

NEWS UPDATE

MARCH 2009 | A MONTHLY DIGEST FOR PROBATION BOARDS AND TRUSTS

TRUST PROGRAMME LATEST FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Christine Lawrie

With the trust programme continuing to dominate the landscape, I am continuing to reflect your concerns through my membership of the Probation Trusts Programme Board.

This has entailed:

- Pressing for a full-time programme lead
- Highlighting risks so as to best mitigate these early
- Feeding back members' views in a non-attributable way
- Encouraging additional support for boards during this process
- Suggesting a refocussing from the tests to strategy and outcomes

On this last point, we are continuing to press for a clear statement on the NOMS vision for trusts. A PA position statement on this subject can be found on our website [here](#). We have sponsored a Transition To Trusts project which will report its findings in early April. Also, a report will shortly be sent to members setting out the PA's recommendations to NOMS for business flexibilities for trusts.

BOARDS INVITED TO MODERNISATION WORKING GROUPS

The Probation Association is inviting representatives of probation boards and trusts across England and Wales to join one of three Modernisation Joint Working Groups set up under the aegis of the National Negotiating Council for the Probation Service (NNC).

"The PA is seeking to bring as much of the knowledge and expertise that resides within its membership to working party discussions with the unions to ensure that we are providing solutions that are fit for purpose," said Chas Dowden, Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager for the PA.

The Association is also seeking board and trust membership to a similar joint working group of the Standing Committee for Probation Chief Officer Grades (SCCOG).

In a separate development, the PA is inviting trusts and boards soon expected to be awarded trust status to a Human Resources workshop to discuss best HR practice and solutions to issues arising from the transition from boards to trusts. The event is scheduled for late April in London.

• *For more information contact Chas Dowden on 020 3008 7849/07974 772053 or via email at cdowden@probationassociation.co.uk*

MERGER NEWS AND VIEWS AIRED

Trevor Williams, Director of the Probation Trust Programme and East of England ROM, was among the speakers at a Mergers and Collaborations Study Day held by the PA in London last month. He told Chairs and Chiefs from 37 boards and trusts that merger decisions must be driven locally, not from the centre, and that if two boards wished to merge only one needed to be "green" in IPPF terms.



EVENT PLAYS KEY ROLE IN QUALIFICATION DEVELOPMENT

The Association is continuing to represent the interests of boards and trusts as the local employers in the development by NOMS of a new Qualifying Framework for Probation Practitioners (PQF).

On January 21 the PA held a consultation event in London to bring together board and trust representatives to consider a NOMS consultation paper on the emerging framework.

The event, attended by representatives from 34 boards and trusts, was extremely productive and ensured the Association was able to make a well-informed response to NOMS.

This response, which took the form of a letter from PA Chief Executive Christine Lawrie to Robin Wilkinson, NOMS HR Director and Senior Responsible Officer for the PQF Project, was circulated by email on February 12 to Board and Trust Chairs and Chiefs and to the delegates who contributed to the event.

The PA is now awaiting the outcome of the submission by NOMS of the emerging Framework to Ministers which, if successful, will trigger a formal consultation phase.

- For more information on the PQF contact Mike Caldwell, the PA's Governance Services Manager, on 020 3008 7935 or via email at mcaldwell@probationassociation.co.uk

MINISTER KEEN TO FURTHER LINKS

Alan Wooderson and Christine Lawrie had an extremely productive meeting with David Hanson, Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice, on 4 March. The meeting was also attended by Michael Spurr, Chief Operating Officer of NOMS and David Griffiths, Deputy Director System Reform, Criminal Justice Group, Ministry of Justice. The Minister was very supportive of closer joint working with the PA and said he was pleased that the relationship between MoJ, PA and NOMS was flourishing.

OFFICE DIARY

10 March	<i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> Chief Officer Forum with GMB/Scoop and NOMS
11 March	<i>Chief Executive:</i> Meeting with Michael Spurr (NOMS)
12 March	PA Board of Directors Meeting
13 March	<i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> National Negotiating Council for the Probation Service (NNC) Strategy & Progress Monitoring meeting
17 March	<i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> Standing Committee for Probation Chief Officer Grades (SCCOG) meeting r.e. modernisation agenda <i>Governance Services Manager:</i> Probation Qualification Framework (PQF) Project Board meeting
19 March	<i>Chair and Chief Executive:</i> Regular meeting with Chair and Chief Executive of the Magistrates' Association
20 March	NNC Pay Implementation Group
23 March	<i>Chief Executive and Warwickshire Board Member Charles Goody:</i> Microsoft MOJ Executive Briefing
25 March	<i>Chief Executive:</i> Probation Trust Programme Board
26 March	PA conference - The Future of Probation Governance and Service Delivery in Wales <i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> NOMS Union Consultation
31 March	<i>Chief Executive:</i> New Joint Probation Chiefs & Chairs meeting

PA MAKES NEW APPOINTMENTS

Two managers have joined the PA. Ian Fox, a former probation Regional Manager for Wales and project manager for an EU probation programme in Romania, joins as Business Capability and Policy Development Manager and former journalist and probation area communications manager Neil Lampert has taken up post as PR and Communications Manager.

Ian will be working closely with stakeholders to develop shared initiatives, while Neil will be responsible for raising the Association's external profile and enhancing communications with members.

- Please contact Neil with feedback on this update and any other PA communications issue on 020 3008 7937 or 07891 348815 or via email at nlampert@probationassociation.co.uk