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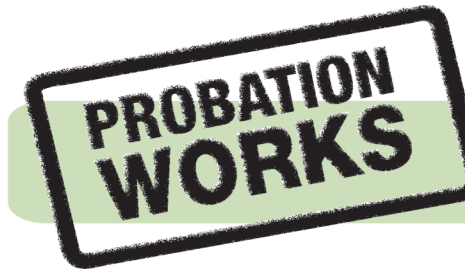


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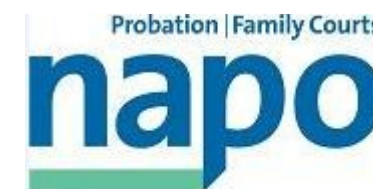


keep it public – **keep it local**

PROB/08/2013

16 August 2013

NATIONAL AGREEMENT ON STAFF TRANSFER AND ASSOCIATED PROTECTIONS



Intensive national negotiations took place between 12 and 14 August to devise a national collective agreement to cover the proposed transfer of probation staff from Trusts, either to the Government's proposed National Probation Service (NPS), or to the 21 proposed Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs).

All three probation unions – UNISON, Napo and GMB – were represented at the talks, as were the Probation Association (representing Trusts) and the Ministry of Justice. The negotiations were conducted under the auspices of the National Negotiating Council (NNC) and the Standing Committee for Chief Officer Grades (SCCOG).

The talks have produced a set of draft documents which will:

- Set out key principles
- Govern the split of the Probation workforce between the NPS and the CRCs
- Confirm the actual staff transfer process
- Set out the protections which will apply to jobs

and terms and conditions at the point of transfer and beyond.

Further discussions will be taking place this month in advance of a final negotiating session which will take place on 30 August.

UNISON's participation in the talks, and in the creation of a potential national collective agreement, is without prejudice to our on-going opposition to the Ministry of Justice plans to break up and privatise Probation. Even though we are totally opposed to the government's reforms, our duty to our Probation members is to ensure that your interests are fully protected at all times. In short we have to plan for the worst, whilst still campaigning for the best.



CONSULTATION

UNISON will need to consult widely on the proposed national collective agreement on staff transfers, that emerges from the negotiations by the end of this month. To this end, we are proposing the following:

- The draft National Agreement, with UNISON guidance, to be distributed to UNISON Probation Branches and representatives during the week starting 2 September
- Branches and representatives to organise workplace meetings for members to consider the proposed agreement during the period: 5 September to 13 September.
- UNISON's National Proba-

tion Committee to meet on 17 September to consider the outcome of the consultation, and the views of members, in order to decide our final

- position on the draft agreement

Branches and representatives are advised to request appropriate time off for both activists and members to take part in these essential consultation sessions. Given the level of detail likely to be contained within the draft national agreements it would be reasonable for staff to be allowed at least half a day off to take part in the consultation. Meetings should be held in work time to maximise participation.

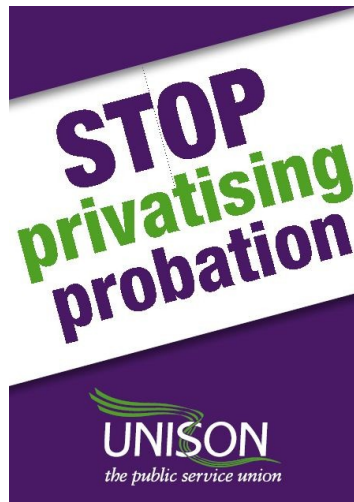
ADVICE ON TESTING

The Ministry of Justice has written to Trusts to ask for volunteers to test certain aspects of the proposed split in the Probation workforce between the NPS and CRCs.

UNISON is aware that many members may be unhappy with the prospect of having to participate in such testing, given that it forms part of Government reforms that 99% of our members have said that they oppose. To date, the Ministry of Justice has made it clear that it only wants willing volunteers to take part in any testing.

UNISON's advice is that any member who is approached to take part in testing and is unhappy about having to participate should register his/her opposition to participation with his/her manager and ask to be excluded from any testing.

UNISON expects that Trusts will recognise the validity of such strongly held objections and not force any member of staff, who does not wish to take part, to participate. Members who feel that they are being unfairly coerced into taking part in testing are advised to contact their UNISON representative for advice. Branches and representatives should refer on any problems that arise in this respect to Ben Priestley, National Officer, at the UNISON Centre, in the first instance.



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PREPARATION FOR POTENTIAL INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Last month's decisive survey results, showed that:

- 99% of UNISON Probation members are opposed to the Transforming Rehabilitation programme
- 85% are willing to take industrial action, if necessary, to protect their jobs, pay and conditions

As a result of these figures, UNISON is now making preparation for any formal industrial action ballot that may be needed later this year. UNISON Regions have been asked to undertake the necessary work to ensure that our membership records are up to date to facilitate any forthcoming ballot.

JOIN UNISON

UNISON is working hard to ensure that the interests of our members are protected if the Government's Probation reforms become a reality. If you are not already a trade union member, now is a really good time to think about the benefits of joining us. If you join you will get:

- The opportunity to have your say in the consultation over transfer arrangements
- The ability to take part in any collective action to defend jobs, pay and conditions
- UNISON legal protection and advice
- The strength and solidarity of being in a trade union with the majority of your colleagues



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PREPARATION
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