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NOMS and the army



In a meeting between the Home Secretary and NOMS officials at the beginning of the summer, John Reid instructed staff to ‘think outside the box’ when targeting young offenders. He said he was keen about looking at involving the army to provide structures for young people’s lives and asked for a briefing paper on its feasibility.

The Home Secretary also said he was very interested in exploring ways of increasing the visibility of unpaid work, for example through uniforms. Unpaid work would have to be portrayed as ‘penance and contrition’ and be generally seen as paying back to the community.

As far as the prison population was concerned, John Reid added that he absolutely agreed that the most serious and dangerous offenders should be imprisoned and that this should be the approach. He said that prison protects the public, was a

deterrent, punishes, and was a chance to rehabilitate.

In the minutes of the meeting the Home Secretary is noted as agreeing with the principle of end to end offender management, but wanted Ministers to look at the structures again to ensure that they were ‘fit for purpose’. He said he was not entirely convinced of the regional basis of NOMS, and his preference was for linear line management, for example one person in charge of women’s prisons, one person in charge of foreign nationals, etc.

The Home Secretary also asked officials why the Home Office could not just commission from the centre rather than regionally. It was explained that ROMs worked with local authorities and offending patterns differed between regions. John Reid said he would give this further thought. If there were efficiency reasons for a regional approach then he would

understand this, as his principle was ‘everything must go to the front line.’

The minutes of the meeting also confirm that no final decision would be made on a NOMS Bill in isolation from the rest of the legislative programme.

Harry Fletcher

In this Napo News Health & Safety Handbook

Overcrowded offices, high temperatures and computer work are just some of the problems of a poor working environment that are tackled in this booklet. Members can check on minimum legal standards, and NPS and CAF/CASS policy standards to see if their workplaces comply, and there is guidance on what to do if they don’t.

Keep your copy to hand at work – you never know when you might need it.

Contestability prospectus published

In August, the Government published its long awaited prospectus on how privatisation would be introduced into the provision of probation services. 'Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships' contains a whole range of unproven assertions.

In the forward the Home Secretary argues: '... we need to harness the dynamism of as wide a range of clients as possible from the private, voluntary and public sectors to ensure that offender services are only delivered by those who show they can do the best job'. The paper is silent on how this is to be achieved.

The document claims that the introduction of privatisation into the Prison Service has improved standards. In fact, successive reports have shown that this is not proved. The Home Secretary notes that less than 5 per cent of the budget is currently spent outside the Probation Service. He argues that performance testing in prison contracts has had 'a major effect on driving up standards across the custodial sentence', but again offers no proof. He wants this, non-proven, approach to be adopted by the Probation Service.

In the absence of legislation he is requiring that this year and next Probation Areas will, on a voluntary basis, double and then double again the proportion of services they contract out. From April 2008, following legislation, they will go further and open up to competition a much larger proportion of the interventions they provide - up to £250 million of services a year. He controversially

adds that this will include unpaid work.

John Reid also says 'where a whole probation area is failing to deliver expected levels of performance we plan to put the whole offender management function out to competition'.

He argues also that he values the public sector, and that it will have a continuing role, but adds that everything must be challenged. He states that there is only one future for probation services and that is a mixed economy - and then says he is going to consult on the proposals!

The paper was not press released and so there is unlikely to be much public debate in the newspapers. However, Napo's central assertion will be 'where's the business case?'

In a message to staff, Roger Hill, notes that the purpose is to open discussion with prospective providers. He confirms an Act of Parliament is needed, but says that the service will be expected to contract out and build on the start that has been made during the current year. Hill continues to believe that the NPS will remain the dominant

supplier for all services for offenders in the community. He also believes that public protection and performance are the biggest priorities for the service.

Roger Hill tells staff to note that the paper, as opposed to the forward Napo assumes, is laden with language such as collaboration, alliances, joint ventures and partnerships. Nevertheless, the whole proposals is a threat and Napo, over the coming weeks, will be campaigning to oppose the introduction of any form of forced competition and demanding that business cases and proof be produced to show that the proposals will have the benefits that are claimed.

Harry Fletcher



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New parliamentary briefings

Napo presented two briefings to the Justice Unions Parliamentary Group, and to Probation Minister, Gerry Sutcliffe, in July. Both of these: *Supervision In The Community: An Alternative Approach* (BRF 15-06) and *Reducing the Prison Population* (BRF 16-06) are available on the Napo website or by emailing kfalcon@napo.org.uk.

Supervision in the Community argues that there is a positive alternative to NOMS that is being trailed in Scotland.

A plan for a single corrections agency in Scotland, similar to the one for England and Wales, was published in the Labour Manifesto for the 2003 Scottish Parliament elections. However, following widespread opposition during the consultation stage, the idea was dropped. Instead the Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2005 was introduced. The main clauses of the Act place a duty on the criminal justice agencies in local government to co-ordinate with the Scottish Prison Service to share information, to prepare and submit annual

plans and to involve others in planning new Community Justice Authorities. It also legislates to allow partners to be consulted on area plans and is based on partnership rather than market testing or contestability.

The briefing concludes, 'In Napo's view, the changes underway in Scotland have been driven by a concern to increase the effectiveness of all services in reducing re-offending, but in England there is a real risk that structural changes based on the creation of a purchaser provider split and competition will be counterproductive, overly bureaucratic and will not have the impact that the Government desires'.

Reducing the Prison Population argues that it is possible to reduce the prison population significantly without leaving the Government open to the accusation that it has become soft on law and order.

By mid-August the prison population exceeded 79,000 for the first time and it

is probable that it will increase to beyond 80,000 during the course of this year.

In the briefing, Napo recognises that any strategy to reduce the prison population has to command public confidence, but says it believes steps could be taken to address the problem. It looks specifically at such areas as short-term sentences, remand and recalls.

It concludes: 'a strategy that involves the diversion of short-term prisoners, a review of the Bail Act; and greater discretion where decisions on recall and breach have to be made, could reduce the prison population by 10,000 or more. In the absence of a significant prison building programme greater use of community resources would be seen to be the only way forward. It is, however, imperative that the Probation Service is adequately resourced to deal with any increase in workload, and that there is full consultation with relevant trade unions before any strategy is embarked on'.

Pensions Latest

The Regulations governing the LGPS in England and Wales have now been amended to extend protections for scheme members who might otherwise lose out as a result of the removal of the Rule of 85.

The Regulations will mean that:

- The effective date of removal of the Rule of 85 for existing scheme members as of 30 September 2006 will be 1 April 2008. (The original proposal was to remove the Rule of 85 from 1 October 2006). When the Rule of 85 ceases, existing members' accrued pension benefits will be fully protected for life. This applies to both active and deferred members.
- The protection for existing Scheme members will be extended until 31 March 2016. (The original proposal was only until 31 March 2013. This gives full protection for active members at 30 September 2006 who would qualify for the Rule of 85 and be over age 60 by 31 March 2016.

- Partial protection for active members at 30 September 2006 who would qualify for the Rule of 85 and be over age 60 by 31 March 2020. This partial protection means that instead of the normal actuarial reduction only a proportion will be applied and only to the service after 1 April 2008.

The DCLG – the government department responsible for the LGPS formerly known as the ODPM – has launched a consultation document 'Where Next?', outlining options for the new LGPS for England and Wales that is to be introduced in April 2008. The consultation includes four options for the basis of the new LGPS and a common package of changes that would apply in any structure.

The common package includes: increased death in service benefits from two to three times salary; extension of the provision of partners' pensions to include cohabiting

partners as well as married couples and civil partnerships; two tier ill health pension provision; additional flexible retirement provisions and new early retirement arrangements.

The Trade Union Side has considered 'Where Next?' and have put forward preferred options for the 'new look' scheme. The main elements of this are:

- A final salary scheme.
- An accrual rate of 1/60th, rather than 1/80th plus 3/80ths lump sum as at present, with the option to commute up to 25% of the pension as a lump sum.
- Significantly reduced actuarial factors for those who retire before their normal retirement age.
- An acceptable level of employer contributions.
- A variable contribution to be fairer to the low paid.

The internal consultation on 'Where Next?' runs until 29 September 2006. The statutory consultation on specific new-look LGPS proposals would then take place from November 2006 to February 2007, with Regulations made and laid by April 2007.

The Trade Union Side will continue to press for improved protection for existing members and improvements for all scheme members from April 2008.

There will be a pensions fringe meeting at the AGM. A one-day Seminar for Branch and CAF/CASS Section reps is planned for the autumn, to inform the discussions on the acceptability of the final package that will be known once the statutory consultation is published.

Pete Bowyer

Recalls

Napo remains concerned that prisoners and those on community penalty and HDC are being recalled to custody for technical breaches. Napo has argued in briefing material (see page 2) that if professional discretion was returned to staff it would greatly relieve prison overcrowding.

Home Office statistics show that of those recalled serving between one and four years, 60 per cent were because of technical breaches. Of those given a sentence of four years or more, only 8 per cent were recalled for re-offending.

There are also concerns about HDC. One member of Napo in Eastern England believes that in two recent cases where

there was good evidence that the person had been at home they were nevertheless arrested and detained. The member noted there was no possibility of the Probation Service intervening to stop the arrest as the order went straight from the monitoring company to the police. The system is criticised as being purely bureaucratic. It appears that the private company does have the power to order imprisonment without judicial safeguards.

Napo is keen to collect examples of recalls where staff believe that discretion would have been more purposeful. Case stories should be sent to hfletcher@napo.org.uk.

Harry Fletcher





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Since Napo News was last published, there have been a number of major announcements and reports produced by Home Office Ministers, on structures, policy and privatisation:

Structures

In July, a Home Office Action plan 'From Improvement to Transformation' was published outlining that NOMS was to go through yet another restructuring, with:

- the post of National Offender Manager, to disappear;
- the introduction of four new directorates: Commissioning and Partnerships, Performance and Improvement, Corporate Services and Offender, Law and Sentencing Policy, in addition to the Directorates of Health and Offender Partnerships and of the Change Programme;
- NOMS Head office to reduce by half by 2010, and to focus on commissioning services;
- ROMs to work more closely with the regional Government Offices.
- A new performance framework for the Probation Service to be agreed by December 2006;
- A new performance framework and operating model for NOMS to be drafted by December 2006 and agreed by April 2007.

For the Probation Service, there will continue to be a Director of Probation 'for a period of time', but it would seem certain that the Director post and the NPD would disappear as and when the legislation on Probation Trusts comes in. The Government has reaffirmed its commitment to legislate, but the timetable for bringing that legislation forward remains unclear.

Policy

Also in July, and on the same day that the Government announced that Custody Plus would not go ahead in November,

Ministers published their policy paper: 'Rebalancing the criminal justice system in favour of the law abiding majority.'

It is a very strange document talking 'tough' as much as it can, and implying support for the 'prison works' philosophy, but in other areas supporting the previous Five Year Plan which is based on getting prison numbers down, and rebalancing sentencing.

Issues particularly relevant to the Probation Service include:

- The work of the North Liverpool Community Justice Centre, which involves Merseyside Probation Area, to be extended.
- Community Payback to be expanded.
- PO and drug interventions programmes to be combined.
- Probation resources and expertise to be concentrated on those who most need them.
- MAPPA to be improved, with 'stringent' case review procedures, and the assessment and management of those who have committed violent and sexual offences to be subject to national standards.
- A National Enforcement Service to 'clamp down on those who do not pay fines or comply with court orders'.
- The Home Office to consult on giving probation staff the power to vary punishments, depending on behaviour, without having to go back to court.

Privatisation

In August, 'Improving Prison and Probation Services: Public Value Partnerships' was published. This paper, previously referred to as the 'contestability prospectus', and its proposals for introducing a 5 per cent target for Probation Boards to spend on sub-contracting in 2006/7 and 10 per cent in 2007/8, is summarised in on page 2 of this Napo News.

This paper makes it clear that targets will be used to bring in other providers in advance of legislation. It is implicitly saying that targets will be used to effectively privatise some of our work, specifically interventions including unpaid work, some programmes and victim contact work, even if the Government never gets the legislation they want. The threat of privatisation of the rest of probation work, is left hanging in the air, in the context of a probation trust failing a performance test.

The paper makes for particularly depressing reading, and seems mainly concerned with how bits of the Probation Service can be broken off to allow others to make a profit at our expense. The paper is simply untruthful in claiming that reports such as the NAO report show that competition has improved standards in prisons. It also sinks

to the level of quoting the CBI as justifying that claim.

In some ways, we have been looking at worse scenarios for the Service over the past two and half years. For all the problems ahead, it at least looks as if a Probation Service will remain. There also has to be real doubts on whether the planned legislation will ever be realised.

So while it is clear that our campaigning to date has made an impact, we clearly can't be complacent. We will need to continue to campaign against these plans and any attempt to privatise probation work and probation jobs.

TPOs

A current issue that rightly concerns many TPOs is whether they will get a job as a PO when they qualify, as a result of budgetary pressures. The NPD has confirmed that this year, Areas would be fined £40,000 if they did not employ their TPOs. We are concerned that some Areas are using our pay settlement as an excuse to cut back on posts. The reality is that until Job Evaluation is completed, Areas will not know their full costs. At the current time there is no reason why the costs should exceed the amount that Areas were told to budget for.

Napo will continue to try and exert pressure locally and nationally to ensure that all TPOs get PO jobs when they qualify.

Another issue for TPOs which we are currently battling on is TPO pay. We hope to have a formal offer that we can put to members shortly, but we are in difficult negotiations with the NPD at the time of writing.

AGM

By the time this Napo News reaches members, AGM will be only a few weeks away - October 6, 7 and 8 at Eastbourne. Inside this Napo News you will also have a copy of the motions due to be debated this year, and a ballot form for determining the running order of motions at AGM.

Please take part in the ballot, whether or not you can attend AGM, and if at all possible come along to AGM.

The CAF/CASS Section will also be holding its Section AGM immediately before the full AGM on October 6.

Napo has made a big impact in both the Probation Service and CAF/CASS over the past year. AGM is your opportunity to shape that impact, and shape Napo policies, and to show our employers and ministers that we are united in defending our jobs and our Services.

Judy McKnight

Rebalancing the Criminal Justice System

On 20 July the Home Secretary published a White Paper on the Government's plans to rebalance the criminal justice system in favour of victims and the law abiding majority.

In the spring the Government published its five year strategy for protecting the public. The strategy starts from the premise that the Government needs our prison and probation system to work in a far better way with a wide range of partners. Rebalancing the justice system is said to build on that initiative. The Government stresses that more time and effort should be put in to work with repeat offenders and on serious and violent crime. Accordingly, the Home Office will be consulting with stakeholders on how sentencing can be made clearer and whether there should be more discretion for the courts.

The Government is also proposing measures to enforce sentences effectively, with robust measures to make sure people comply with court orders, particularly for those who breach bail. It is unclear what these measures will be.

Prison places

Where the courts sentence or remand an offender to custody the Home Office recognises it needs extra prison capacity. It is, therefore, putting in train a programme to deliver an extra 8,000 prison places. It is stated that this will be done through both expanding existing prisons and building new jails. The document does not say where the money will come from.

Predictably, the Home Office also states that it will deport more foreign prisoners by increasing transfer arrangements and by removing them earlier in their sentence.

CBI losing patience

There is increasing evidence that the private sector is losing patience with the Home Office over the failure to deliver a clear message on the role of business in corrections policy. In early July the CBI went as far as producing a report which said the Government had to do more to drive reform to reduce re-offending.

In a press statement it said: 'the Government must do more to reduce re-offending and crime by making greater use of competition in offender management.'

It added: 'the pace of reform in the criminal justice system should be stepped up and the Home Office should publish its long awaited framework on how diversity of provision will be used to combat re-offending'.

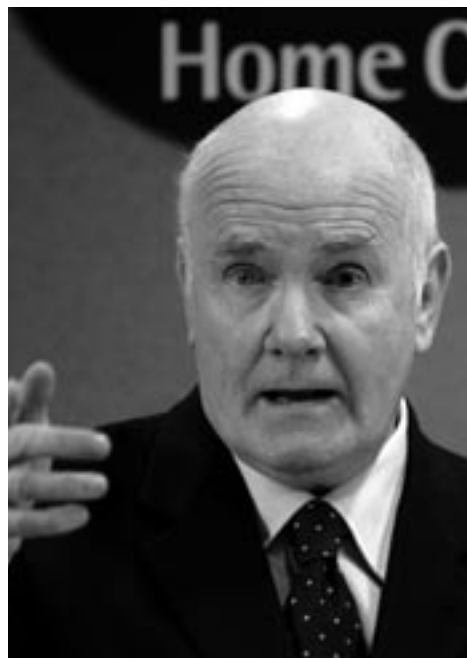
The report of the business lobby group - 'Protecting the Public: Partnership

The paper acknowledges that better ways are needed of dealing with less serious offenders with tough community sentences. It is said that the Home Office will work with the Lord Chief Justice and judges to find ways to ensure that probation resources are targeted at those who most need them, and that significantly more minor offenders are fined rather than given low level community sentences, which will save report time.

Community Justice

The paper confirms what Napo has been saying for several months now, that custody plus will not be introduced in the autumn. Indeed, it may be that the measure will never be implemented.

It is also proposed that more will be done to



develop community justice and restorative justice initiatives, in particular expanding unpaid work beyond the 5 million hours currently completed, and to make the work more visible. It is acknowledged that more needs doing to improve MAPPA arrangements, including stringent case review procedures, to make sure that cases are dealt with consistently and that risk assessment is carried out effectively. It also restates the commitment to increasing the range of partners involved in supervision and says again that the Home Office will bring in expertise from the private and voluntary sector to drive up 'the quality and performance of community punishment'. However, no date has yet been fixed for the introduction of the NOMS Bill.

Finally, the paper notes that measures will be introduced to improve performance in probation. As a priority, the Home Office will be focussing on those Probation Boards who are not performing well. They have already required 6 Boards to provide immediate improvement plans to ensure measurable progress by March 2007.

Home Office Reorganisation

The day before the publication of Rebalancing Justice, the Home Office published its reform plan. In brief the main points were:

- All parts of the Home Office to have a stronger focus on protecting the public.
- Changes to strengthen leadership.
- Reshaping our structure and organisation, including IND to become an executive agency of the Home Office.
- A shift in resources and responsibilities to frontline services and operations.
- A reform programme with seven strands: seeing transformation in our skills, processes and system, data, risk management, project and programme management, stakeholder relations and in the way we match resources to priorities.

In addition the Home Secretary stated that the number of Home Office employees would be reduced from 9,000 to 5,000 over the next 5 to 6 years and that the number of employees at NOMS would fall by half from the current 1,600 by 2007/8. It was not made clear how this would happen.

In a press statement, Napo said: 'The Criminal Justice System was last fundamentally revised in 2003. Many of those changes were implemented in April 2005. The system does not need yet more legislative changes, it needs a period of stability... Rather than building yet more prison places the Home Secretary should attempt to divert some of the 54,000 individuals jailed each year for 6 months or less on to community sentences.'

Harry Fletcher

in Offender Management' - says that where new providers from the business and voluntary sector have been brought in there has been considerable success. However, recent mixed messages from the Government on this means the opportunity to build on this is in danger of being lost. Just what this success has been is not quantified in the news release.

The report criticises the Home Office and says that, although the Carter Report says that steps must be taken to address failures within the prison and probation systems, and that NOMS was set up to achieve this, little progress has actually been made. Indeed, if rumours persist, many private sector organisations may cease to see 'corrections' as a lucrative source of profit and look elsewhere.

Harry Fletcher

Pay

It is disappointing that at the time of writing we still have no concrete developments in relation to the annual pay round. CAFCASS is currently working on new ideas to put to us and we understand that we should be hearing its proposals any time now. The stated intention is to ensure that when the remit is formally submitted, it will be with a greater level of confidence that both the unions and the sponsoring department may consider it worth serious thought. Let's hope so. CAFCASS is aware that we expect something concrete very soon, as we do not want members to be waiting until January for their pay increase again this year

As previously reported, the strategic pay review appears to have stalled, with little apparent progress since the work on job evaluation was undertaken earlier in the summer. We continue to hear worrying stories from a growing number of regions about the increasing difficulty in recruiting appropriately experienced FCAs.

Management Restructuring And New Jobs

In the last edition I drew attention to our growing concern about failure to properly negotiate with the Trade Unions over some key issues, particularly in relation to the rush towards developing new jobs. There have been some fairly robust exchanges, particularly with the Chief Executive and we have also shared our concerns with Board members during one of our regular meetings.

Ultimately, although we have been teetering on the edge of lodging a formal dispute, after discussions with Unison colleagues we agreed we would hold back at this stage. AGM in October will provide a good opportunity to discuss these difficulties more widely with membership and consider any future position. Jane Booth, has agreed to take part in a panel session with myself at conference, which should be a good opportunity for those attending to ask questions and give views on the full range of negotiating issues.

National Standards

If you haven't read these yet then do. You may find yourself surprised, possibly even critical, both in terms of the content, but also the format. Napo is preparing a formal response, which will be circulated to all members and it is fair to say that we are disappointed at the quality, concerned as to whether there is a meaningful consultation (given that training and implementation is already being planned), and worried about some of the practice assumptions being put forward. Look at each standard and ask yourself... 'how would a lay person know if I had met this standard?'... 'is this within my power to achieve?' Time and again, the

answer is likely to be 'I don't know' and 'no'. My personal favourite is being required to be 'passionate' – I'm looking forward to the objective assessment of that one.

We know that CAFCASS' practice has been coming under criticism, particularly in recent inspections, but we are going to need something clearer and more sophisticated than this as a tool if we need to improve practice.

Negotiating agenda

So, there appears to be no slowing down of the negotiating agenda. CAFCASS is showing signs of being an organisation in a constant state of change. See you at the AGM.

Sian Griffiths
National Vice Chair



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Editor, Family Court Journal

Napo is seeking to appoint an Editor for its Family Court Journal which is published twice a year.

The Editor will be responsible for all editorial functions involved in producing the Journal including commissioning articles and other contributions, chairing and administering Editorial Board meetings and publicising the Journal at Napo's AGM. The Editor will also be responsible for co-ordinating the organisation of Napo's annual Family Court Conference each February.

The job attracts a £4,500 pa honorarium.

Full details of the job are contained in the application pack which is available from Keith Waldron, Napo, 4 Chivalry Road, London SW11 1HT (tel 020 7223 4887, email kwaldron@napo.org.uk). Further information can be supplied by Sian Griffiths, Napo's CAFCASS Vice Chair via sgriffiths@napo.org.uk,

The closing date for applications is Friday 13 October and interviews will be held at the end of October 2006.

Learning at work – in the hotseat

Napo Assistant General Secretary, Cordell Pillay, was 'in the hot seat' on the TUC 'Unionlearn' website last month. Cordell answered questions on what Napo is doing to support learning at work and why she became a Skills for Life Advocate. An extract is printed below. You can access the site on www.unionlearn.org.uk

1. Why did you sign up to become a Skills for Life advocate and why do you feel literacy and numeracy skills are important.

I became a Skills for life Advocate because I am committed to learning and the acquisition, and sharing of knowledge. My life experience has shown me that knowledge is power and therefore acquiring basic literacy, numeracy and language is one's 'passport' to self-empowerment. Learning provides access to resources and opportunities enabling individuals to progress in everyday life and to develop professionally. I want to encourage, support and mentor those who for whatever reason have been denied access and the opportunity to learn.

2. What have you been doing to move the learning at work agenda forward in your union?

Napo has been at the forefront of the learning agenda for many years, and has worked with national training organisations and colleges to foster learning and development. In 1998 Napo accessed funds from the ULF to develop the Certificate in Community Justice in partnership with employers, to give members in the Community justice sector access to learning and a recognised qualification. We are now embarking on a comprehensive programme to recruit and train ULRs to provide support and create opportunities for individuals working in Probation and CAFCASS.

We are expanding the levels and types of courses we provide, and working with higher and further providers to accredit courses in order to ensure equality of access and transferability.

3. What impact has learning at work had upon your members?

Learning and development has always had a high profile within Napo. However, since our work in learning and development has become one of partnership with employers, with a clear focus on professional development and qualification, members' interest has blossomed with individuals showing greater attention to local and national training initiatives; accessing

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courses, and, in becoming members of Napo's national Training Committee.

Employees within Probation and CAF/CASS continue to be attracted to Napo because of our commitment to learning and personal and professional development. All members receive a copy of our annual training strategy. This provides an evaluation of courses, how learning has been put into practice and diversity monitoring information.

4. What is next for your union and your members?

To have 48 ULRs fully trained and competent in all areas of training and development by June 2006 with learning

agreements in all Probation and CAF/CASS regions. To ensure ULRs become an integral part of probation and CAF/CASS learning and development structure, contributing to training needs analysis and the annual training strategy, and to continue to work with Skills for Justice to develop appropriate qualifications.

5. What would you like to see being done to move the learning at work revolution on to the next level?

I want learning to become a central focus within workplaces at all levels and to see it is maintained regardless of the political or financial climate. I would like to see greater publicity of the value of ULRs by Sector Skill Councils in order to raise the status of ULRs.



Cordell in the hot seat.

Are you interested in becoming an ULR?

There are approximately 12,000 Union Learning Reps (ULRs) across all trade unions. During 2005 alone they provided advice and guidance to 67,000 trade union members on issues connected to their education, training and professional development needs. ULRs secure a new focus on learning and skills in the workplace.

The primary role of the ULR is to negotiate change with the employer around training and development opportunities and ensure that members can access information, advice and guidance on these and other learning opportunities.

Napo network

In partnership with the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU), and with finance from the Union Learning Fund, Napo is embarking on its first round of identifying and training its own network of ULRs.

In order to ensure that Napo ULRs are best

placed to increase professional development opportunities for members and ensure fair and equal access to these, it is proposed that they are strategically linked to regional consortia and probation areas.

During 2006 and 2007, Napo will be offering members and existing reps, the opportunity to become accredited ULRs. ULRs will become part of a national network that will receive on-going support and advice from the union centrally, and also GFTU and Unionlearn, the learning and education arm of the TUC.

Given the on-going fundamental change to the Probation Service, the Napo ULRs will come at a vitally important time in ensuring that the learning and development needs of members remains a central focus within this change.

Training for ULRs

There will be two training courses for ULRs,

both at Northern College, Barnsley.

- 23-25 October 2006
- 8-10 March 2007

The main purposes of the training is to:

- Understand how best to identify individual and group learning goals.
- Develop the agenda for learning and development in Probation and CAF/CASS.
- Identify how best to negotiate change on training issues with the employer.

Training for Napo ULRs will also cover issues around:

- The structure for ULRs in Probation and CAF/CASS.
- Understanding the work of Probation Service assessment centres.
- Understanding barriers to learning, e.g. Skills for Life.

Cordell Pillay

To apply to enrol on one of the ULR courses and to receive further details, please complete and return the form below to Jeanie Ah-Fong, Napo, 4 Chivalry Road, London SW11 1HT.

Name

Address

Post Code

Napo membership number

Email

Disabled Staff Conference

The National Disabled Staff Support Network Conference will be held on Thursday 30 November and Friday 1 December 2006 at the Swanick Centre, Alfreton, Derbyshire.

The theme will be 'Disability Equality - Beyond Compliance'. The timing could not be bettered because by 4 December 2006 all Areas will have to publish their Disability Equality Schemes in line with the DDA legislation 2005 - The Public Duty to Promote Disability Equality. The legislation requires that Areas produce robust evidence of 'the genuine and influential involvement (not mere consultation) of disabled people' so let your voice and views be heard.

Speakers

The Minister, Gerry Sutcliffe has agreed to

speaking, as has Richard Cullen, Head of NPD Human Resources. An invitation has also gone out to Helen Edwards from NOMS.

The conference will also see the election of officers and Regional Coordinators. If you are interested in any of these posts, CAF/CASS and Probation colleagues will need to discuss this with their managers, as you need to have your Area's permission.

For further information about posts contact the Chair David Quarby on quarby@ntlworld.com or the Secretary Desiree Leete on Desiree.Leete@devon-cornwall.probabtion.gsi.gov.uk

Details of the application process will appear in the next Napo News and in the NDSSN newsletter on EPIC

Foreign national prisoners – continued concern

The Government's treatment of foreign nationals in British jails seems to go from one extreme to the other. This spring it became apparent that probably thousands of foreign nationals, who may have been subject to deportation proceedings, were released by the Prison Service because they had come to the end of their sentence. The problem essentially was that the Immigration and Nationality Department did not have sufficient staff to process applications for deportation quickly enough.

In 2002/3 a crisis occurred in the Immigration Courts, when it was discovered that appeals were coming in at the rate of 9,000 a month but could only be heard at the rate of 6,000 a month. Accordingly, staff were moved out of the Immigration/ Deportation section to process asylum appeals. As a consequence the IND were unable to process the prisoner cases and therefore they had to be released. It became publicly apparent in April 2006 that prisoners, who should have been deported were being released into the community, and this finally led to the downfall of Home Secretary, Charles Clarke. In June 2006 around 300 staff were moved out of Appeals to deal with foreign nationals facing deportation proceedings in jails. The Immigration Courts are now experiencing delay, non-production of

prisoners and protracted adjournments.

In prisons, the situation is now at another extreme. Napo understands that hundreds of foreign nationals have now passed their release date and are being held on immigration warrants pending the deportation paperwork being processed. Members report around 20 prisoners are being held back at Liverpool prison and at least that number at Belmarsh. Many have now been in prison for at least 2 months beyond their release date. They include individuals jailed for fine default. One Italian national was jailed for 42 days for not paying fines and is still inside. Another from the Republic of Ireland was jailed for 30 days and is also still awaiting release.

Prison staff report that individuals with British passports are being held beyond their release date because they have 'foreign sounding' names. One, called Fernando, who is of Spanish origin, is being held despite the fact that he is a British national. Others with British passports are being held pending deportation to Somalia and other African states. Staff also report that access to telephones and legal advice is very poor and that the system is struggling to cope.

Other examples received include foreign nationals whose orders terminated on

6 May 2006, 25 July 2006 and 30 June 2006, who are all still being held on Immigration Warrants. Probation officers believe that most of them will be held until the autumn before the system can cope.

Other staff have reported that they are spending huge amounts of time chasing up cases of foreign nationals to ascertain whether they have been released or deported. One particular case which has arisen is of an Italian who was due to be released on 10 May, who was actually held until 28 June, and for reasons that are totally unclear was deported to Romania.

In a press statement, Napo, said: 'The situation has gone from one extreme to the other. Foreign nationals are now being held months past their release date, including some who are clearly British but have foreign sounding names. The log-jam of foreign nationals is making prison overcrowding even worse.'

If any Napo members have further stories about the treatment of foreign nationals in jails in England and Wales, please send details at hfletcher@napo.org.uk.

Harry Fletcher

On the fringe

As ever, Napo will be continuing to be involved with the Prison Officers Association in organising fringe meetings at the 3 main Party conferences. This year the theme will be *Social Justice – Safer Streets: Is there a future for British Justice*. In a new venture all meetings will be sponsored and run in collaboration with the New Statesman.

Details of events are as follows:

Liberal Democrats

**Hilton Metropole Hotel, Brighton
1.00pm, Tuesday 19 September**

Platform: Baroness Linklater; Lynn Featherstone MP; Vicky Borroughs, Napo; Colin Moses, POA.

Labour

**Midland Hotel, Manchester
1.00pm, Tuesday 26 September**

Platform: Gerry Sutcliffe, Justice Minister; Judy McKnight, Napo; Colin Moses, POA, Martin Bright, New Statesman.

Conservatives

**Highcliff Marriott Hotel, Bournemouth
1.00pm, Monday, 2 October**

Platform: Baroness Anelay; James Clappison (tbc); Harry Fletcher, Napo; Colin Moses, POA, Martin Bright, New Statesman.

Unfortunately meetings will not be open to members unless they are already going to the conferences as they are in the secure area.

World Female Prisoner Numbers

The first ever comparative world female prisoner numbers report was published by the International Centre for Prison Studies during August. The study shows that more than half a million women and girls are held in prison around the world, with a third of the women held in the USA and a third in China. In addition there are 55,500 in Russia and 28,500 in Thailand.

The Report notes that female prisoners generally constitute between 2 and 9 per cent of the total prison population. A total of 4,392 women are locked up in England and Wales, which constitutes 5.7 per cent of the total prison population. This is higher than Scotland or Northern Ireland and well above the European average.

The study also reveals that there are continental variations in the number of women and girls within the prison population. They constitute a smaller percentage of the total in Africa at

2.7 per cent. America is 5.3 and Asia 5.4 respectively. The average level in Europe is 4.4 per cent.

Baroness Corston, formerly a MP for Bristol, has been commissioned by the Government to carry out a review of the treatment of women in the criminal justice system. Napo will be giving evidence to her in November and would welcome contributions and comments from members over the next month or so. If you are interested in helping contact hfletcher@napo.org.uk,

Harry Fletcher



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The risks of lone working

Motions requesting the National Probation Directorate to abandon the unsafe practice of lone-working with Unpaid Work groups have become a feature of recent Napo AGMs.

Following the 2005 AGM Napo has tried unsuccessfully to persuade the national Health and Safety Forum to agree that double cover for all national Probation Service Unpaid Work projects should be the minimum safety standard. The employers have demurred, saying it is down to individual risk assessment to determine what cover is needed. Meanwhile many Probation Areas have been given the go ahead by the NPD to ignore the one to six ratio, and numbers in work groups have been growing. In many cases the increase has been introduced without a further risk assessment, demonstrating clearly that safety is not the first priority.

At the same time double cover has been agreed in that other area of potential high risk, Approved Premises. However, staff in Unpaid Work can be just as exposed and vulnerable to the same unpredictable risk situations. This has been highlighted

by a shooting at a Merseyside project and by regular 'near miss' incidents at projects around the country.

At a time when we are already aware of under-reporting of incidents, it is deplorable that our employers are not prepared to support staff safety with the minimum requirement of two staff on Unpaid Work projects.

Napo's Health and Safety Committee has taken steps to mandate the Negotiating Committee, via the NEC, to make a formal claim to force the issue with the employers through the NNC. To support this, all members who work in Unpaid Work are urged to ensure that they complete incident/accident forms for all events (including those which were potentially dangerous) and for any occasion when they are expected to take out a group single-handed. These reports should be copied to the branch safety reps and branches should then collate and forward it to Chivalry Road.

Tim Wilson
Health and Safety Committee

Prisons hit new record high

The prison population hit 79,000 for the first time ever during mid-August. At the same time as the Home Office released the figures, a report from the Prison Reform Trust noted that half the prisons in England and Wales were officially overcrowded. Indeed, one in five jails, the Trust reported, was forced to exceed its safe overcrowding limit.

The report notes that 80 of the 142 prisons are over the certified normal accommodation. In addition opportunities for constructive activity had become very limited. Over 17,000 prisoners are held two to a cell built for one. The current prison population includes over 11,000 young people under 21, of whom 2,729 are children under 18.

According to the latest Home Office figures, 27 prisons were over their safe overcrowding limit during July. They were: Belmarsh, Birmingham, Blunderston, Brixton, Bristol, Bullingdon, Camp Hill,

Cardiff, Chelmsford, Cookham Wood, Doncaster, Down View, Glen Parva, Guys Marsh, Holme House, Leeds, Parc, Parkhurst, Pentonville, Ranby, Risley, Shrewsbury, Stafford, Swansea, Winchester, and Woodhill.

Harry Fletcher



Access To Work

There has been a great deal of confusion created recently all over the country due to the Government decision to withdraw Access To Work funding from central government departments from the 1 October 2006.

John Hutton had referred to this in his speech at the TUC Disability conference and it initiated a cry of alarm from disabled people as he talked about the £60 million ATW spend, which was largely going to the public sector, being transferred to the private sector, in an attempt to get the private sector to employ more disabled staff.

Clarification has been sought and a spokesperson from the Department for Work and Pensions has stated that the withdrawal of funding only relates to central government departments. However, the confusion has continued due to staff at Job Centre Plus offices thinking that the National Probation Service is a central government department. A number of staff have been contacted in different areas of the country to inform them that their funding will be coming to an end.

This of course is not the case as probation staff are employed by Area Boards and are not civil servants. Anyone receiving funding who is told by ATW staff at the Job Centre Plus that their funding will cease from the 1 October should inform them of this fact and that the withdrawal of funding does not apply to our service.

The TUC have also written to John Hutton following his speech at the conference in May but are still awaiting a response.

David Quarmby
National Disabled Staff Support Network

Trade Union Organisation

PSO Forum

The latest meeting of the PSO Forum took place in July in London. There was a good attendance. This meeting was addressed by a representative of the Health and Safety Committee and there was a general discussion of a range of health and safety issues raised by members at the Forum. The PSO Forum Constitution had been approved by the May NEC and this provided the Forum with the opportunity to discuss three AGM motions at the meeting. All three were passed following debate and will be included on the order paper at this year's AGM.

The next Forum meeting takes place in Leeds in November. The date and venue will be confirmed in due course. There will also be a meeting for PSO members at AGM.

Jonathan Ledger

Branch Representatives Course

'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 on cgriffith@napo.org.uk or 020 7223 4887

The annual review of trade union course provision is taking place in September. Following that meeting the programme for 2007 will be made available, hopefully at AGM and by separate Branch Circular.

TUC LGBT Conference 2006

Shirley Anderson, Alexander Sinclair and myself attended the TUC conference for lesbian gay bi and trans trade unionists at the end of June. It was as lively and encouraging as ever.

Napo submitted a motion on contestability and privatisation. This motion correctly focused on the threat to LGBT people, but was the first motion for this conference which clearly stated that the threat of privatisation is a threat to all staff. Concern was expressed that those who will bid for our work are perhaps less likely to have policies and strategies on diversity. Within this it is a particular concern that faith groups who have discriminatory attitudes to LGBT people, both staff and users, may put in bids. Several delegates from public service unions spoke in favour of our motion and it was passed unanimously.

Tackling Harassment at Work was also an important issue. Unions need to ensure employers deal with this and that their officials are trained. It was believed 'Hate Crime' was under reported and legislation needs to be changed so that it is not left to the discretion of courts but is an offence in

itself. There were also motions about sexual health, better education in schools, and the lack of action on bullying.

The Conference welcomed the amendment in the House of Lords that includes goods and services as an area where LGB people are legally protected against discrimination. It will soon be illegal for hotels to refuse accommodation to gay couples for instance. However, there were concerns expressed that once again our trans colleagues' needs had been overlooked.

There were several workshops. One was on the need for LGBT matters to be returned to the responsibility of unions rather than employers controlling them by the use of staff support groups. Unions, however, need to gain the confidence of LGBT members

Napo brought an emergency motion about Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities. A member of Opus Dei, (a fundamentalist Catholic group) she has, despite being given several opportunities by journalists, nothing positive to say about LGBT

people. Yet she is the lead Minister on equality! The only debate on the motion was on how strongly we press her to make a commitment to our cause.

Much of the conference focused on the international situation. Despite our problems we are so much better off than our sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia the Middle East and Eastern Europe. It is clear from what we learnt that the problem is not about race but culture and historical background. The union movement needs to fight for the rights of those suffering oppression throughout the world.

Michael Lloyd



Delegates vote at this years TUC LGBT conference

Change of details form

Important: If any of your details have changed please fill out this form and return, free of charge, to Napo, FREEPOST LON10564, London SW11 1YZ or e-mail your new details to membership@Napo.org.uk

Name _____

Membership no. (eg M012345)* _____

New grade _____

New address _____

Postcode _____

Is this address your Work or Home address? (Please tick one)

Work telephone no. _____

Date effective from _____

* Your membership number can be found on the top right-hand corner of the address label on your envelope.

I have changed Probation Area

from _____

to _____

Date effective from: _____

I have left the Probation Service

I have left CAF/CASS

Date left: _____

Prison Officer Corruption

A report was leaked to the media on 31 July that claimed that there could be up to a thousand corrupt members of staff currently working in prisons. The study was undertaken by the Prison Service in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police.

In a message to staff Director General, Phil Wheatley, said, 'it would be naïve to think there aren't a small number of staff who are corrupt in a Service the size of ours but I am confident that the vast majority of staff are honest, hard working and professional.'

He told staff not to interpret the figure of over a thousand corrupt members of staff reported in the media as confirmed, they were an estimate that appears in the study.

In a press statement the Prison Reform Trust said: 'most prison staff do a good job in difficult circumstances, following just 8 weeks of basic training. However, the presence of even a small number of corrupt officers undermines their efforts as well as public trust'. The PRT note that there has been a high turnover of prison governors in the past five years and that the Prison

Service has high sickness levels among prison officers, with the average sickness rate for 2004/5 standing at 12.7 per cent. They also note that the turnover of staff in the seven PFI private prisons is much higher than the public sector.

Pentonville

In a separate development on 14 August, it was reported that 14 prison officers had been suspended in Pentonville following allegations of corruption, believed to be involving trafficking in mobile phones and cannabis and inappropriate relationships with prisoners. As a consequence Pentonville had to reduce its operational capacity by 116 to ensure that staffing ratios remained in tact. However, Colin Moses, the National Chair of the Prison Officers Association said more stringent vetting of prison officers was needed. He claimed that some of the problems were caused by a policy of local recruitment. He also called for an external police investigation into the allegations.

Harry Fletcher

Adverts

Private villa to rent in Bali

Set in tropical gardens, 500m from the beach, restaurants and coral reefs. Sleeps up to 4 people. Housekeeper included. Drivers service available for tours around Bali. Visit www.balibliss.com to see photographs! £200 per week

Call Lisa Bailey on 07891 784 737

Mont St Michel, Brittany

Three well-equipped stone cottages (sleeping 4, 4 & 7) in rural hamlet. Beaches, gardens, wildlife, walks, watersports, golf, cycling, tennis, riding. Close ferries and Ryanair flights.

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BASW Forensic Special Interest Group: Annual Study Day

Wednesday 18 October 2006

Venue: R.S. Hispaniola
Victoria Embankment, London

The Future Direction Of Forensic Mental Health Social Work And Probation

Speakers include: Nick Benefield Snr
Policy Adviser DSPD Unit
Don Brand Consultant, SCIE
Jackie Craissati Consultant Psychologist
Harry Fletcher Asst. Gen. Sec. Napo
Gwynne Jones GSCC

Cost: £90 including light sandwich lunch and beverages (£85 for BASW members)

Application form

Name

Name & address of organisation

Daytime telephone no

Details for invoice if any

Special dietary requirements:

Return form to: Pattie Ducie, c/o The Cottage, Ladesfield, Vulcan Close, Borstal Hill, Whitstable, Kent CT5 4LZ
Or e-mail to janet.pyne70@ntlworld.com

Vendee France

Three new gites, fully self-contained. Three mins from wine route, 40 mins from golden beach of Sables D'Olonnes. From £200 pw. B&B £40 per night. Plus special rates. Travel by ferry or fly to La Rochelle.

www.frenchescape.co.uk

Tel: 01622 609615 evenings.

Southern Spain

Three bed villa with private pool, Vinuela, Andalucia, Spain. Situated in the heart of a tiny village amidst an area of outstanding beauty. Malaga Airport 50 mins; beach Torre Del Mar 20 mins. From £250 p.w.

Contact Jenny Yates 07712 367705; e-mail

jennyates@ukonline.co.uk

La Manga del Mar Menor

Spain. Two bedroom, two bathroom apartment overlooking secluded beach. Two pools, tennis courts. Unspoilt traditional area on La Manga peninsular. Near golf courses, beaches, marinas. From £175pw.

Call Val Roberts 07990515780 or

valerie.rob@ntlworld.com

Alanya - Turkey

Ground floor 2-bedroomed apartment. Two bathrooms. Sleeps up to 6. Situated 500m from beachfront. Mountain and sea views. Gated complex with security, parking and communal pool. Shops, restaurants and bars nearby. £175-£250 per week.

e-mail: ron@parlok.co.uk

tel: 01524 831486 or 07921438534

East Yorkshire Coast

Stunning Grade II listed cottage with secluded garden in Hornsea. Next to the Mere, 10mins from beach and on the Trans Penine Trail. Many original features - cobbled walls, beams, open fire and close to local amenities.

Please telephone Tracy on 07739 580548

and visit our website on www.hornseacottage.co.uk

Northumberland Coast

Comfortable self contained spacious apartment. Grade II listed building close to beach. Sea views to Holy Island. Seabird sanctuaries nearby and hill walking. Three bed, sleeps up to eight. Child reductions

Phone 01670 516348 or email

dorothylater@hotmail.com

Would you like to take part in a useful piece of research? A PhD student needs probation officers to complete a brief questionnaire about The Practice of Interpreting. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. Please contact Nadia Hussein on nadiahussein@hotmail.com

Cumbria

3 bed-roomed house. Peaceful setting with rural views, 4 miles from Ullswater and 5 mins walk to the Rheged Centre with restaurants, cinema and play areas for children. Dogs welcome. Costs from £150 - £350.

Call Sue Holmes on 01794 522220

or email Romsay@tiscali.co.uk

Protaras, Southern Cyprus

New, quality, spacious 2 bedroom apartment, sleeps 6. Fully equipped kitchen, TV, DVD, communal pools, fully air conditioned, 10 minutes to beaches and all amenities, car park space. From £225 to £325 weekly. Available from April 2007.

Contact June on 07917401614 or email miss.

lati@virgin.net

Marbella – Costa Del Sol

Brand new ground floor apartment on a golf course. Sleeps four+. Two bathrooms. Gated complex with swimming pool, gardens and parking. Shops, restaurants and beach close by. £300-£450 per week.

Contact, tonypreskey@aol.com or

telephone 01604 407872.

La Manga Mar Menor

Spain. Sea front, three bedroom, two bathroom fully equipped apartment on unique Spanish peninsular at La Manga. Very restful location. From £175pw. Fly to Murcia close by.

www.la-manga-spain-co-uk

Tel: Margaret Fraser 01527 879446

NAPSAC Autumn Meet 2006

Helmsley Youth Hostel, North Yorkshire
12 to 15 October

A weekend fell-waliking in beautiful North York Moors

Contact: Peter Holden 01299250808 or

07958355514 peterjholden@hotmail.com

AGM 2006

Eastbourne

6-8 October 2006

Stronger Together

With so much going on this is one conference you won't want to miss.

Record attendance

We look set to have a record number of members at this year's AGM with registration already up 10 per cent on last year.

Conference events

Friday morning

Question Time?

Politicians from the three main Parties will debate the future of the criminal justice system in a Question Time style event. With panel members: Nick Clegg, Liberal Democrat shadow Home Secretary, Edward Garnier, Conservative Home Affairs spokesman; Neil Gerrard, Chair of the Justice Unions Parliamentary Group, and Judy McKnight, General Secretary of Napo.

CAFCASS Section AGM – 11.00am to 1.00pm.

Saturday morning

Probation members can hear from NOMS Chief Executive, Helen Edwards, Probation Director, Roger Hill and PBA Chief Executive, Martin Wargent on the future of the Probation Service.

Family Court members will be able to discuss current negotiating issues with CAFCASS Corporate Director, Jane Booth and Napo National Vice Chair, Sian Griffiths.

Speakers during the three days will also include Brian Caton, General Secretary of the POA, John McDonnell, JUPG Secretary and Frances O'Grady, TUC Deputy General Secretary.

Policy making

This year there are more motions than ever up for debate on such varied issues as, Probation training, Flexible 50+, benefits sanctions, racism, the BNP, negotiating structures, working for peace in the Middle East, the Murbarek Enquiry, sickness absence, Unpaid Work, violent incident reporting, workloads, CAFCASS failure to negotiate, C-NOMIS, British foreign policy and the rights of the child, the Prison Inspectorate under threat, Promoting the Probation Service, Health and Safety... and many, many more.

Register before 15 September and save £20!

- Early registration costs £15 (£5 TPOs, unemployed and retired members).
- Late registration fees are £35 for all categories and members and guests.

Register online www.napo.org or contact Head Office 020 7223 4887 info@napo.org.uk for a registration form

On the Fringe

Lone Working with Unpaid Work Group
Guest Speakers include Roger Sutton GFTU

Disability Equality – You and Me
National Disability Support Network

The future of the LGPS
A briefing on the Pensions situation

Political campaigning: Why we need to organise
With guest speakers John McDonnell, Secretary JUPG, and Jamie Doward, The Observer

The future of Probation Training
Guest speaker Ian Manborde, ULR Project Manager

Professional Judgement – use it or lose it!
A discussion of good professional practice regarding risk and recall with Jo Thompson, Head of Pre and Post Release

TUPE Legislation
Your questions answered by Joe O'Hara, Thompson's Solicitors

PSO Forum
Open to all PSO members attending conference

Managers Meeting
Open to all managers attending conference

LAGIP
A meeting for lesbians, gay men, bi-sexuals and trans gendered members

ABPO
The Association of Black Probation Officers welcomes the opportunity to meet with members and other Black attendees to discuss relevant issues

Women in Napo
A meeting organised by women in Napo for women in Napo

Friends and family welcome

- Bring a guest for just £15 (before 15 September)
- Free crèche throughout Conference

Evening Entertainment – in Eastbourne's fabulous Floral Hall

Friday – dance into the small hours with fantastic 12 piece soul band After Midnight

Saturday – ABPO Benefit with sounds from Inspiration FM and DJ Mark Dean – fresh from the ABPO conference ready to take Napo by storm.

Late bar both nights.

Tickets on sale at AGM.

