



**Lobby of
Parliament**
Page 3



**Managers
Conference**
Page 5



CAFCASS
Page 6

Home Office major crisis



© Stefano Cagnoni

In recent weeks the Home Office has experienced what is probably its worst crisis for decades. As a consequence of the 'foreign nationals scandal' there are now hundreds of prisoners being held beyond their release date awaiting deportation procedures to be completed. They include at least two Europeans who were jailed for fine default. In addition the Prison Service has been ordered to return scores of lifers back to closed conditions, following the revelation in the press that there have been a number of high profile abscondee from open prisons.

Napo also understands that the street crime initiative has backfired. In 8 hotspot areas there are now an additional 7 crimes on average per day. The Prime Minister has ordered the police to sort out the problems by the end of July. This may involve intensive policing, a presumption of no bail and more jail sentences.

Parliamentary questions have revealed that over 1,000 offenders have been given indeterminate sentences during the last year, which is double the expectation. The Home Secretary is in the process of ordering the Parole Board to be more cautious, so less prisoners will actually be released. In addition there is huge pressure in the media for longer sentences for those convicted of serious offences.

Napo understands that the Home Secretary has called in Heads of Department and asked them to come up with ideas for 'quick wins' over the next few weeks. Insiders describe morale at the Home Office as at its lowest level ever.

Legislation

It is now highly unlikely that the legislation to allow for contestability and the fragmentation of the Probation Service will be introduced into parliament this year. It

is also highly probable that Custody Plus will be delayed and that the Youth Justice Bill, which was introducing intensive supervision, has also been deferred.

There is no indication that there will be any extra resources for Probation, indeed the Home Office budget has been frozen for the next three years.

The prison population currently stands at 77,800 and is predicted to hit 81,000 by the autumn. There are currently 1,300 places left. The effect of the measures outlined in this article mean that the 81,000 is now a gross underestimate. There is little scope to build new prisons and no additional capacity in the Probation Service. The Government has failed to deal with the hysteria in the media and now faces the biggest crisis it has ever seen.

Harry Fletcher

Sentencing Controversy

Press uproar followed the jailing of Craig Sweeney for life for the abduction of a three-year-old child in January this year. Sweeney was convicted at Cardiff Crown Court and given a life sentence with a recommendation that he serve a minimum of five years.

There was also outrage in the media that Sweeney had previously been given a three-year sentence for sex offences but had been released after 18 months.

Napo said in a number of television and radio interviews that it was the law that all prisoners serving one to four years were released automatically at the half-way point and that the Prison Service had not been lenient. Many commentators in the media pointed out that had Sweeney served the full three years the offence would not have happened because he would have been in prison. Napo again explained the rules and regulations and was asked to comment

on the new sentence. It pointed out that defendants who plead guilty receive a one-third discount and that all prisoners serving more than four years are eligible for discretionary parole once half the sentence has been completed.

Subsequently, the Daily Mail 'revealed' that '53 lifers had been sentenced and released since 2000'. Napo again pointed out that these were discretionary lifers and that the vast majority had been convicted under the 'three strikes and you're out' rule for a further violent offence. The courts and the Parole Board, therefore, were correctly interpreting Government policy. Nevertheless, the current Home Secretary, implicitly criticised his predecessors and said that there would be an enquiry and that the rules would be changed.

Harry Fletcher

Executive Release

It was reported in the Times last month that the Home Office was actively considering introducing legislation to allow for a one off executive release of all prisoners serving less than 12 months, if the prison population continued to rise remorselessly and the service felt it was unable to cope.

Last year 63,000 individuals received a sentence of 12 months or less. Most served about 3 months, so the daily population would therefore be in the region of 10,000 to 15,000. The Home Office later played down the story saying that no proposals had gone to Ministers on the issue. Napo understands, however, that the previous Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, did order an all options review and that executive release was one possibility.

In a press statement Napo said: 'whether the proposals will ever see the light of day in the current political climate is highly debateable. Even if the Home Office did release thousands of short term prisoners the Probation Service has not got the staff to supervise them'.

The union added: 'It would be extremely difficult. Four or five thousand prisoners could come out on the first day. The adverse publicity would be overwhelming'.

Napo understands that the Home Office is looking at alternative strategies to reduce the short term prison population.

Harry Fletcher

Recalls – Breach of Licence

AGM 2005 carried a motion expressing considerable alarm at the dramatic rise in the number of people returned to prison after recall and calling on the union to campaign for a reversal of the trend.

Napo members will be aware that individual prisoners can be returned to custody: if they commit a further offence; on grounds of risk of harm; or for technical breaches of licence conditions. Napo will be producing briefing material on this issue in the near future, possibly launched at the AGM this year.

In the meantime, if members have examples of recalls to custody which are technically correct but are not necessarily constructive, and which add to pressure in the prison service, please send them to Kath

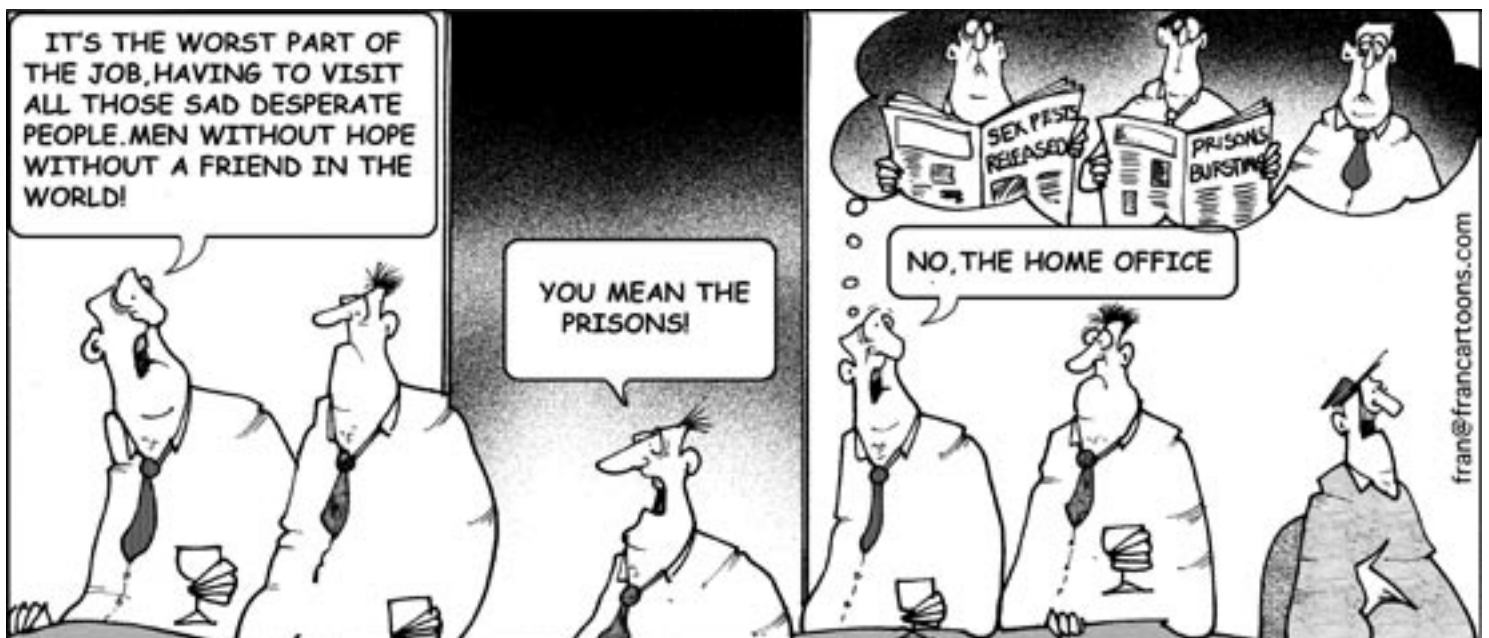
Falcon kfalcon@napo.org.uk, without delay. Napo would also be interested in receiving any other cases of individuals receiving prison sentences where alternatives would be more appropriate.

The Prison Service is facing an unprecedented crisis and Napo will be producing material in the near future that explores the potential for alternatives to custody.

Harry Fletcher



©Stefano Cagnoni



Successful public services lobby

Napo members from all over England and Wales turned out in force for the extremely successful Public Services Not Private Profit lobby of parliament on 27 June. Over 200 Probation and CAFCASS staff joined 2,000 trade unionists from 16 unions for the rally which called on the Government to halt its privatisation agenda.

Napo General Secretary, Judy McKnight, speaking at the rally, praised the event as historic. She said:

'It is perhaps obvious that all those of us in unions fighting privatisation of our particular public services should unite in our campaign to defend our services and oppose their privatisation. But actually it hasn't been that obvious, as until this initiative - primarily on the part of John McDonnell and a few colleagues - to launch the joint union campaign Public Service not Private Profit, we'd all been doing our own thing in terms of parliamentary campaigning.

And colleagues if there is one thing that is certain, it is that the Government has a very concerted strategic approach to the dismantling and the privatisation of the

public services for which we all work so it was never more timely that we must be equally concerted and equally strategic in our approach to saving those services from dismantling, from privatisation and saving those services for the public.'

The full text of Judy's speech is on the Napo website, along with more pictures of the rally and lobby.

The key focus of the lobby for Napo members in Probation was to ask MPs to put pressure on the Home Secretary to 'think again' about his plans for the Service. They asked MPs to urge Ministers to listen to the results of the consultation exercise on Restructuring Probation and to shelve plans to dismantle the National Probation Service and to introduce competition.

MPs were given a briefing, prepared for the lobby, highlighting the successes of the Service (and the fact that, despite resource shortages, Probation is performing better than ever against targets), and suggesting alternative ways of achieving the Government's objectives of end-to-end sentence management and cooperative working.



© Stefano Cagnoni

Campaigning priorities

Napo members, who were unable to attend the lobby in June, are now being asked to contact local MPs, either by letter or at their surgery, with the same message. A copy of the lobby briefing, together with a second briefing giving a 'brief history of NOMS', is available on the Napo website www.napo.org.uk or can be obtained from Kath Falcon at Chivalry Road kfalcon@napo.org.uk. There is also a model letter for members to use on the website.

Harry Fletcher



© Stefano Cagnoni



© Stefano Cagnoni



© Alf Bonner

Custody Plus

Custody Plus, which was contained in the Criminal Justice Act 2003, is due to be rolled out nationally in November 2006. However, at the time of writing, no national standards have been produced either by the NPD or NOMS, and the projected 4,700 additional staff needed to supervise the order are not in place. At best 1,100 additional staff have been recruited since 2002, at a time when the caseload has risen by 2-3% each year.

Home Office Minister, Gerry Sutcliffe has said in parliamentary answers that Custody Plus will only be introduced when resources

are in place. It therefore seems highly likely that the measure will not be rolled out as planned. A typical London Borough will be looking at 50 to 60 additional cases per month. The Home Office, Napo understands, has calculated that, as a consequence of introducing Custody Plus in November, experienced probation officers would be carrying 10 to 20 high risk cases each. Napo has made it clear that such a situation is untenable.

Harry Fletcher

Judy McKnight Writes

Staff Morale

Having addressed a number of Branch AGMs recently it is clear that morale in the Probation Service is on the floor. Members feel overworked, pressurised, and unappreciated and wonder where on earth their service is heading. Morale in CAF/CASS may not be so low as in the Probation Service, but CAF/CASS members are facing their own problems on reorganisation and workloads.

Jenni Russell writing in the Guardian recently on the current Government, said: 'Throughout the public sector, all those on whom targets were imposed have gradually found themselves working in systems that largely reduce them to impotent cogs in machines. Millions who once took great pride in their work no longer have much autonomy in how they do it. That makes them sullen or enraged, because they know how the restrictions on them are distorting the jobs they should be doing.' Sound familiar?

Staff – The Crucial Ingredient

One of the many problems with the Government's current approach to public services and to public sector reform is its complete lack of recognition of the need for staff engagement and support for any change programme and the need for staff to feel supported. The basic concept of 'employee care' is not just about being a good employer for its own sake, but about recognising that public services are dependant on staff for their success and that supporting and caring for staff is critical to securing effective performance.

I was recently at a NOMS meeting where I received yet another power point presentation with diagrams of NOMS and Probation structures within it. I have lost track on how many presentations of different models I have sat through since Patrick Carter's report suggesting NOMS was first published two and half years ago.

It is bad enough that civil servants are still scratching their heads trying to work out an organisational model for NOMS that might make sense, but I was even angrier when at this same meeting a chart popped up outlining the three critical factors for ensuring the success of Offender Management:

- 'Partnership and alliances;
- Effective IT
- Contestability and Commissioning.'

No mention was made of the importance of staff.

Given that a public service is dependent on staff for delivery, staff, along with plans for their development and training, should feature strongly in any plans for changes and reform.

In contrast, we are still not receiving satisfactory answers to questions about the future training strategy for Probation. We were relieved to receive confirmation that there will be a cohort 10 of TPOs, and we have been assured that we will be consulted on the emerging plans for offender management training that will be modular based. Many questions remain unanswered though and there is a stoney silence on plans for training for interventions work.

The future nature of collective bargaining remains uncertain. Helen Edwards has sought to assure us that, as she sees it, 'the future of national collective bargaining is not at issue but rather the form it will take following the establishment of the new trusts and new employers' organisation or suchlike and yourselves in the trade unions.'

Perhaps the phrase 'suchlike' says it all, and confirms that the future structures of the Service, such as they may be, are still being drafted on the back of an envelope.

At the current time the future of the NPD is in doubt and we are unclear what that means for human resources' policies, health and safety and diversity, let alone the full range of policy issues that Probation needs a clear central and national voice on.

Another rumour about is that John Reid is not over keen on regional structures. Will the future of ROMS be in doubt? How will the fact that that they have never had a job description affect their future if regional structures are reviewed and ROMS face the prospect of redundancy? I trust all ROMS are trade union members.

Scotland

At the end of May the Scottish Executive published its 'National Strategy for the Management of Offenders'.

Scotland went through a consultative exercise on NOMS and the introduction of contestability in early 2004. Unlike our experience in England and Wales, politicians in Scotland took notice of the consultation exercise. They developed a system based on ideas that received widespread support and was based on evidence of what works. As a result Scotland has not introduced NOMS on the basis of contestability, but on the basis of partnership and cooperation. All relevant agencies, are required to work together to reduce re-offending.

The Scottish strategy also sets out five key interlinking themes that it is based on:

- 'Setting priorities;
- Working together in new ways;
- Developing and supporting the workforce;
- Communication;
- Measuring, learning and acting."



© John Harris

So in Scotland, 'developing and supporting the workforce' is recognised as a critical ingredient for success.

Scotland is now in a position where instead of still talking and working out how some of the positive concepts of end to end case management could be introduced, they are now doing it. A lesson perhaps about the need to listen to the results of consultation, including consultation with staff, and a lesson in introducing change effectively by supporting staff and securing their support for any change planned.

Have Good Summer!

I hope all members have a good summer. Please don't forget to register for AGM, being held in Eastbourne from 6 to 8 October. Remember to submit motions for AGM, either through your branch, or individually with a fellow member seconding. The closing date for AGM motions is 18 August.

Judy McKnight

Pensions progress

Discussions are continuing at a frenzied pace on extending protection for existing members and looking to improve the scheme from April 2008. As indicated in last month's Napo News, improvements to the scheme in future will reduce the effect of the abolition of the Rule of 85.

The judgement of how far current members will have been compensated for the removal of the Rule of 85 can only be made once it is known which improvements are likely to be agreed. Improvements to the future scheme benefit everyone, of course, current and future members alike.

Progress has been made on agreeing the estimated costs of protection and savings from commutation and the removal of the Rule of 85.

Branches and members will be given further details as soon as they become available.

Pete Bowyer

Managing in a climate of bullying

The theme of this year's Manager's Conference was 'Managing in a Climate of Institutional Bullying', something which manager members in both CAF/CASS and the Probation Service identified with.

When Roger Hill, the Director of the NPD addressed the Conference, he recognised the pressure that managers faced, in managing in an organisation where expectations are much clearer and more challenging than in the past with tough targets to be met.

He recognised that the last five years had been characterised by targets, and thanked managers for their contribution, as demonstrated in the latest performance report, that the Service was performing better year on year. Roger spoke of the Hanson and White case and the lessons to be learnt and also provided an update on NOMS.

He reported that recent monitoring of cases going to formal grievance, disciplinary/capability processes and employment tribunals, showed that at the end of March 2006, 208 out of 21,000 staff were in one of those processes; of those, less than 1%, 39 out of the 208 cases, were for bullying or harassment. Roger accepted when questioned however that the numbers in formal processes might only be the tip of an iceberg in terms of the full range of cases, with many dealt with informally.

Martin Wargent, Chief Executive of the PBA, gave a detailed speech on bullying and its impact at work and supported the idea of a joint piece of work with the unions on addressing how bullying and harassment could be better dealt with.

He also spoke of the good resources available on line, including the website: www.bullyonline.org, a treasure trove of useful information for anyone subjected to



L to r: Mike McClelland, Roger Hill and Judy McKnight.

bullying at work.

Delegates to the Conference also received copies of Napo's 'Anti Harassment and Anti Bullying Policy', the results of Napo's 2005 survey on institutional bullying, BRF17/05, and relevant ACAS, CAF/CASS and Probation Service papers. (Further copies available from Napo Office on request.)

Workshops at the conference considered different aspects of bullying and harassment, including diversity issues, their

links with discipline, grievance and other procedures, and their links to stress and sickness.

Other contributors to the conference included Jonathon Ledger who provided an update on pay and grading issues and myself, who provided an overview of some of the key issues for manager members in CAF/CASS and the probation Service.

Judy McKnight

Keep on campaigning

The Managers Conference also heard from John McDonnell MP. John, who is Secretary of the Justice Unions Parliamentary Group, praised Napo's campaign on NOMS, which had contributed to delay in the introduction of the Bill, and said that briefings from Napo had been invaluable to MPs.

He urged Napo members to continue arguing the case. The way forward, he said, was through continued dialogue with Ministers, and continued questioning of the legislation (which is now likely to be introduced at soonest at the end of the year) to try to force the Home Secretary to either put the Bill on the backburner or to enter into talks;

The JUPG would continue to meet with Ministers; to circulate information within parliament; to mobilise and to lobby; and to back alternative approaches. If that failed then there would be a fight on the floor of both Houses over the legislation.

Harry Fletcher, in the same session, told managers that there were several reasons to feel hopeful about the future. The Home Office was in meltdown and anything could arise from discussions, including the possibility of a Minister of Justice. He argued that the performance of the service was at its best level ever; that there would be training for at least another cohort; that Custody Plus would probably be deferred until resources were available; that journalists were taking a more balanced view towards further serious incidents; that as far as CAF/CASS was concerned, Fathers 4 Justice had been discredited.

On NOMS, he said, the central campaign against the Bill had resulted in MPs being critical and that MPs from all Parties firmly believe that the case for dismantling the Probation Service has not been made.

Vicky Boroughs
National Vice Chair



National Negotiations

The negotiating arena continues to be somewhat frantic and Napo currently has some very real concerns about CAFCASS' ability to meet its commitments to the partnership agreement with respect to consultation and negotiation. There is currently a frankly, unhealthy pressure for quick change both in organisational and professional terms. Not only do we seriously question the effectiveness of these changes, but they are certainly not conducive to good industrial relations.

At the June Section Executive Committee the negotiators were mandated if necessary to pursue a formal dispute, specifically regarding the organisational changes and development of non-negotiated new jobs. Napo does not oppose in principle the idea of considering the development of new jobs, but requires CAFCASS to consult and negotiate in line with their own Partnership Agreement.

We have yet to see a clear explanation as to how this rushed development can be demonstrated to improve service delivery and sadly have found the strategic arguments offered to date unconvincing.

Members do need to be aware that if they are applying for 'new' jobs – there may have been no agreement as to pay or job descriptions. If in doubt, talk to your Regional Convenor. Many service managers have raised concerns about the wider impact on pay and the potential knock-on effect on their work and job descriptions. We are already hearing that the creation of posts such as Heads of Service is increasing rather than decreasing the pressure on service managers. This is hardly surprising.

Sadly it is our view that CAFCASS has slashed its national office function to such an extent that the cracks are beginning to show, both in relation to national management's ability to achieve its own priorities, but also the impact on regions. It would appear that what we are now seeing is that classic organisational reflex - if in doubt, reorganise!

Pay issues

The claim has now formally been put, and we await a response from CAFCASS which is seeking its remit from the DfES as it is required to do. We have been given assurances that this will be pursued quickly, but have also been told that what we are seeking is 'challenging'. More information will come out via Regional Convenors as soon as it is available.

As far as the Strategic Pay Review is concerned, we continue to wait patiently for any meaningful information as to what is on offer. We have started the process of

job evaluation which involves evaluating all current existing roles within our remit. This is an intensive piece of work which has raised a number of questions, not least about the way some job descriptions have been framed.

Property Strategy

This is still under discussion and is causing us concern. On the one hand the strategy talks about responding to local need, yet on the other it appears to be proposing the universal move towards controversial proposals such as hot desking, which Napo opposes on health and safety grounds.

It is also not helpful that what appear to be ideological and budget driven proposals are framed in terms of improving service delivery. It is hard to see how the move away from offices which serve local communities and the push to develop 'centres of excellence' actually meets the needs of our client group, never mind staff.

Workloads Policy

When the Workloads Policy was put into place it was agreed that it was important to review the calculations within a reasonable timescale, and we have just embarked on that process.

Both CAFCASS and the unions agree this is something we need to prioritise, particularly given the developments arising out of the private law programme, the growth of various court based schemes and the professional strategy proposals.

The lack of clear statistical information is hampering progress, but we are currently considering adopting a method called 'Process Mapping' which is intended to provide a reasonably sophisticated analysis of the time required for all tasks, and which has recently been adopted by agreement with the unions in the Probation Service.

This is not going to be a quick fix and it is important to confirm to members that the current agreement is just that, an agreement – please don't be persuaded that it no longer applies. It does! It may not be a perfect measure, but there is currently no better measure available to us.

National Standards

The proposed national standards have been launched in a very public way, so we hope that the planned consultation period is a meaningful one. I personally have already given Anthony Douglas some instant feedback – it was neither diplomatic nor measured, that can come later, but as this is

an approach he appears to value... We will, however, of course now be consulting with members and providing our usual calm, logical response! A small group is meeting at the end of July to draft this and we would welcome maximum discussion and comments through the regional structures, or direct to myself.

Other policy developments

The constant outpouring of policy documents and 'consultations' continues – whatever happened to the CEO's early statements about reducing the number of policies, light touch etc...? Current examples include: record keeping; family assistance orders; safeguarding; commissioning - I'm sure I will have missed something in that list. Again, please do raise any views with us.

What is interesting of course is what happens after consultation. Either these drafts just seem to disappear, or when they do finally emerge, interesting little additions can be found, some of which are really quite significant. An example of this is the quiet inclusion in the performance framework document of the feedback forms to be attached routinely to all reports. You may not even have been aware this was happening. Nobody is going to argue with the idea of improving quality, including getting feedback, but doing it in a vacuum, and without even ensuring staff know what is being attached to their report is disrespectful; undermines local initiatives which may be working well; is dubious from an effectiveness

point of view; and does not contribute to the development of a positive learning environment in which staff feel safe and open to challenge. And, before someone says, 'well we circulated the performance framework to all staff', let's be aware that it was about 100 pages long and none of the changes from the original were in anyway marked. I doubt if many people will have had time to read it that carefully.

And finally, don't forget it is national AGM 6-8 October. If you've never been before, please do seriously consider attending. We are spread round the country quite thinly and this is our one annual opportunity to meet nationally. Its also Napo's supreme policy making body, which is also reasonably significant. So get your registration in and a hotel room booked.

Sian Griffiths
National Vice Chair



A partnership to support professional development

Napo's commitment to the training and professional development of its members has and continues to be a core objective and, as such, Napo has strived to secure funding to achieve this goal. In 1997, Napo secured funding from the Union Learning Fund (ULF) to work with the CJNTO and probation to develop the Certificate in Community Justice. This work was completed in 2001. The certificate now forms part of the Skills for Justice suite of awards.

Napo's next step is to ensure members have access to training and professional development. In partnership with the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) we have secured further funding from the ULF.

ULF funding has already contributed toward the production of a training needs analysis exercise that many hundreds of Napo members completed earlier this

year. This information will be crucial to developing a national picture of the workplace and personal needs of members.

Union Learning Reps

A central feature of the Napo-GFTU partnership in driving the argument for a new focus on training and education for probation and family court staff will be via the recruitment and training of a new network of Union Learning Representatives (ULRs).

Across the trade union movement, ULRs have successfully created a new agenda on learning and skills and enabled thousands of trade union members to access new development opportunities typically through partnership arrangement with their employer.

The fundamental challenges faced by Napo members place a demand on the union

to ensure that it is strategically placed to identify and negotiate measures that enable staff to gain and continually develop the skills for the job.

Advocates for Change

Napo ULRs will act as local advocates for change in each Probation Area and, it is proposed, will be linked to regional consortia which have principal responsibility for training and development matters.

Details of training opportunities will be sent to branches, and the CAF/CASS Section and announced in the next edition of Napo news. Any existing Napo reps and members with an interest in training and professional development are welcome to apply for this position.

**Cordell Pillay, Assistant General Secretary
Ian Manboard, Project Manager, GFTU**

Bits & Pieces

Stressful Software

We have received a steady stream of examples of difficulties that members in Probation experience with software programmes such as CRAMS and notably OASys. This evidence is welcome and can be used in our discussions with the NPD. Please keep it coming – address emails to mmcclelland@napo.org.uk. (Succinct as possible please.)

Performance Report for Probation Service

Performance Report 20 (2005/6) is now available on the NPD website. It was published on 15 June. At a time when Probation has been pilloried over isolated high profile cases it confirms that the service has exceeded 7 of its 11 service delivery targets and been within 10% of the other 4. So, according to the statistics, we're doing the business. Then, rather like Top of the Pops, it publishes the 'risers and fallers' - Areas that are doing well and those that aren't. This is good for morale in some Areas but not so good in others.

What is the cost of all this target chasing? Perhaps part of the price shows up in the failure of all but 5 Areas to meet the target figure of 9 days for sickness absence. The media picked up on the fact that around two-thirds of Areas failed to meet targets to do with risk assessments for high risk and prolific offenders. One has to wonder whether this might not, at least in part, be due to the (in)adequacies of the tools used to carry out the assessments. This is a point Napo has made to the Director of Probation, Roger Hill.

NWMT

The roll-out of the Tool across the country has been delayed by Steria for reasons that

are unclear. Napo has written to Roger Hill explaining that whilst we acknowledge that it isn't the NPD's fault that the Tool has not been put on Area servers over the last few weeks, it is nevertheless their responsibility. He was told that if this work is not completed by the time of the NEC in July, the NPD risks the possibility of a ballot for industrial action in accordance with the motion at last year's AGM.

The timing for PSRs (SDR) has been revised down to 6.5 hours following a process mapping exercise. This is a 'moderated' planning figure taking into account allowances for prison visiting and 'no-show' (nil) reports. In other words it is the figure that will be used in allocating work rather than the figure for how long it takes to actually complete one report (which is calculated at 30 minutes longer). The figure is based on a 'pull-through' eOASys type Report and it is agreed that it should be reviewed again in November. Already there is some evidence that the shortcomings of OASys (slowness etc) might necessitate a reassessment.

The standard allowance for overheads, not including training, leave and sickness absence is 16% (i.e. 6 hours in a 37.5 hour week). This covers such things as general admin, team meetings, reading and supervision. There is no evidence known to Napo to suggest that this figure should be adjusted in any way.

Custody Plus

Some uncertainty now exists regarding the roll out date, currently planned for November. A parliamentary question, answered in the middle of June, suggested that Custody Plus would be introduced

'when resources allow'. Conclusions may be drawn from this even though no firm statement has been made indicating any postponement of introduction. It is difficult to see how the November date can stand in the face not only of current staffing difficulties but also the complete lack of any National Standards for this new sentence.

It is also increasingly evident that the Government is concerned at the possibility that Custody Plus might have the perverse consequence of actually increasing the prison population. At any time this might give pause for thought. At the moment such a possibility hardly bears thinking about.

**Mike McClelland
National Chair**



© Stefano Cagnoni

NOMIS and ViSOR

Both of these tools are due to start arriving in the Probation Service soon. It is important that Branches are kept up to date with roll-out developments in their Areas so that they can make the appropriate representations. A Briefing Paper will be issued shortly with advice on how to go about this.

NOMIS

In due course NOMIS will replace existing case recording systems in Probation such as CRAMS and Delius. It is supposedly an integrated (with the prisons) case recording and management system that has been developed for use in England and Wales from what was originally a Canadian product called c-Tag and i-Tag.

Roll-out is due to start first in HMP Albany in July. The first Probation Areas to take it will be Norfolk and Northamptonshire and the plan is that they should move to it in November. Introduction into other Areas is then scheduled to progress through 2007.

Training for an Area should start about 6 months prior to roll-out, which means it should already have started in the 'early-adopter' Areas.

There are some concerns about the training particularly in terms of provision for AT users. Ergonomic and accessibility assessments on training provision have not been completed and without these it will be difficult for Areas to undertake their own risk assessments.

ViSOR

This is a database of all registered sex offenders and, in due course, some of the most dangerous and violent offenders. One of its primary purposes is to support MAPPA and it will provide detailed information, including photographs and intelligence on individuals. It is currently deployed throughout police forces in the UK and it has links to the PNC. It is now to be rolled out to Prison and Probation Services and it should enable all 3 services

to better manage some of the most dangerous violent and sex offenders..

Subjects (offenders) are termed 'nominals' and case managers are known as 'nominal owners'. Information will be drawn from OASys and the expectation will be for nominal owners to raise cases on ViSOR and input information. Where Probation is involved this will normally be triggered by MAPPA.

In Probation, South Yorkshire and Durham are scheduled to be the 'early adopters' with rollout there scheduled for September, with training already commenced. Other Areas in the North West, London, and Yorkshire and Humberside are due to follow thereafter and introduction across the Service is due to continue through 2007.

Concerns

Napo has only recently been alerted to this programme timetable and a number of concerns have already been expressed. Not least of these is that ViSOR is not electronically linked to either OASys or NOMIS and so it will be yet another database onto which (considerable) information will need to be entered manually. Rolling out ViSOR without ergonomic and accessibility assessments, which have yet to be completed, would breach an undertaking previously given by the NPS.

Mike McClelland
National Chair

Youth Offending Service Seminar

Calling all members working in Youth Offender Teams. Book now for the YOS seminar on 'Working in a Multi-Disciplinary Team – exploring best practice for members in the current climate of change'

Friday 8 September
10.30am to 4.30pm
Friends Meeting House, London

In the morning Ellie Roy, Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Board, will speak on current issues facing the YOS.

Interested? Contact Vicky Boroughs
vboroughs@napo.org.uk or Mike
McClelland mmclelland@napo.org.uk or
ring Chivalry Road 020 7223 4887

Police Federation and Napo: shared concerns

Napo was invited to speak at the Police Federation Conference for the first time in its history. Over 1,600 constables, sergeants and inspectors were in attendance.

The vast majority of the delegates were white men, despite the fact that 27% of all police officers are now female. There were few black officers at the conference, although they do now tend to support Black Police Association events.

Jan Berry, who is a police inspector, chairs the Federation. She noted in her opening address that there were now 140,000 police officers, a rise of 10% in the last 5 years. She told conference that 53% of police officers felt that their lives had been put in danger at some time in last 2 years.

Common concerns

Perhaps not surprisingly the same issues concerned the Federation as concern Napo: role boundaries, amalgamations and targets.

Jan Berry introduced the Home Secretary, John Reid, who said how much he appreciated the police and that they were a 'beacon of excellence for the rest of world'.

He made no policy commitments, describing himself as 'the new boy', and told delegates that his first choice job had always been Defence, but if he had to choose a second it would be working with the police.

Panel discussion

Later Napo joined a panel to discuss whether community penalties were worthwhile, the role of custody, and dealing with prolific offenders. Martin Copsey, Chief Probation Officer for Dorset, was also involved and was surprisingly supportive of the problems and dilemmas facing the Probation Service at present.

Napo argued that there were too many people in prison and that the Probation Service needed further funding; praised partnership work with the police including work with Napo on the Conference Consortium; and criticised the Government's target culture for both Probation and the Police.

Harry Fletcher



Jan Berry

Courtesy of the Police Federation

The TUC Disability Conference May 2006

Napo sent two delegates to this year's conference, myself and David Quarmby, Secretary and Chair of the National Disabled Staff Support Network. Angela Hands, Napo Vice Chair also attended. We all felt that it gave us an opportunity to see trades unionism at its very best. A whole range of disabled people and their supporters coming together in a vibrant atmosphere, where respect for their access requirements is practised not merely preached.

However, the two days left many delegates questioning how much substance, as opposed to spin, there is in this Government's commitment to improving the life chances of disabled people. Especially when, TUC General Secretary, Brendan Barber, spoke of the grim statistics of poverty and disabled people. The playing field was not level, he said, when it comes to access to education, health and housing. In particular the statistics are shocking in relation to the employment of disabled people, particularly those with visual impairments or mental health difficulties.

John Hutton

The conference also heard from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, John Hutton, and I doubt many delegates could at first believe what they heard. Whilst stating his commitment to the Government's Respect Agenda, and saying

Trade Union Organisation

Recruitment Seminar

A very successful seminar addressing recruitment took place in London on 25 May with half of Napo's Branches represented.

The day took the form of planning and organising for recruitment using exercises based on the experiences of members in their Branches. The exercises helped produce ideas and potential strategies which can be applied locally.

From a national perspective TUO Committee will be working with Napo's Membership Department to develop our recruitment strategy, review, revise, and improve our recruitment materials, and build on the support we provide Branch Membership Secretaries. A number of ideas are being discussed and we are hoping to use this year's AGM to promote new initiatives.

Organisation and recruitment are top priorities for the whole trade union movement at this time. We are confident that this seminar will help Napo continue to grow numerically and increase the activity of members both locally and nationally.

Jonathan Ledger

that unprecedented amounts of money had been made available to improve disabled people's life chances, he then announced that the Access to Work Scheme was being removed from the Public Sector. His justification being that, in his view, workers in the Public Sector were protected by the Disability Discrimination Act on the public duty to promote disability equality.

Napo's motion to conference deplored the removal of the Government's Access to Work scheme from local offices to a centralised call centre. This was strongly supported. Napo also spoke in support of a motion deploring the inappropriate use of ASBOs with regard to people, mostly young, suffering from mental and neurological disorders and learning difficulties.

All the motions, at conference this year, had a common strand. It is actions not words and real resources that disabled people need. People with disabilities also need to have a say in matters that affect them and the TUC committed itself to prioritising work with organisations of disabled people over those bodies where disabled people are not in key positions.

There was also a debate at conference on the issue of assisted dying with Jane Campbell MBE speaking against and Dr Tom Shakespeare putting the case in support. Both speakers have profound disabilities and both stressed that their aim was to promote the debate in an informed and respectful way.

Marathon effort

Still going strong with just a mile to go, Rob Thomas passes the Houses of Parliament in his marathon run to raise money for Edridge. Rob ran the 26 miles in 5 hours and 23 minutes. Chris Martin, son of Edridge Fund Secretary Richard Martin, was also running to raise money for the Probation and CAF/CASS welfare fund. His time was 5 hours 2 minutes, despite a knee injury at the 20 mile point and having to limp the last six miles.

Between them Chris and Rob have raised around £5,000 for Edridge and the mental health charity Palms, who furnished them with places on the run. However, some sponsorship money and pledges have yet to come in. So, if that's you, do get the money to Rob, Chris or Edridge as soon as possible.

David Quarmby was re-elected, at conference, to the TUC Disability Committee. Given that we are such a small union, his success is a real tribute both to David and Napo.

Finally, the TUC's new guide on disability legislation, 'Disability At Work', was also launched at conference. This can be downloaded free from the TUC website and is available in print and other formats. Or phone for free copies on 020 7467 1294.

Desiree Leete

National Disabled Staff Support Network

Branch Representatives Course

'Representing Members', 18 - 21 September, T & G Centre, Eastbourne.

Applications are invited for this course, which is designed specifically for representatives who deal with grievances and disciplinary cases. It covers rights, regulations, and skills.

'Diversity and Harassment', 13 - 16 November, T & G Centre Eastbourne.

This course is designed to give representatives an opportunity to discuss the different approaches to diversity in Employment Law and what that means in the workplace.

Please contact your Branch Chair/ Secretary/Convenor for further details and a registration form or Cynthia Griffith at Chivalry Road cgriffith@napo.org.uk or 020 7223 4887.



Foreign National Injustices

The recent flurry of Home Office activity, prompted by the 'tabloid frenzy' around the release of those, defined under the catch-all category of foreign nationals, either not subject to deportation or not deported in accordance with the direction of the sentencing Judge, has caused a considerable amount of administrative confusion and casework disruption. It has also unquestionably led to institutional injustices for those caught up in this latest example of Ministerial 'quick fix' populism, with hundreds of prisoners now held beyond their release date awaiting deportation.

As a Probation Officer in Central London I had first hand experience of the distressing and sudden impact that the policy directives had on a number of clients about to re-enter the community on supervised licences.

London policy

This after London Probation to its credit had put together a full and considered Foreign Nationals Policy highlighting best practice. At best this Home Office drive appears to be a shameful abuse of due process and appropriate Human Rights protections.

The National Campaigning Committee discussed this as a matter of urgency last month. Napo has in the past fought

a successful campaign against 'double punishment' and the Committee agreed to collate examples of how Home Office directives in relation to the treatment of foreign national prisoners have impacted across the country on practitioners and managers, with a view to formulating a campaigning response.

If colleagues are able to furnish case examples could they please email them to me mike.guilfoyle@london.probation.gsi.gov.uk

Mike Guilfoyle
Campaigning Committee

ROMS and Legality

Napo understands that the Home Secretary can delegate his responsibility for the Probation Service in ways he thinks fit and that would include the creation of Regional Offender Managers. However, lawyers have advised Napo, that ROMS do not have the power to introduce contestability. That would require further legislation.

The legal advice also confirmed that service level agreements (SLAs) are not legally binding on Areas. Furthermore, if a ROM attempted to impose an unreasonable SLA it could be challengeable. This would be possible, for example, if an Area did not have resources to implement a service level agreement, or it was implicit that certain statutory duties could not be carried out as a consequence.

Counsel's view

Counsel also told Napo that it would be wrong for the Secretary of State to punish a Probation Board, under Section 10 of the 2000 Act, for refusing to sign a SLA. Section 10 provision is an emergency power

for serious problems only.

Advice also indicates that it might be possible to challenge decisions if they are irrational. For example, if Boards were required to reach targets but with insufficient funding for them to produce reports.

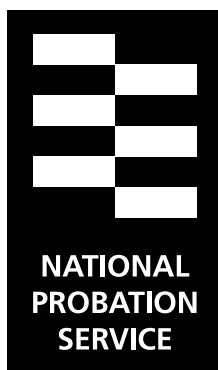
Counsel's view is also that there must be a statutory provision in the eventual NOMS Bill to prevent conflicts of interest. For example in relation to an employee of a private company writing reports about sentencing if that same company is responsible for a particular sentence, such as prison or tagging. This might be in breach of Article 5 of the Human Rights Act - the right to a fair trial.

Napo's lawyers believe one of the reasons for the delay of the Bill is almost certain to be difficulties in drafting as well as controversy.

Harry Fletcher

The NPD – What's happening

Napo is concerned at the possibility that the National Probation Directorate could effectively cease to exist from late autumn 2006. It is unclear at the time of writing what exactly will happen to its current functions.



Some, it is thought, will be swallowed up by NOMS. Others may, or may not, be devolved to the Probation Boards Association.

Napo will be briefing MPs on the situation, making it clear that it is totally unacceptable to have no voice in Government arguing the case for Probation. It may be that the decision to shut down the NPD will be revised.

At meetings over the coming weeks with the new Minister, Gerry Sutcliffe, Napo will be arguing strongly that a voice for the Probation Service must be retained.

Harry Fletcher

Certification Officer

Statement to Members concerning the Annual Return to the Certification Officer as required by the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993.

The following financial information was included in Napo's annual return to the Certification Officer for the year ending 31st December 2005.

1. The Total Income and Expenditure of the Union	
Income:	£1,942,095
Expenditure:	£1,657,500
2. Amount of Income from Membership Payments	
	£1,881,668
3. Amount of Income and Expenditure of Political Fund	
Not applicable	
4. Salary and Other Benefits paid to each Member of the Executive, the President and the General Secretary	
General Secretary Gross Salary	£50,774
Employers' NI Contributions	£5,876
Lease Car	£3,988
Superannuation	£7,623
Total	£68,261

Auditors' Statement

'We have audited the accounts of Napo for the year ended 31 December 2005, which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet, Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses and the related notes. These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and the accounting policies set out therein.

In our opinion the accounts give a true and fair view of the state of the union's affairs at 31st December 2005 and of

its surplus for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.'

Bryan & Ridge, The Gatehouse, 2 Devonshurst Place, Heathfield Terrace, London W4 4JHD

Napo's detailed audited accounts for 2005 will be presented by the Treasurer to the 2006 AGM as required by Section 14(c) of the Constitution. If approved, they will be included in the Annual Report, which is sent to all members.

A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or has occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concern with such one or more of the following as it seems appropriate to raise it with: the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, she/he should consider obtaining independent legal advice.

Duncan Moss
Treasurer

Judy McKnight
General Secretary

Adverts

Ireland, Donegal Bay

Five bedroom holiday house. Sleeps 10. Magnificent seafront location with views over Donegal Bay. Open fire. Pets permitted. Irish Tourist Board 3* approved. From £375 p.w.

Visit the house @ www.holiday-rentals.com/ardenmhor. 0121 443 4438 or 020 8450 0371 siobhan.jones@blueyonder.co.uk

Bergerac - South West France

Bed & Breakfast in beautiful 3 bed spacious house with pool. Ideal location, lots to do and explore locally with parking, linen and towel service included. From £30 per room per night. Breakfast an extra £3 per person. Available on a single or group basis.

Andrea 07949456394 or France 0033 553796478

Foothills of the Pyrenees

A newly refurbished village house with three double bedrooms. In riverside village (Campagne-sur-Aude). TV, DVD, washing machine. Stunning mountain scenery, sporting facilities, historical sites are all within one hour's drive. Carcassonne airport is 45 minutes' drive. Prices from £150-£250 per week.

Contact Fiona or Paul on 01273 270198. f.bauermeister@ntlworld.com mob 07717151642

Southern Cyprus

Spectacular views of the coast and mountains from this luxury villa, in a picturesque and peaceful setting on the edge of the rustic village of Neo Chorio. The Olive House has a private pool, 3 bedrooms (sleeps 6), 2.5 bathrooms and is superbly furnished. Surrounded by beautiful countryside yet just 8 minutes drive to the beach. Paphos airport 55 min.

Email theolivehouse@msn.com (quote kap).

Calvados, France

Comfortable self contained gite near Vire, Normandy. Part of a farmhouse complex. Close to Caen, Normandy Beaches and Bayeux. Ideal for walking, cycling or just a rural retreat!

For info, pics and prices contact Beckie at beggypie@hotmail.com or log onto www.holidaylettings.co.uk and use the links France/Normandy/Vire

Bordeaux

A beautifully restored 19th century stone house, located within the Medoc wine region. Situated in private woodland near the coast. Sleeps 10 with private pool.

Contact: 07884 264844 / 07884 264843.
Email: info@lepreauxcepes.com
Web: www.lepreauxcepes.com.

Krakov, Old Town

Beautiful apartment, fully equipped, sleeps eight. Fantastic base to explore rest of Poland and eastern Europe. £15 per person per night or from £200 pw. Cheap flights from many airports.

Contact Paul on 07810201741 or email malgosiaeaden@tiscali.co.uk

Cala Mayor, Mallorca

Two bedroom front-line apartments with magnificent sea views. Each with en-suite bathroom, shower-room, TV, terrace and pool. From £275 to £375pw.

Call Brian Harrison 01275 373992 or email brian.harrison@dsl.pipex.com

Grange Over Sands

Lake District. Four nights £140. Longer stays by arrangement. Luxurious two bedroom first floor apartment in quaint Edwardian coastal town. Patio garden with views over bay. Good road and rail links.

For information or bookings phone Sherry Barrass on 01772 335426 or 07815 148205.

NAPSAC – I've seen the adverts, but what is it?

NAPSAC is an informal group of Probation and CAF/CASS colleagues and their friends who get together a couple of times a year, drawn by a mutual love of fell-walking.

The group started life in 1976 with a sponsored walk to raise money for the Edridge Fund. Such was the feeling generated that people wanted to continue to meet regularly and have done so twice a year for 30 years.

We now use youth hostels, often taking most of the hostel over, and we try to create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Amongst others, people with families and people who come on their own seem to appreciate and enjoy this.

We aim to offer a good value five-night break in the Lake District each May half-term week and a similar value three-night

Hallbankgate – Cumbria

A fully renovated barn conversion (sleeps 3) with private garden set in 10 acres of land. Overlooking the Geltsdale Nature Reserve and situated close to Hadrians Wall. Discounted rates available for this year.

Becki Atkins 016977 46624 or beckianneatkins@aol.com

Fuerteventura

New high quality three bedroom two bathroom duplex bungalow. Fully equipped kitchenette, TV DVD CD and Video. Communal pools, 10 minutes from beaches and amenities. 1.5 km from golf course. Special offer £199 pw.

Contact Aileen on 07908 778909 or email jajames8@hotmail.com

Northern Cyprus

Three double bed bungalow, private pool & beautiful scenery, full A/C. Sleeps 6.

Introductory offer From £175-£300 per wk. Fabulous guest reviews recieved.

www.farmhousevillatrncoyprus.com or contact Louise on 07717651044/0161 8600750

Algarve

Gorgeous new villa for rent. Fully equipped. Pool. Atlantic views. Sleeps five. One hour from Faro airport. From £180 per week.

Call Hugh and Pat on 01594 827244
Email imherenow69@hotmail.com

break elsewhere in the country in October. This autumn we shall be in the North Yorkshire Moors at Helmsley.

Quite a number of people who come have a Probation or CAF/CASS connection, but it is often only very tenuous (!) so the informal rule about not talking 'shop' works well and contributes to a very relaxing time. Walks on offer vary from gentle ambles to serious hikes over longer distances according to your taste or ability.

If you would like any more information about the NAPSAC Autumn Meet Helmsley Youth Hostel, North Yorkshire, 12 to 15 October, do contact me.

Peter Holden
01299 250808 or 07958355514
e-mail: peterjholden@hotmail.com

A crucial conference in a crucial year

AGM 2006 will probably be the most contentious and crucial in Napo's history. The parliamentary Bill which is expected to abolish the Probation Service and introduce competition and contestability will be a focal point. The disastrous state of CAF/CASS funding will also be at the centre of debate.

Speakers currently invited include Baroness Scotland, Probation Minister (tbc); CAF/CASS Minister (tbc); Dominic Grieve, Conservative Shadow Attorney General (tbc); Nick Clegg MP, Liberal Democrat Shadow Home Secretary; Helen Edwards, NOMS Chief Executive; Roger Hill, Director of Probation; Marin Wargent, PBA Chief Executive.

Including CAF/CASS section AGM 11-1pm Friday 6 October.

On the fringe

There will be a variety of fringe events at this year's AGM including a major debate on 'The Future of Probation Training'; and a meeting on 'Political Campaigning', with guest speakers John McDonnell MP and Jamie Doward from the Observer. There will also be meetings on health and safety, professional and trade union issues as well as events organised by LAGIP, ABPO, Women in Napo and the National Disabled Staff Support Network.

Bring friends and family – Guests welcome, free crèche.

Register now

Members are urged to register without delay. Registration fees are £15 before 15 September (£5 for TPOs, unemployed and retired members). Late registration after this date will cost £35 for all categories of member and guests.

Provisional programme and registration forms from info@napo.org.uk or 020 7223 4887. Download a form or register online www.napo.org.uk.

Stronger Together Napo's Conference and AGM

6-8 October 2006

Devonshire Park Centre, Eastbourne

**Register online:
www.napo.org.uk**

