?

Professional Institute

Napo is, of course, the professional association for probation work but there has been an announcement of an Institute of Probation. Napo's National Executive Committee has given its consent for us to be involved in talks about the development of the Institute with Unison and the Probation Chiefs and employers. Napo voted in favour of a Licence to Practice and the Institute, over time, could be the appropriate place to develop this. However, it is not without difficulty and we are proceeding with caution. Of course, it doesn't help matters that the Secretary of State made his announcement about it. I can reassure Napo members that the first principle, set in granite, is that the MoJ must have no control, oversight, accountability to or for the Institute.

Finally, on professional issues, we have jointly commissioned a piece of research with the Probation Chiefs Association which proposes alternatives for the community rehabilitation for short term prisoners. We don't believe that privatisation is necessary to afford supervision of this group and the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies are putting together the research to prove it. This project will be completed early in the New Year and provide a central aspect to our campaign- especially relevant to those wavering MPs. We'll keep you posted.

Tom Rendon
National Chair



Family Court FoCuS

In this *Napo News*, Napo's new Assistant General Secretary and FCS lead Officer, Dean Rogers covers a difficult pay offer, worries about the closure of Children's Contact Centres and the need for the MoJ to get a closer and stronger grip on all things Cafcass. He also reflects on Napo's approach to these challenges and how much more effective we are when were led by members expertise – something Governments usually just don't do, dooming many public sector policy initiatives to failure.

As we go to press Napo is still consulting Cafcass members about this year's belated pay offer. The details are disappointing for most staff, the now Government standard issue 1% except in this instance non-consolidated for everyone earning above £24,000 p/a.

Living wage club

There are some laudable elements to the offer. Cafcass will become an official member of the Living Wage Employers club which protects against deflation in lower pay grades and establishes a useful precedent for unions in other agencies. Cafcass is also maintaining contractual progression – something which is unusual in the civil service and which they are making noises about seeking to improve in the future.

However, it's hard to look positively beyond the disappointing non-consolidated 1%. In its own way this is as targeted as previous weightings for the lowest paid in that it disproportionately impacts on higher paid professional staff. The majority will no longer be benefitting from progression and are seeing the pay freeze becoming an Ice Age. All their bills will be rising so any below inflation award is a real terms a pay cut. Making the miserly award non-consolidated just adds insult to injury. For those earning around £45,000 they'll see their actual salaries falling in April as increased pension contributions kick in, just as they lose this 1% 'award'.

Incompatible

Such awards are unsustainable and incompatible with maintaining a highly motivated, highly professional service.

What is additionally worrying is that it is being presented now – at just the point when Cafcass is preparing to be transferred into the MoJ family. Whilst the adoption carries no obvious immediate risks and Napo has no wish or intention to scaremonger we are naturally concerned that Cafcass is joining evidently the most dysfunctional family in this most disturbing and unstable of Governments. Non-consolidated awards are increasingly common place in the civil service and Cafcass will need to be able to assert its independence as things progress.

Worrying sign

Another worrying sign of Government dysfunction impacting upon Cafcass's aims is the closure of Children's Contact Centres. Napo, supported by the Family Court Unions' Parliamentary Group and our partners at Simpson & Millar, has now launched a parliamentary campaign against these centres being closed. You can get involved by writing to your MP and asking for their support. The irony here is that many of the Centres are run by charities and are closing because of a lack of funding. The same coalition behind these cuts is, in the same breath, urging charities to invest and speculate by bidding for work in probation and delivering other aspects of the CJS.

A Christmas read

A good book for the Christmas list is Anthony King and Ivor Crewe's, 'The Blunders of Our Government'. This revisits and considers some of the many memorable Government disasters over the last 30 years – think Poll tax; the Child Tax Credit fiasco under New Labour; any number of IT disasters; and many, many more.

Some common themes emerge. For example, elitist Government Ministers with no idea how a policy would impact on the impacted communities (e.g. Nicholas Ridley



said if people were struggling to pay the Poll Tax they should sell a painting, apparently without irony); an incomprehensible inability to monitor contracts and hold private companies to account; ministers making major policy changes even where something wasn't obviously struggling just to be seen to be doing something to justify their office; and a remark-

able arrogance and inability to admit failure and therefore learn anything from the mistakes. King and Crewe can't find any Minister who resigned because their policy was a disaster.

I mention this because Cafcass is getting closer to Government and a department headed by the most cavalier of current Ministers. Elsewhere in *Napo News* you'll read how Transforming Rehabilitation is King and Crewe's next edition's postscript.

Dysfunctional government

Napo will continue to expose Government dysfunction and the impact it's having on our members and the families who members support. To do so we rely upon the expert insights you have and which Governments choose too often to ignore. We need your input. Inside organisations Napo has to engage with local employers – the underpaid and undervalued local middle managers up to senior managers often tasked with achieving the impossible, to make sure we can translate political incoherence into policies and practice that work for members and families. For this we rely on a network of local representatives.

If you want to play a bigger part in this vital work defending Cafcass email me via drogers@napo.org.uk.

LifeLines befriends and supports prisoners on Death Row throughout the United States through letter writing.

LifeLines was established 25 years ago, and we now have members all over the world. If you think you have the time and the commitment, please visit our website to join or for more information.

www.LifeLines-uk.org.uk

LifeLines

Edridge Fund update

New Trustee Appointed

We are very pleased to announce that at the November NEC meeting Charlotte Dunkley of Trent Branch was elected as the new Trustee for Edridge, and she will be starting her work with us in the near future, once we have briefed her on the legal bits and our operational systems. Charlotte has been the Edridge Representative in Derbyshire for some time, and has also been an active member of Napo. We are all looking forward to working with Charlotte.

We are even more pleased to say that there was quite a competition for the Trustee vacancy, as it has been many years since we had that number of nominations. This is a good sign for the future, as there will be another vacancy next year.

Farewell to Nick Paul MBE

Nick Paul has been the Edridge Representative in London for a very long time, and served his entire career in the East End. Nick has been a Trustee for the last five years, and apart from being awarded an MBE, he received a Lifetime

Achievement Award last year for his work as a Probation Officer. He has also served as our Vice Chair since May 2011.

We are sorry to lose Nick, as he brought a very down to earth attitude to our work, and alongside this he worked tirelessly to support those colleagues in need of our help. Nick is also stepping down as London Branch Edridge Representative, and will be retiring from the Service in the near future. We wish him well for the future.



Appeal for Volunteers

In the last issue of Napo News we appealed for volunteers to help us in our work. We did have some interest from people at AGM, but we have still not had any contacts from members about this. In the near future we will be compiling a list of the sort of things we need help with and will include this in a future issue of *Napo News*.

What we would like is for people to contact us to talk about volunteering, and give us an idea of the sort of skills they have that we could make use of. It need not be a very

heavy commitment, and any voluntary roles could be tailored to the specific skills people have. So if you could spare a couple of hours a week at least, then please email David Cox, and he will give you a ring to talk about it. David's email address is :- edridge.treasurer@edridgefund.org

Thanks to Our Supporters

So many of you have worked to help us during the year in so many ways, so we would like to thank you all – we cannot do what we do without you.

The Trustees and Staff of the Edridge Fund of Napo

Call for papers: Probation Journal 2014 Special Edition

Probation, Relationships and the State: Who is in the Room?

Relationships are integral to the work of probation and community justice. In this edition we hope to explore the multitude of relationships that influence and impact upon the dynamics of supervision, interventions and desistance from crime. We would welcome papers on the following topics:

- Group programme dynamics and relationships
- PbR and the market - moral issues linked with commercial relationships within CJ
- Multi-agency relationships and partnerships
- Relationships in prison
- Police and probation relationships and issues of trust
- Citizenship and community
- Relationships and what works: working with specific groups eg. women, young adults, Black ethnic minorities, elderly people.
- Relationships and types of offences eg sex offenders, violent offenders,
- Relationships and specific needs, eg mental health, self-harmers,
- Perspectives of staff and occupational cultures
- Personalisation and changing dynamics of supervisor relationship
- Critical analysis of relationships – when relationships go wrong/poor practice

We welcome full articles, comment pieces or practice pieces. The first deadline for submissions is 31 December 2013. If you are interested in contributing to this edition, please contact Emma Cluley, Managing Editor at prb-journal@btinternet.com.

AGM 2014 | 9-11 October, Scarborough

Napo's 2014 Annual General Meeting will be held on 9, 10 and 11 October 2014 at the Spa Complex Scarborough.

All members of Napo may attend the AGM and registration will open in June 2014.

Motions to be considered by the AGM may be submitted by the NEC, a national committee, a Probation branch, the Family Court Section, the PSO Forum or any two full or professional associate members of Napo. Constitutional amendments may be

submitted only by the NEC. Motions and constitutional amendments must reach the General Secretary no later than 12 noon on Thursday 14 August.

Amendments to motions and amendments to constitutional amendments must reach the General Secretary by 12 noon on Thursday 25 September. Details of motions and constitutional amendments received will be circulated to members at the end of August.

Put the date
in your diary
now!



Letters

Bitter irony

On the Campaign front, yesterday, in my day job, I spent the day hosting some prison officials from Kenya. They are over here on a tour of prisons, probation, approved premises etc. They are keen to learn from our experience particularly about 'after-care' services from Prison, APs and rehabilitation. Oh the irony.

I did take an opportunity to explain to them that whilst agreeing we have a very good system that works, we do not have a Government that agrees with us and they are in the process of selling off the service.

They were somewhat surprised, indeed shocked by this. The NOMS person who was present was at pains to point out its all OK and that we are keeping the high risk cases and the APs. That was somewhat lost on the Kenyan officials who said why then are they selling the rehabilitative parts of it? There was no answer and we moved on.

I just thought it was somewhat ironic and indeed sad, that the very day I get my letter telling to express an interest in my job, I'm in a room telling people what a great service we have.

Mike Rayfield
Surrey & Sussex Branch

Napo 'Big Night Out' in Newcastle

I just thought I would let *Napo News* know about Northumbria Branch's latest fundraising effort. Napo member, Steve Lee arranged, a 'Big Napo Night Out' last month as a pre-Xmas social and a fundraising event in Newcastle. Steve's band (pictured), the Soulutions, who are well known on the local music scene, played for free and around a hundred Napo members and friends danced the night away! The



'Big Night Out' raised just under £500 for the branch campaign funds. Brilliant!

Tim Wilson
Northumbria Branch

All credit to Napo

I applaud the advice Napo has given and the actions the union is taking to preserve the integrity of the Probation Service, it reflects great credit on Napo. You have my total support as a retired member who fears for the future of the Criminal Justice System and its exercise of fairness and compassion for both victims and offenders if it becomes the 'play child' of 'for profit' organisations.

Bob Cranna
Retired Member

Napo News welcomes letters and contributions from members. Please write in to editorial@napo.org.uk

Spirit of protest

Last month's walk out in protest at the TR agenda plans was my first experience of strike action and I have been inspired by the collective spirit of Napo and the genuine solidarity that has been shown at this challenging time. Sincere thanks for your leadership and guidance.

It led me to the following reflection inspired by my uncle Harry Clarke who was a staunch campaigner against social injustice right up until his death a few years ago at the age of 84.

My Uncle Harry from Jarrow was a probation officer and he inspired me to follow the same path. He was a formidable character who fought for the oppressed all his life and the seeds of his destiny were sown as he watched the Jarrow Marchers set off on the long road to London.

On the morning of the march, his school headmaster issued a warning that any pupil leaving the school grounds would be severely punished; but guided by his moral compass Harry



chose to defy this instruction and he followed the men for three miles.

Harry had to run to keep up with the well drilled marching pace of men whose calves and biceps had been sculpted by the rivets and steel of ships they sent to every part of the globe. As a result, Harry received six of the best but as the splintered bamboo cane drew blood he was galvanised and the spirit of protest burned within him.

Harry's wounds healed and his arms grew strong and his tenacity would enable him to endure many hardships including the horror of being a prisoner of war in the Burmese jungle. He was a man of substantial moral fortitude with an insatiable appetite for justice and if he were alive today he would walk with us in protest and remind us of the danger of apathy and indifference.

To do nothing will be of enormous benefit to Mr Grayling so let us not give up with a fight. United we stand!

John Finnigan
Northumbria Branch

That man again!

Christmas caption competition

There will be a prize of a copy of Anthony King and Ivor Crew's 'The Blunders of our Government' (see page 9) OR a Cuba Solidarity Goodie Bag AND a Napo Probation Not for Sale T-Shirt to the writer of the wittiest or most apposite caption. E-mail your answers to editorial@napo.org.uk by Monday 6 January or write in to Napo News, 4 Chivalry Road, London, SW11 1HT.



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