

NEWS



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From the Co-Chairs

Since our last column there has been the first NEC of the Napo year. It was great to welcome new NEC reps and to welcome back established colleagues all of whom are working within the revised NEC framework following the SGM in the spring.

It was also the first time that the Branches who were dissolved and recreated to match the contract package areas formally functioned at NEC level; although of course they have been working as new Branches for some months. We were impressed how all members of the NEC engaged in some very difficult decisions and issues which Napo is facing. One of the really positive decisions made was to formally elect Jay Barlow as Family Court Section Vice Chair. Jay's arrival will help our understanding of the issues facing our members working in Cafcass.

Judicial Review

At the point of writing, we have been in post for about eight weeks. What an eight weeks it has been. Between us there have already been two visits to the High Court, with us nearly getting locked in on the first occasion and the final visit is pending. In addition we have had almost daily contact with the lawyers including over weekends, and because we have been part of the con-



Yvonne Pattison and Chris Winters.

fidentiality ring have read pages and pages of statements. As already explained in a members' mail-out there are significant restrictions on what can or can't be shared with members and every mail-out has to be cleared with our lawyers. As and when we are free to share details with members we will do so.

The support and contribution of members has been impressive and we and all our colleagues at Chivalry Road really appreciate the willingness of members and activists alike to provide us with specific information often at very short notice. It is particularly appreciated given the pressure people are experiencing whether due to workloads or the pressure on the amount and flexibility of facility time which many of us are experiencing including our Branch Officers.

They do a great job at local level under very difficult circumstances and also have 'day jobs', which means they can't always just drop everything at short notice. It is their local knowledge, both professional and trade union which continues to be vital.

We fully recognise the anger and disappointment of members when they received the news that on legal advice we could not achieve any more from legal proceedings and it was with a very heavy heart that we had to communicate that to members.

National Committees

Napo as an organisation also has to continue with business as usual. Napo's national committees have had their first round of meetings and are beginning work on the motions passed at October's AGM as well as ongoing work which was codified in this year's Operational Plan which was adopted by the recent NEC. There remain a number of vacancies on the committees and request for nominations will be going out to Branches in the near future. So if you are interested in specific areas of work which Napo does, please look out for it.

Business as usual also means the ongoing meeting which Officers and Officials have with NOMS. As members can imagine the atmosphere at present can best be described as interesting! However, we are all professionals. These meetings include the Transforming Rehabilitation Consultative Forum which meets fortnightly and deals with TR related issues. They also include the Probation Consultative Forum which meets slightly less often and deals with what are described as 'business as usual' issues.

Negotiating

On the negotiating front, the National Negotiating Council (NNC) is scheduled to meet for the first time in mid-December, given that an earlier meeting was cancelled at short notice. In addition Napo, colleague trade unions and NOMS HR are looking at dates for other negotiating meetings to deal with the myriad of outstanding harmonisation issues still outstanding from the split in June.

As the year is approaching its end, it is always time to reflect. Napo members have faced a challenging year and we are all aware that those challenges will continue. For us this is a union to be proud of, especially during periods of challenge. This year has clearly seen members, Napo staff and officers, old and new, rise to that challenge. We would like to wish all members well for the festive period ahead.

Best Wishes

Yvonne Pattison and Chris Winters
National Co-Chairs

Gender breakdown of Napo posts

Members may be interested to see the latest figures for gender breakdown in Napo following the latest rounds of elections. Membership overall of Napo is approximately 70% female and 30% male.

There has been an increase in the percentage of female Officers and National Committee members since last year but a small decrease in the percentage of female Branch Chairs, NEC reps and other Branch post holders. Some of these are changes that are not statistically significant given the small numbers involved, but nevertheless we hope that next year we will be able to demonstrate greater progress towards

proportionality.

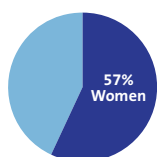
We have included a new category of Negotiating reps this year in the breakdown. If anyone one would like a more detailed breakdown for any other posts, please get in touch.

We will be doing some research to see how Napo compares with other similar unions and will also seek members' views and ideas at the Women in Napo conference later this year.

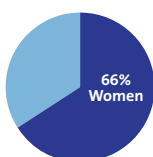
Megan Elliott
Women in Napo



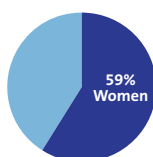
National



Napo Officers

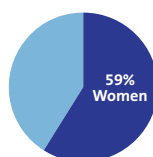


NEC Reps

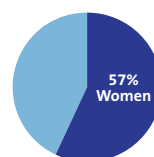


Other Committees

Branch positions



Negotiating Reps*



Other Branch post holders

*includes JNCC Reps, Convenors, CRC and NPS leads

Family Court FoCuS

It was with pride and a little trepidation that I agreed whilst at Napo AGM to stand for the National Vice Chair post with responsibility for the Family Court Section. Facility time of one day per week has now been allocated for this and my roles and responsibilities are still being agreed. The appointment is to go before the NEC for ratification.

I am planning to work closely with the Family Court Section Executive Committee and its Co-Chairs, Nicki Kenney and Steve Hornby. I will also be working with the Family Court Committee and the Cafcass National Negotiating Committee and Partnership Committee. I will have some responsibilities within Chivalry Road and have already attended my first Officers and Officials meeting there.

There has been a very good take up of places on all three of the Family Court Section Committees this year and this bodes well for a busy and productive committee year for the Section. I am optimistic that this will mean it will be possible to 'revive' the Family Court Journal and the committee will welcome articles from members for future editions.

Local organisation

We now have 21 office contacts in place to be a first port of call for members needing support or advice. They will also have a role in recruiting new members to Napo. Some of us recently attended an excellent training day with national rep, Dave Rogan, to develop skills for representing members facing discipline or grievance proceedings. Day 2 of this training is to take place early in December.

There are ongoing concerns about the cuts to Legal Aid funding in the Family Court and the extra work and responsibilities for our members because of the resultant increase of litigants in person (often with very vulnerable children). Napo, PCS, Unison and Simpson Millar Family Solicitors have produced an excellent booklet entitled 'The Impact of Legal Aid Cuts on Family Justice'. You can download a copy from the Napo website <https://www.napo.org.uk/family->



court-unions-parliamentary-group.

The threat to Child Contact Centres because of funding cuts is also of significant concern and will require further work by the Family Court Committee.

Workloads and stress

You do not need me to tell you that workloads within Cafcass remain a major concern and work on this is ongoing with a time record-

ing exercise currently being undertaken by Cafcass. Hopefully, this could lead to change and improvements to the Workload Measurement Policy. The results should ensure that points are put into the workload measure to reflect the work that is done at each stage of a case.

The SEC is piloting a stress survey for staff in Manchester and is hoping to roll this out to other teams where indicators suggest that stress levels are rising. The Health and Safety Committee is pursuing further work on the survey started at AGM. The aim is to seek to reduce work-related stress, anxiety and depression. This is a priority for the Family Court Section in the coming year. By taking collective action, we can identify and seek to combat the causes of stress and anxiety at work for our staff.

At a time when the majority of our Napo members from Probation are facing what is probably the worst threat to their professional lives in the form of Government attempts at privatisation, it is natural that their needs and concerns will take up a great deal of Napo time and energy. As a former probation officer, I support that fully and wish them every possible success.

It is important as well, though, that the Family Court Section is not overlooked because of the 'TR' crisis. I will do my utmost as Vice Chair to ensure that our concerns remain firmly on the national agenda.

Jay Barlow
National Vice Chair

Family Justice concerns raised in parliament

Napo continues to play an active role in the Family Court Unions' Parliamentary Group (FCUPG) of which we are a founding member.

The Group which is chaired by Elfyn Llwyd MP was formed in 2006 to support the work of those employed in the Family Justice system. It meets every two months whilst Parliament is sitting and currently comprises representatives from Napo, PCS and Simpson Millar Solicitors and over 20 MPs and Peers on a cross-party basis.

The current focus of the Group's campaigns within Parliament is:

- Cuts to Legal Aid
- Impact of Court Closures
- The Closure of Children's Contact Centres
- A Single Family Court
- The Future for Cafcass.

Child contact centres under threat

At the last meeting on 18 November the Group met with Elizabeth Coe, the Chief Executive of the National Association of Child Contact Centres, and agreed to give its support for NACCC's campaign to obtain future funding. NACCC plays a critical role in ensuring that children have safe contact with the parent/carer they do not live with, but its current finances will only allow it to continue until February unless

the government urgently agrees to further funding.

MPs in the group have tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM 581) on this – Napo members are asked to draw this to the attention of their MP and to ask her/him to consider signing it.

The Group also heard concerns about the government's plans to centralise divorce services provided by courts. PCS, whose members work in the Courts, explained that centralisation will lead to further staff cuts as well as uncontested divorce proceedings being given to legal advisors.

Impact of legal aid cuts

Representatives from Simpson Millar solicitors were able to brief parliamentarians on the continuing day to day impact of the legal aid cuts; telling the group that some legal professionals were now providing advice for free, as there was no other help available to many families. They also highlighted the worrying recent increase in care cases and promised to supply MPs with examples and a list of questions to be asked. The Group will also be putting down parliamentary questions and writing to the Minister, Shailesh Vara, about both the cuts and the effect on the courts of the increase in Litigants in Person.

2015 Family Court Conference

18 June 2015

Theme – Children, Changes and the Law
The Royal Angus (Thistle) Hotel,
Birmingham City Centre

Put this date in your diary now!

Ian Lawrence writes



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Tough decisions are rarely popular, but they sometimes have to be made

At the time of going to press we are awaiting responses to our letters to CRC bidders alerting them to the continuing operational problems following the discontinuation of our Judicial Review. As you may have read elsewhere in my GS blog (on the Napo website), the Court have not lifted the confidentiality tag from the key evidence given on behalf of the Secretary of State during the Judicial Review process, and the Secretary of State is not consenting to doing so.

That evidence essentially explains why he and his senior officials have concluded that it was safe for him to award contracts to CRC bidders and what he intends to do to make the system fit for purpose.

We anticipate that the reason why the Secretary of State is digging his heels in over the evidence question is that they don't want the bidders to see the high level assessment of the operational state that NOMS and MoJ are presiding over and which the bidders, if they decide to go through with contract signature, will be buying into.

More on all this will follow; but I wanted to take this opportunity to personally address the fact that some members are understandably angry that we did not let the judges decide on whether or not we had a case. This week we will be holding a meeting of Branch Chairs and representatives to explain the decision by the Officer Group and myself as to why we authorised

discontinuation of the Judicial Review application. This was, as we have said already, made on the basis of our legal advice which followed on from us having successfully secured key documentation and statements from the defendants which were germane to our claims about case allocation, staffing and ICT.

It does not mean that we agree with or trust Chris Grayling to deliver what he says he will as contained in his evidence. Neither does it change my view, that the CRC bidders are being asked to buy into a highly volatile operational structure that, if it is not put right in terms of the issues we have been campaigning about will, at some stage implode.

Accountability – it's what we do

The Officers and I will seek to offer you all the facts and context about why we took our unanimous decision and we will quite rightly be held to account through the union's democratic structures. I have no problem in admitting that the JR decision was, by any standards, right up there as one of the most difficult I have been party to during my career; but if members know anything at all about me it's that I will not hide from tough choices.

One of the key requirements of strong leadership is to avoid the more comfortable options just to court popularity. Much easier, if I am being brutally honest (and I am being) to defend a brave stand against the odds that would have brought accolades about us 'going down fighting', against the harder and cool headed option of rationally examining what we had achieved within an already limited legal scope, and more importantly, appreciating that we could achieve no more through progressing the litigation to a hearing.

Nobody is underestimating the disappointment and frustration felt by many of you who see the prospect of outsourcing coming closer and we share that as well. All I ask is that our members take time to reflect on the stand their union has taken during a long and testing member led campaign that has had a strong professional emphasis. It's one that is far from being over, especially in terms of what we aim to do in the run up to the next general election.

FCS Pay offer now out for consultation

It seems like ages ago since I last mentioned the pay claim situation and we have at last received a formal offer from Cafcass that Dean Rogers and the FCS Committee have issued to members, together with a commentary about the negotiating climate that they have had to operate in.

Please do have a look at this and respond as requested.

NNC and a pay dispute

The National Negotiating Council reconvened this week after what has been a massive gap between meetings. This would not have happened had it not been for the cancellation by Management of the last one at the Ministers behest, as his ideological demands were deemed more important. You may already have seen that Napo and Unison have registered a formal dispute following the failure by the employer to properly negotiate and even try to attempt to answer the elements contained in the joint claim, which of course we submitted ages ago. We will issue more about this as soon as we can.

PSO Forum

Thursday 29 January 2015, 11am – 4pm
The Priory Rooms, 40 Bull Street,
Birmingham B4 6AF

The last twelve months have been extremely challenging and as the future remains uncertain it is important that we make best use of opportunities for members to come together and share experiences of what is happening in their workplace at the frontline.

The PSO Forum is your chance to speak with fellow PSO colleagues and share any issues, difficulties or ideas and take them forward collectively. It is important that we show solidarity in the period ahead, and the PSO Forum is in place to make sure that the voice of PSOs is heard in Napo.

Registration

Branches can send one member from the Branch (usually the elected PSO Forum Rep), whose expenses will be met by national Napo. Additional PSO members are welcome to attend, but their expenses must be met by the Branch.

If you wish to attend please contact your Branch Chair/Secretary in the first instance for a registration form. Return the form to Cynthia Griffith cgriffith@napo.org.uk at Chivalry Road no later than Friday 16 January 2015.

National Standards and Practice Framework

New draft National Standards and an associated Practice Framework have recently been circulated for consultation and Napo's Professional Committee has submitted a response. These are revisions of already extant documents dating back to 2011 and they have become necessary primarily as a consequence of the service split in June and resulting new ways of working. Even in 2011, National Standards had already been reconstructed with an eye to the future possibility of the Probation Service being split up and sold off.

The new draft National Standards say little more and little less than did the 2011 version. About four sheets of A4 state, very basically, what shall be done. The key document, some 75 pages long, is the Practice Framework which supplements and fleshes out the National Standards. Again, this Framework is based on a previous iteration but it takes account of new processes such as the RSR tool and the risk escalation process (CRC to NPS). The draft Standards are dated April and the Framework is dated September 2014.

The Framework also seeks to encompass new work under the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 – namely statutory supervision of under 12 month prisoners,

post-release and the the Rehabilitation Activity Requirement which will replace both Supervision and Specified Activity requirements. Taking the lead from the Standards, the Framework describes the 'what' not the 'how'. Both documents are written to allow for professional discretion and/or so as not to tie the hands of new employers over how they choose to operate. Which is the dominant driver is a matter of opinion.

Charitably, the Framework might be described as a brave attempt to establish order in the midst of what is now a thoroughly illogical operating model. Napo's response to the draft has been critical but ultimately any criticism might best be directed at the Operating Model itself and this is recognised in our response.

It is not currently known when these documents will be published - but presumably soon. Neither are we able to say whether the drafts are likely to be re-written in any way to take account of comments that Napo and other stakeholders have made. Publishing Napo's actual response is unlikely to be helpful since it is detailed, and specific and will make little sense to anybody without reference to the draft document itself.

Mike McClelland
National Official

Napo's Annual Report

Napo's Annual Report 2013/14 is now available on the Napo website <https://www.napo.org.uk/annual-reports>. To order a printed copy please email Annoesjka Valent at info@napo.org.uk



2013-14
Annual Report and
Constitution

WiN – ground breaking research into the impact of potential privatisation on Napo

Women in Napo (WiN) is an informal structure within which we aim to increase activity amongst women members and ensure that our union, which is around 70% female, properly represents its membership.

women
+ in **napo**

Between 2011 and 2013 WiN worked with Professor Gill Kirton from Queen Mary's University on our three year gender equality strategy. Early this year Napo Officers and Officials agreed that we would work with her again on another research project on privatisation/outsourcing of Probation Service work and gender and union effects. This research will look at the impact of the staff split, TR plans and the union restructure on women in Napo. Sarah Friday and I met with Gill and her associate Cecille Guillaume last month to discuss how this will work.

Funding

The project will run for a year maximum and Gill expects to get confirmation of the funding for it shortly. Napo is not funding this research but we will provide access to

members and information. The first phase will be interviews with Napo Officers and Officials and gathering information.

During the next phase, in early 2015, Gill and Cecille will aim to work with branches, initially interviewing chairs or convenors before doing more in-depth work with those branches that can accommodate them. This would involve interviewing activists, holding roundtable discussions and if possible attending branch or workplace meetings. The aim will be to interview at least one person in each branch but time constraints will not allow for in depth work in each branch.

Membership survey

Gill and Cecille will design and carry out an online membership survey in early summer. They will also get involved in the Women in Napo conference in June. They will aim to have some preliminary findings (at least) by October to present to Napo either verbally

(at the AGM WiN fringe meeting) or in the form of a report.

Many members are supportive of work to increase the activism of women in Napo. This is a fantastic opportunity to benefit from this research. At a time when the focus is on organising our union in the two workplaces we have found ourselves in there will undoubtedly be benefits from a piece of research such as this one. The results will be helpful to us as a union in our efforts to recruit, organise and activate our members. This research will also be of interest to other trade unions that experience outsourcing and privatisation and we should be proud to be involved with something that will be so important to us as a movement.

I hope that you will be able to take part

in the research, by being interviewed, attending a roundtable discussion or by completing the survey in summer. This activity will fit with the planned Women in Napo conference in June and our continuing efforts to organise and activate members.

Katie Lomas
Napo Vice-Chair



Probation stress

The stress survey that was carried out at the AGM in October was a snap shot indicator of stress levels amongst Napo members since the Probation service split in June 2014.

Of the 367 probation employed members who attended the Napo AGM, 169 took part, a response rate of 46%. They were asked a number of question relating to stress at work and were able to grade their answers depending on whether they 'never, sometimes, frequently' suffered stress as a result of each issue. They were also asked a number of questions about how their health was affected by their work. Almost a quarter of the respondents said they had taken sick leave due to stress at work that they thought was related to TR.

The percentage results shown below are that of the total number of probation staff who participated. The 'never, sometimes, frequently' options have been amalgamated, in

order to give total number of probation staff who suffer from stress on each issue.

Clearly the survey results indicate that work-related stress is a major issue for our members and that this is impacting their health and potentially their performance at work.

However only 20% of respondents said they had requested a stress risk assessment.

Stress risk assessments are not a magic answer to resolving the problem of stress at work but are a systematic way of working with the employer to begin to address the issue. So if you are suffering from stress at work you should request a stress risk assessment. This can be an individual assessment, or if the problem of stress at work is wider spread, a team stress

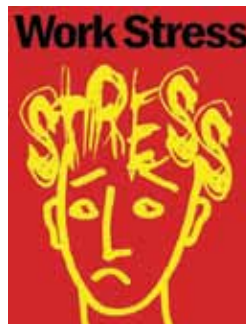
risk assessment.

Napo safety reps are entitled to be involved in the risk assessment process and if they think the assessment is not 'suitable and sufficient' they are entitled to ask for it to be reviewed.

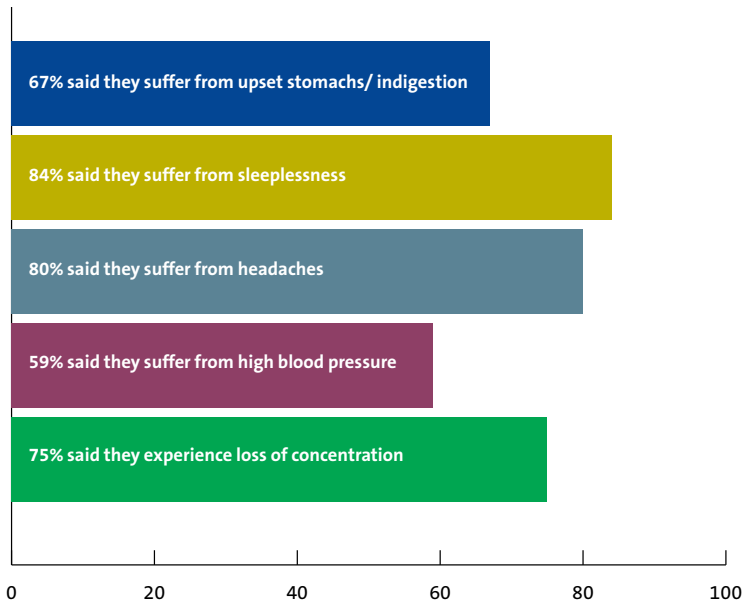
Given the key role Napo probation members play in protecting the public safety, the survey demonstrates the need for changes to address those issues that are causing stress at work and this must be done to deal effectively with major health concerns and potential serious public safety issues.

Sarah Friday

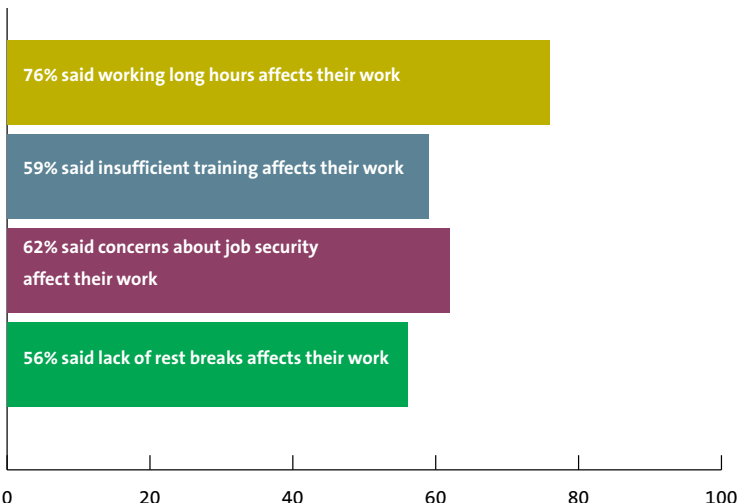
Napo National Official (health and safety)



Symptoms of stress – in response to questions on how work affected their health



In response to questions on how the job design and work environment affects them



Mercia Branch getting clued up on Health and Safety

The Mercia branch has done a great job in recruiting new safety reps to cover the NPS/ CRC split. Below are some of the reps on a Napo two day 'introductory safety reps' course I compiled and taught. The course content covered the basic framework of health and safety law at work, the safety reps role, safety structure – within CRC/NPS and at branch and national level, facilities, time off and training for safety reps, workplace inspections, risk assessment, safety committees and taking up problems through grievances and disputes.

Joanna Perkins, Co-Chair of the Branch said: 'The course inspired the reps; their reaction to the course was brilliant, and it gave them the confidence to take up the H&S Rep role.'

If you are interested in becoming a safety rep let your local branch know. I will be running the same course in other branches/divisions where sufficient numbers of new safety reps have been recruited.

Sarah Friday

Napo National Official (Health and Safety)



UK National Work-Stress Network

After the Hazards Conference, trundling off to the Stress Conference in Birmingham felt almost old hat. It certainly felt appropriate!

I was placed in the over spill accommodation namely the Premier Inn and it couldn't be faulted. The conference puts on taxis to get you to and from the conference (although this didn't always go to plan) and the staff at both locations were very helpful.

The two day conference (Saturday and Sunday) felt more like a family gathering than a formal conference as most people are repeat attendees. This doesn't stop them welcoming new members though.

The morning started with late taxis, two short notice changes to key speakers, no microphones, an over-enthusiastic air conditioning system and a computer system that didn't feel it should be made to work on a weekend! However despite all this the speakers were good and varied and coped with excellent humour and professionalism with all the problems.

Speakers

The speakers included Carolyn Jones from the Institute of Employment Rights, Tarani Chandola, Professor of Medical Sociology at Manchester University, Rebecca Norris, an Occupational Psychologist and Tracey Harding, Head of Health and Safety with Unison.

The afternoon was spent in workshops and there was a variety to choose from (some sensibly repeated the following morning) including stress risk assessments, zero hour contracts, and one on resilience, which was my choice for the Saturday afternoon. It was lively and controversial to say the least with the first hour (constructively) hijacked by Unison Reps discussing the problems of 'union stress' due to there being

too few of them with too many demands on their time.

The second hour returned to the subject in hand and it was clear that aside from a few diehards most people accepted resilience to stress as a good thing; but too easily stolen and misused by management to place blame on an individual for not being 'strong' enough for the job rather than the job being something involving too much pressure for anyone to safely cope with for long.

Sunday morning was straight into another workshop. This time I picked Stress Risk

Assessments. It turned out not to be as I expected, i.e. an instruction on how to carry one out, but instead a discussion and information session on why we do them, what use they can be and ways to make sure management carry them out.

Overall, this was a fun weekend, but one where I came away with plenty of leaflets, new contacts, and new ideas. I will certainly be aiming to attend again next year and I hope you can join me.

Amanda Fisher

Co-chair Napo Health and Safety Committee

Stress in Essex

For as long as we can remember, work-related stress has represented a significant problem for members in Essex. The impact of stress and the level of sickness absence amongst our members have been stubbornly high for many years. The remedial action take by our senior management has had little impact, indeed the problem has worsened year on year.

Several months ago Branch Officers became conscious of a perceived deterioration in the psychological health of many of our members working within the CRC. Unsurprisingly, this followed on the enforced split of the service and the chaos which ensued. In response to this situation we sought an urgent meeting with the senior management of the CRC. The response to our concerns was at best 'underwhelming'. As a consequence, and following on from the stress survey at Napo's AGM, Essex Branch decided to conduct its own survey amongst staff in both the NPS and CRC. This also included non-members. The form we used was based upon that used at AGM.

Results

The results of the survey were broadly similar to those from the AGM in October. However, it is the evidence and the impact of the survey which has proved valuable going forward. Members were afforded the opportunity of make honest comments with anonymity. Armed with what we believed was strong evidence of a very serious problem we were better able to challenge management. Initially, our finding were greeted with a degree of hostility and suspicion from our management; however within a short period of time they were engaging with us, although, to be honest they had little choice by then. It will come as little surprise that our evidence was simply telling management what their absence-management data had been tell-

ing them for quite some time.

Finding solutions

We are still some way off of finding a solution to the issue, but through conducting the survey we have been able to approach the discussions from a position of comparative strength. We have combined this with active encouragement of members to seek stress risk assessments where appropriate.

We have collected data on the situation within Essex NPS although we have yet to take this forward

Needless to say we would recommend this strategy for any branch facing similar problems. In our case the decision to survey staff was quite spontaneous. I suspect that had we organised this through accepted channels such as our JNCC or local H&S committee we would still be bogged down in the design of the questionnaire and our best endeavours would still be buried in the 'long grass' somewhere.

Bob Culliton

Essex Branch Vice Chair-CRC



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H&S Reps Training

'Stress at Work'

All day Thurs 26 Feb 2015
London Probation HQ, Buckingham
Palace Road.

Run by Dave Adams, Napo national link officer for H&S Committee who has been delivering a stress training program for staff in Warwickshire.

Numbers limited to 16 – early application advised. Closing date 26 January 2015

Please contact mpearce@napo.org.uk for registration form.

TTIP and the threat to probation services

A recent *Guardian* article 'Risky business: no wonder Capita wants to avoid public service contracts' was an analysis of the company's decision to turn their back on Government contracts, which the journalist noted has meant that US firms have been among the big winners from Grayling's probation privatisation plans. It concluded that this may be because they are banking on victory for the US side in the negotiations over the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). So what is TTIP and how could it affect our service. National Official, Sarah Friday, investigates.

Our future is already being dictated by TTIP – even though it's not yet agreed, we need to understand what it is about and why it is such a threat. Minds tend to glaze over at the very mention of the European Union and trade treaties – that's why these things are made so dull, so that no one takes much notice when their public services and democratic rights are being taken from them. But the UK trade union movement is alert to this threat. A resolution passed at this year's TUC conference called for 'a clear position of outright opposition to TTIP'.

So what is TTIP?

It is in theory a free trade agreement being negotiated between the EU and United States, and it is about lowering tariffs, but as these are already generally low, it is actually more about 'regulatory harmonisation' – the removal of regulatory 'barriers' that restrict potential profits of transnational corporations.

TTIP is designed to build on World Trade Organisation (WTO) provisions around free trade and cut through 'red tape' that the WTO has not been successful in removing. It is an attempt by transnational capital to deregulate anything that stands in the way of them making profits. Health and safety legislation, employment rights, food safety laws will be assessed as 'barriers' to profits of transnationals.

A threat to democracy

Negotiations have been done in secret, we only know anything about TTIP due to leaks and because we can assume that it will look fairly similar to CETA, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, between the EU and Canada which is more advanced in negotiations and so therefore open to public scrutiny.

The EU chief negotiator for TTIP is the unelected Ignacio Garcia Bercero. After TTIP

negotiations are completed, the European Parliament will have the right only to say yes or no to the agreement, there will be no possibility of amendments. A few MEPs may get to see it – but they will only be able to read the documents in designated reading rooms and will not be able to take them away or to copy them. Neither parliamentarians nor the public will have access, there will be no parliamentary debate and it will be passed as secondary legislation.

Key demands of big business

TTIP is backed by ISDS (Investor State Dispute Settlement) clause. This clause allows any investor to sue a government if the investor feels they are being blocked from making profit. A transnational corporation can directly sue the UK government if it introduces any new regulation that might, even unintentionally, limit that transnationals' expected future profits. If a government comes to power with a policy

of public ownership of industry, energy and transport, this agenda is directly threatened by TTIP.

ISDS is a key demand of US big business. It is opposed by France and Germany who want greater access to US markets including the US's much cheaper oil and gas, but who do not want US corporations and investment banks taking over key parts of their highly productive export industries; hence the power play over the ISDS clause.

The fears around ISDS are not theoretical; the Egyptian government is being sued by Veolia for increasing the minimum wage and the Australian government are being sued by Philip Morris International over its cigarette plain packaging legislation. Increasingly multi-nationals are taking governments to court and governments are losing.

Threat to public services

TTIP directly threatens public services, including the NHS and probation. The NHS is very vulnerable to TTIP because the 2012 Health and Social Care Act opens key areas to private contractors and so for the first time the NHS could come under the scope of free trade agreements such as TTIP. Labour has pledged to ask that the NHS be protected from TTIP.

At a recent Parliamentary meeting I attended on 'TTIP, NHS and public services' organised by the all Party Parliamentary Group which promotes TTIP (and is funded by British American Business) the threat to probation from TTIP was repeatedly referred to. Speaking at the meeting, Dave Prentis, Unison General Secretary said that if an incoming Government wanted to reverse probation privatisation, the transnational companies who have bid for services will be able to sue the Government for present and future loss of profits. He added that no Government will be able to take this risk.

Andy McDonnell MP said that the Labour Party wanted to look at the probation privatisation and to have the freedom to say 'that this is not on'. He feared that TTIP would not allow this.

What's happening now?

The period of consultation over TTIP has now come to an end and it will be full steam ahead until discussions around TTIP are concluded at the end of 2015. Securing an agreement that NHS will be exempted from TTIP is not enough, we need to be committed to unconditional opposition to TTIP as it is a threat to other public services – including probation – as it is to wages, health and safety and environmental standards.

Sarah Friday
Napo National Official



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Women in Napo Profiles – Ann Cruse-Stoddart



This issue *Napo News* profiles Ann Cruse-Stoddart. Ann has been a Napo activist since 2011 and is currently Convenor of the West Yorkshire Branch.

Why do you think it is important to be an active woman in Napo?

I believe that it is important to demonstrate that women have a powerful voice and strong beliefs and are well equipped to represent the views of all members. Also within West Yorkshire we have a higher number of female employees than men and I feel that it is vital that this is reflected in the branch exec.

Have there been any women activists who have helped or inspired you?

Katie Lomas... because she is a legend. She stepped up and led West Yorkshire Branch at a time of crisis and has never looked back. She is knowledgeable, efficient and asser-

Obituary – Margaret Ashton

Margaret joined the Probation Service in the early 1970 and first worked at Guildhall Street, Preston before moving to Kirkham prison. From there she went to Lytham as an SPO where she remained for a number of years leading a team of loyal and hard working staff. She was highly respected by Probation colleagues, local magistrates and Court officials.

In the late 1980s her husband Les was made redundant from the shoe trade and they moved to Norfolk, after he found employment there. It was while she was in Norfolk that she was honoured with an MBE. On retirement they moved to Cyprus and were very happy there making many friends. Les died about two and a half years ago and Margaret never really got over his death. Margaret had a lot of friends in Lancashire and although it is 25 years since she moved away, she stayed in touch with some of them. Most have now retired and moved on but those who are still around remember her with great affection. She was a kind and lovely lady and will be sadly missed by those who knew and loved her.

tive. She gets things done and what she doesn't know isn't worth knowing, a true inspiration.

What you think are the most important issues for women in Napo?

A longstanding concern of mine has been the disproportionate treatment women receive within the criminal justice system. Female offenders are demonised and little consideration is given to the wider societal issues which impact on women and may lead to offending, for example, being the victim of domestic abuse. I also feel that Napo should be looking at the treatment of women in society generally and could support other campaigns that aim to address this e.g. No More Page 3.

What does your branch do to encourage women members to become active in Napo?

Previously we have had a Women's Officer

to encourage more women members to become active. Currently, the majority of our executive members and branch officers are female and I feel that this provides encouragement and motivation to other women who wish to become more actively involved in Napo.

women + in napo

The Women in Napo profile is a regular feature in Napo News. If you are a women activist in Napo and would like to share your experience and thoughts on what Napo is or could be doing to support women in the union please contact [Katie Lomas klomas@napo.org.uk](mailto:Katie.Lomas@napo.org.uk) or [Sarah Friday via editorial@napo.org.uk](mailto:Sarah.Friday@editorial@napo.org.uk) for a questionnaire.

Standing up to the far right

In November Napo members from Kent, Surrey and Sussex Branch campaigned against the far right group Britain First (BF) who stood a candidate in the Rochester and Strood parliamentary by-election. BF is a split-off from the British National Party that now appears to be in terminal decline after internal disputes and the expulsion of its leader Nick Griffin.

In recent months BF has managed to build a small but significant following through social media outlets such as Facebook and this was its first attempt at using electoral politics to boost its profile. They have virtually no local support on the ground, but the defection of Tory Mark Reckless to UKIP created the sort of toxic atmosphere that the far right likes to exploit.

BF candidate Jayda Fransen tried to sow divisions in the community by haranguing

elderly worshippers at a local mosque and attempted to distribute anti-Islamic leaflets. To their credit Royal Mail refused to deliver her election material but this didn't stop her from posing in the local press with her vile racist message.

Plans by BF to march along Rochester High Street met with firm resistance, however. Napo members stood proudly alongside hundreds of local residents and trade unionists twice to physically block BF's passage. On the second occasion BF attempted to break through the anti-fascist line but local residents, including Napo members, held firm behind the banner which read *They Shall Not Pass!*

Predictably BF got a derisory vote polling fewer than the Official Monster Raving Loony Party. Worryingly, however, the general disaffection with mainstream politics and politicians has given them a platform

from which to spout their racist views. Napo has consistently argued that trade unions have a critical role to play in preventing the far right from gaining ground and it is vital that we continue to oppose Britain First, the BNP, the EDL and any splinter group that seeks to divide our communities.

Chas Berry
National Vice Chair



Edridge update

We are pleased to announce that a new Trustee has joined us, elected by the NEC at its November meeting. The new Trustee is David Stevens of Mercia Branch, and we are all looking forward to working with him. David is a retired member, is still active in his branch and has been a branch officer in various roles.

David replaces Alessandra Evans (Thames Valley), who has recently finished her period as a Trustee. Alessandra has worked tirelessly for the Edridge Fund, for which we are all grateful, and we are sure readers of *Napo*

News will join us in wishing her all the best for the future.

Appeal for volunteers

We are always asking readers for money, but we also often say that we need people to help in various tasks to take some of the load off our Administrative Team, and this has featured in previous issues of *Napo News*. Well the result of these appeals has been an almost total silence – ZILCH! We know that these are difficult times, but are you sure that there is not just a little bit of time you could devote to helping us help our colleagues.

So make a New Year Resolution and give us a call or send an email, and we will come back to you to have a chat about what you could offer us. Call our voicemail 020 3397 7025, or email office@edridgefund.org

Applications for Assistance

Once again this year we have been very busy with applications for assistance. At the end of November we had paid out just

under £50,000 in grants. We anticipate that by the end of the year we will have paid out a record sum approaching £54,000.

Donations to Edridge

We have been crunching the numbers again, and whilst our regular donations have remained constant, the amount we

have received in general donations has gone down significantly. What we need is more regular donations, even for small amounts per month – perhaps just the price of two cups of coffee per month. If many more people helped us in this way we would be able to sustain our work to help our colleagues in need.

So please, please go to www.edridgefund.org and click on 'Donate Today' which will take you to our Donations page, where you will find all you need to start sending us a regular payment.

The Trustees & Staff of the Edridge Fund of Napo

Follow Edridge on twitter
@edridgefund



TAX BACK on Napo Subscriptions



Give yourself an early Christmas present and be sure to CLAIM YOURS?

Many Napo members already claim tax relief on their Napo subscriptions. However, there are still a significant number of members who did not know they could claim. As we head towards Christmas every penny counts.

As a Napo member you are entitled to tax relief on your Napo subscriptions. This is because Napo is recognised by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as a professional association, so the amount you pay in subscriptions can be added to your tax allowance. For those paying tax at the basic rate (currently 20%) the average saving is about £40 every year.

Claiming tax relief on your Napo subscriptions is straight-forward, and easy!

You must make a claim within a specified time limit for the tax year that you're claiming for – the time you've got depends on whether you've previously sent in a Self-Assessment tax return.

For further information on how to get tax relief for your Napo subscriptions please visit the HMRC website; hmr.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employers/professional-fees-and-subscriptions or contact the Membership Section at Napo Head Office on membership@napo.org.uk for a Napo Tax Pack which includes a model letter to send to HMRC.

Warwickshire colleagues bid fond farewell to Brian Weatherhall

Colleagues from the Warwickshire side of Mercia branch said a fond farewell to a much loved colleague Brian Weatherhall at his retirement party on 17 October. Brian has worked in various roles in 'Probation' since 1974 and has been a member of Napo since 1977; holding a number of branch officer posts and successfully representing a number of colleagues during his time as a branch rep.

Brian joined Warwickshire in December 1974 as a temporary PO based at the Nuneaton Probation Office. He then started his Home Office training based in Birmingham and qualified in 1977 with a social work qualification. In a varied career Brian has worked in the West Midlands (at the Saltley Office), HMP Borstal Hewell

Grange and for the Warwickshire Probation Service and Warwickshire Youth Justice Service

In 1984 he was involved in setting up the Warwickshire Cautioning Bureau for young people. Between 1990–1995 he was seconded to the Family Court Welfare Service and started doing union work 'because I thought I would have some spare time to do something different'.

Much of Brian's career has been spent working with 'young people' and he has been on secondment with Warwickshire YJS since 2000.

Dave Adams National Vice Chair said: 'I'm extremely thankful for the support Brian has given Napo in the 37 years he has been a member and I am particularly grateful for the support he gave me, during the recent industrial action'.

Brian told *Napo News*: 'I've been extremely lucky to have worked with such a wide variety of people in my career and I have made a lot of very good friends'.

The branch gave Brian a gift of an engraved whiskey decanter and glasses as well as something to put in them!

Brian plans on having an active retirement and hopes to spend more time in Italy with his family.



Dave Adams, Brian, Danny Mannion and Carol Surtees.

Rights for every person in every workplace!

Since the 1990s, the labour market in the UK has experienced a growth in non-standard employment. The nine-to-five, permanent contract of employment is increasingly being replaced with new forms of engagement, as employers seek to increase flexibility among their workforce, with 'zero hours' contracts and/or the use of casual or agency workers. It is not just the insecurity or precarious nature of this type of employment that is the problem. The basis of employment law in the UK means that your employment status determines the level of protection that you get from the law.

Probation employers and Cafcass are not immune to this phenomenon, as they too are resorting to using agency staff and are increasingly making use of pernicious zero hours contracts, in order to plug gaps rather than make informed recruitment decisions. This is why Napo is proud to back 'A Pledge for Every Worker' which will ensure that rights at work are fair, clear, understood and enforced.

Workplace Pledge

A workplace pledge for every worker will provide a foundation to protect some of the most vulnerable workers in the UK. The TUC has shown that the inequality of bargaining power in the employment relationship has resulted in an increase in vulnerable workers being exploited and denied their employment rights by rogue employers and has highlighted the growth in bogus 'self-employment'.

Workers who are forced into accepting contracts that do not accurately reflect

the true nature of their employment status work mostly in non-unionised workplaces and hence they are the least able

to challenge their employer except in the courts. They have been further marginalised by this government's decision to introduce Employment Tribunal fees, which will deter many from fighting for their rights. This is why the Workplace Pledge calls for the abolition of Employment Tribunal Fees

To find out more visit www.workplacepledge.org
Ranjit Singh
 National Official



Hugh Lanning with Ranjit Singh at the parliamentary launch of the Workplace Pledge.

A PLEDGE for every worker

Under this government, insecurity, limited rights, economic uncertainty and a lack of legal protection have all become 'part of a day's work' for people in the UK. Workers feel disempowered, disenchanted and disengaged. This is why we propose a PLEDGE for every worker and rights at work which are fair, clear, understood and enforced on:

PAY – setting out not just the worker's rate of pay, but also the rates of the national minimum wage and living wage, plus other rates of pay in the same organisation, including those of other workers doing the same job.

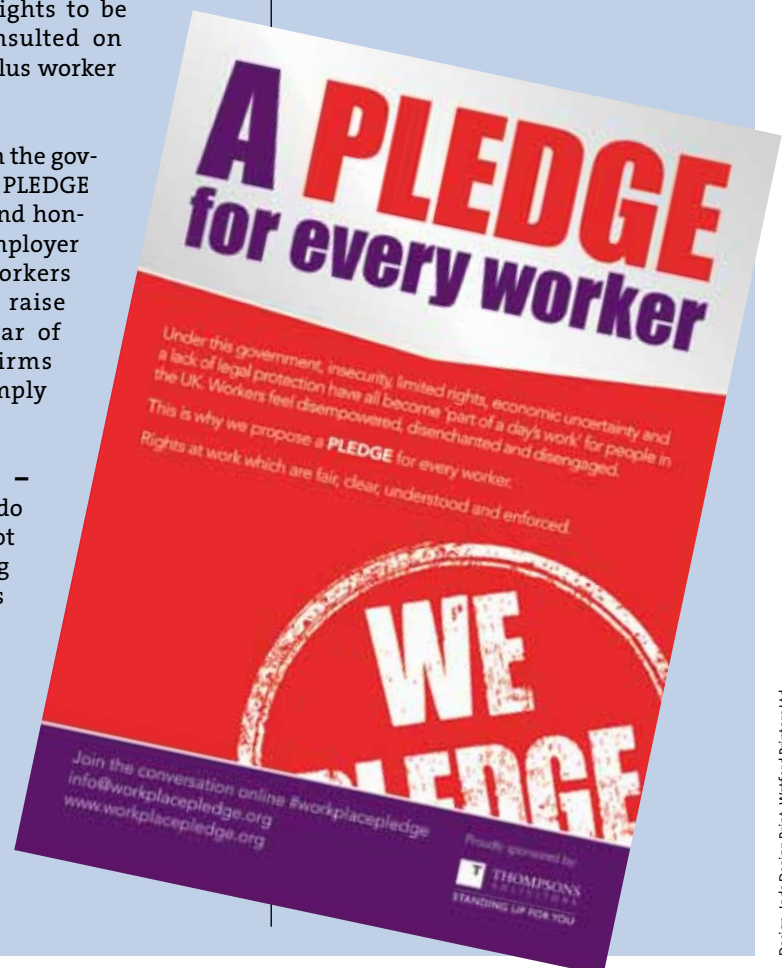
LAW – what the worker can legally be expected to do. This would include hours of work and include the protections Labour is committed to introduce on zero hours contracts. Maximum and minimum hours would be specified.

EMPLOYER – the obligation to treat workers decently, including a safe and healthy workplace, holidays, maternity and paternity leave, sickness and protection against dismissal, discrimination or unfair treatment.

DIALOGUE – a voice in the workplace, with rights to be informed and consulted on changes at work, plus worker representation.

GUARANTEE – from the government that the PLEDGE will be delivered and honoured by every employer equally for all workers and the right to raise issues without fear of victimisation. Firms which do not comply will be named.

ENFORCEMENT – what workers can do if the PLEDGE is not honoured, including the right of access to an independent trade union to advise and represent, plus the abolition of Employment Tribunal fees.



January

M	5	12	19	26	
T	6	13	20	27	
W	7	14	21	28	
T	1	8	15	22	29
F	2	9	16	23	30
S	3	10	17	24	31
S	4	11	18	25	

February

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T	3	10	17	24
W	4	11	18	25
T	5	12	19	26
F	6	13	20	27
S	7	14	21	28
S	1	8	15	22

March

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April

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May

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June

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August

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2015

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SOLIDARITY

NAPU

C A S S

Key

- 31 NEC meeting
- 15 AGM
- 1 Bank Holiday

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Napo
Women in Napo conference York 12 June
Family Court Conference Birmingham 18 June
Deadline for receipt of AGM motions 19 August
Deadline for receipt of amendments to AGM motions 1 October
AGM Eastbourne 15–17 October

TUC Conferences
Women's Conference 11–13 March
Young Workers' Conference 21–22 March
Black Workers' Conference 17–19 April
Disabled Workers' Conference 21–22 May
LGBT Conference 25–26 June
Congress 13–16 September

September

M	7	14	21	28	
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W	2	9	16	23	30
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October

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November

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December

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S	6	13	20	27	

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