

HEAD OF THE PROBATION REVIEW SAYS: “WE DO NOT WANT FRAGMENTATION”

THE head of the joint NOMS/MoJ Probation Review has given assurances to the PA Council that he does not want the process to result in the fragmentation of services or disruption to effective local partnerships.

Phil Copple told Chairs attending Council that the review team recognised probation as the “glue” that created a cohesive system for offenders.

In answer to a question about possible Trust mergers, he said there were already two drivers for this: the ongoing efficiency challenge and competition itself, with the plans to compete unpaid work. The review would help determine the extent and nature of competition. He said that the expectation from the offender services competition strategy should be for much more competition.

Mr Copple said that it was unrealistic to expect public sector Trusts to win every contract, so questions around viability would inevitably arise - more quickly for smaller Trusts.

“However, we are clear that we don’t want to lose effective local working and localism elements,” he said.

“Services must be organised in such a way that they are able to interface with community safety partnerships and the

police strategically – and there is already statutory responsibility through MAPPA and, soon, Police and Crime Commissioners.”

Mr Copple said there was a recognition that probation held a unique position within the criminal justice system in the way that it interfaced with various different agencies.

“At its best probation is the glue that holds the system together for offenders and it is a vital force for greater integration,” he said.

“Probation is in a really critical position in having its hands on the two levers which influence demand in the system: its pivotal role in advising and assisting sentences, and offender management work.

“Probation generally commands a high level of confidence among sentencers and it is important that we don’t compromise this influence and value and do not increase fragmentation through reform, even as there is more competition and a greater plurality of provision.”

On Payment By Results he said the potential benefits were considerable and that the coherence of the system as a whole should be considered as there were dependencies between competition choices and commissioning and delivery



Phil Copple addresses Council

models.

Mr Copple also said that their current assumption was that the 2007 Offender Management Act would be retained. This meant that advice to court would continue to be reserved to the public sector, and that commissioning responsibilities for probation would not be devolved to local authorities, Police and Crime Commissioners or any other public bodies.

Mr Copple reaffirmed that the Government’s policy commitments were to compete all services over time unless there were compelling reasons not to, giving providers freedom to innovate and paying them by results, with the aim of securing significantly better outcomes, i.e. much reduced reoffending rates. He anticipated a public consultation soon, presenting opportunities for further engagement with the PA, Probation Chiefs Association and other stakeholders.

MINISTERS ATTEND PA RECEPTION

JUSTICE Ministers Crispin Blunt, Nick Herbert and Lord McNally all attended the PA's reception for parliamentarians in the House of Lords on Monday.

Other attendees included Shadow Justice Secretary Sadiq Khan, Shadow Probation Minister Jenny Chapman and former Probation Minister Paul

Goggins.

More than 60 Chairs and Chief Executives spoke to MPs and Peers about the work of their Trusts.

Speeches were given by Crispin Blunt, Mr Cox and Tessa Webb, of the Probation Chiefs Association. As last year, the reception was sponsored by The Baroness Linklater of Butterstone.



From left: Chairman Sebert Cox, Baroness Linklater, Probation Minister Crispin Blunt and Chief Executive Mark Ormerod.

“PA GATEWAY” COMMUNICATIONS (Nov)

A review of email communications sent to trust chairs, chief executives and secretaries for distribution to all members. **All documentation attached to these emails can be downloaded by members from the [PA Forum](#).**

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| 31 October | PA News Update Oct 2011 |
| 3 November | Media Coverage – reoffending statistics and MAPPA reports |
| 15 November | Cross Sector Criminal Justice Conference and Times Story |
| 30 November | Public Audit Procurement Strategy and Probation Trusts
PREView Probation Resource Exercise |

PA COMMENDS NOMS PAPER

NOMS' commissioning intentions, as outlined in its latest discussion document, have been commended by the PA. However, in our formal response we listed reservations related to: overly prescriptive use of management info; risks related to national commissioning not taking local partnerships into account; impact of Police and Crime Commissioners and proposals to test a quality assurance approach in an era of deregulation.

COMMUNICATIONS SET TO CHANGE

THE PA is to change the way it sends corporate communications to members.

The Council has agreed that all communications for Chairs, Chiefs and Secretaries be sent via an email link to posts on the PA Forum. The change will come into effect in the New Year.

MEDIA PLANS PROGRESS

twitter 

MORE than 50 Trust communications professionals attended a joint PA and PCA conference to look at improving probation's national profile and boosting Trust's use of social media.

Delegates agreed in principle to a new approach to gaining media coverage and to use social media, particularly Twitter, more widely.

* *The PA now has nearly 400 followers on [Twitter](#).*