No meltdown!

Napo Anti Cuts Campaign

Bulletin No 3
7th May 2009
CAM08-09

napo
The Trade Union and Professional Association for Family Court and Probation Staff

PROBATION UNDER STRESS

TPO Scandal

Napo is making urgent representation to Secretary of State for Justice, Jack Straw, on the employment situation for qualifying TPOs.

Information from across Probation Areas reveals that, as a consequence of the cuts, at least half of the 400 TPOs finishing their training this year will not get jobs or be offered only temporary contracts. Others have been told that they may be taken on as PSOs, and there will be an assumption that they will do PO tasks!

Examples include:

Avon and Somerset - 16 TPOs have been told they will not be offered PO jobs.

Cumbria -10 TPOs will be competing for 2 probation officer posts.

Gwent - 8 TPOs have been told they will not be employed on qualifying.

Teesside - 8 TPOs have been told they will not be offered work after March 2010.

West Midlands -28 TPOs have been told they will not be offered jobs.

West Yorkshire -30 TPOs have been told there will be 14 jobs and that between 7 and 10 will be offered PSO posts and between 7 and 10 will lose their employment.

This goes against assurances made by Jack Straw only a short while ago. As well as being grossly unfair to individual TPOs this will cost the taxpayer at least £20 million. It is a huge waste of talent and resources.

From the Frontline

Humberside Result

We reported in bulletin No 2 that reps from the Humberside Branch had travelled to Blackburn to lobby Jack Straw in his constituency office. Following this, on 29 April, Humberside MP, Elliott Morley (Lab – Scunthorpe) secured an adjournment debate on the cuts in the Area. (See fuller report on page 2).

Only 24 hours after the debate, the Humberside Chief Executive, wrote to staff withdrawing the next stage of the process they had put in place to make staff cuts and said they will not be making any compulsory redundancies in the current financial year.

South Yorkshire Ballot for Action

Meanwhile in South Yorkshire Napo has joined Unison in balloting members to support strike action in pursuit of a no compulsory redundancy agreement.

The ballot statement reads: 'Napo has voiced opposition to any job losses from all grades of staff within the Service on many occasions. We believe that all jobs in the Probation Service are paramount in maintaining a Service that is fit for purpose and delivers on local needs in relation to public protection and reducing reoffending.'

More feedback after the ballot closing on 19th May.

Management of Change – agreement sought

Urgent negotiations between NNC representatives on a framework agreement on redundancies commence this week. In response to representations by the unions a statement from the Joint Secretaries is due to be published imminently asking employers to withhold further redundancy notices for a period of time whilst negotiations take place.

MPs – Regional Briefings

Later this month Napo Branch reps from the Midlands, North East, North West, South West Regions and All Wales will be meeting with MPs from their areas in the House of Commons to brief them on the cuts in their areas. Further sessions will follow for the remaining regions.

The event, on 19th May, has been organised by the Justice Unions Parliamentary Group and the separate regional meetings will be chaired by JUPG officers Neil Gerrard MP, Elfyn Llwyd MP and John McDonnell MP. The purpose is to describe in detail the effect of the cuts and to get a commitment from MPs to raise constituency concerns with Jack Straw.

All relevant MPs have been written to and many have already said they will attend or, if they can't make the 19th, that they would like to meet branch reps locally.

Probation Service Adjournment Debates

There were two debates on Probation in Parliament last week. As well one on the cuts in Humberside, Thames Valley MPs, Tony Baldry (Banbury -Con) and Evan Harris (Oxford, West and Abingdon - LD**)** also secured a debate on accommodation, the closure of the Banbury Office and cuts, on Tuesday 28 April.

Supportive statements on Humberside were also made by MPs Ian Cawsey (Brigg and Goole – Lab), Shona McIsaac (Cleethorpes – Lab) and Graham Stuart (Beverley and Holderness - Con)..

Astonishingly, replying to Elliot Morley in the Humberside debate, Minister David Hanson said: "*Indicative budgets have been set for each probation area and have been issued. However—this is important for my right hon. Friend to recognise—the director general of the National Offender Management Service has now made it clear that the indicative probation budgets were issued without the knowledge or approval of Ministers, and so have no authority, as there is no comprehensive spending review settlement for 2011-12 onwards. Therefore, there cannot be any accurate indicative budgets for any area of Government spending beyond that period.*"

What an admission!

You can read the adjournment debates in full online in Hansard.
Go to www.parliament.uk/ - click on debates then go to view by date for 28th April (Thames Valley) and 29th April (Humberside)
OR find a link on the Napo website www.napo.org.uk
OR email Kath Falcon kfalcon@napo.org.uk for a copy.