

NEWS UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2009 | A MONTHLY DIGEST FOR PROBATION BOARDS AND TRUSTS

EMPLOYER ROLE REVIEW AND A VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

■ By Christine Lawrie
Chief Executive

During September we begin work on three key pieces of work to:

- Review the way the employers' sides of the National Negotiating Council and Standing Committee for Chief Officer Grades work, so that they can more effectively identify member priorities and reflect these in negotiations with the trade unions
- Produce a vision that sets out a compelling rationale for probation in

the 21st century

- Develop proposals for the Association's strategies from April 2010 so that we can continue to adapt to members' requirements in a constantly changing environment

This work is being undertaken by groups of board and trust chairs, with technical advisers where appropriate.

We will keep members' informed on progress and consult with Council as draft reports emerge.

EVENTFUL YEAR DOCUMENTED

The Association's *Annual Review* has been published and distributed to members and stakeholders.



Featuring an Introduction from Chair Alan Wooderson (pictured), the review documents the Association's achievements during a very busy twelve months.

PROBATION PERFORMANCE - NEED FOR A LOCAL FOCUS

Responses to the Association's Discussion Paper *Probation Trusts in Partnership* from individual probation areas, HM Inspectorate of Probation, the Probation Chiefs' Association and relevant Government departments and ministries have been uniformly positive.

The proposals have been welcomed as both a clear vision for probation performance in the context of local partnerships and a recognition of the urgent need for the realignment of probation performance with government policy.

There is potential for confusion as to what constitutes "performance". Is it solely as defined by the IPPF, or should more weight be given to the reality of probation engagement

in Local Delivery Units against objectives shared with local partners? The Association argues that Government policy requires an emphasis on local priorities as the drivers of probation performance.

The Welsh Assembly Government is proposing to introduce similar "local" partnership frameworks albeit with different emphases and lines of accountability. These specifically Welsh principles and strategies should also be embraced in any future performance management frameworks.

The Association will host a study day for stakeholders to help progress these proposals. We will also publish a report on responses to the Discussion Paper.

INTERNET TELEPHONY PROMISES SAVINGS OF 20 PER CENT

The NOMS Information and Communications Technology Group is modernising probation telephony via a centrally managed Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) service across the estate - with the aim of reducing running costs by around 20%.

“The new service will deliver a cost-effective, flexible service, while relieving boards and trusts from commercial management and technical assurance responsibilities,” says Philip French, Chief Information Officer, NOMS ICT.

VOIP involves calls being transported by the internet, rather than by the public

telephone network.

The centrally-managed OMNI National Probation Service Voice Service promises a reduction in running costs with minimal set-up costs. Costs will be reduced through volume-related call charge discounts, free on-net calls and a centralised telephony switch infrastructure.

For further information, contact NOMS ICT Business Relations Manager Tracy Clarke at tracy.clarke@justice.gov.uk or Head of Network and Voice Services Cliff Henson at cliff.henson@justice.gov.uk. Tracy and Cliff will arrange a consultation visit.

OFFICE DIARY

4 September	<i>HR Manager:</i> Secondment Protocol meeting <i>Chief Executive:</i> Meeting with CE Parole Board
7 September	<i>Chief Executive:</i> Telecon with Michael Spurr, NOMS
8 September	<i>Chair and Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> NNC Joint Working Party <i>Chief Executive:</i> Probation Estate Investment Board <i>Chief Executive:</i> Academy for Justice Executive Group
9 September	<i>Governance Service Manager,</i> NOMS PQF Reference Group <i>Chair:</i> NOMS Audit Committee
10 September	<i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> NNC Joint Secretaries meeting
14 September	NNC Review Group
15 September	<i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager and HR Manager:</i> Human Resources Strategic Board Regional Representatives meeting Practical Governance Project Board
17 September	PA AGM and Council Meeting <i>Governance Services Manager:</i> PQF Project Board <i>Governance Services Manager:</i> NPS Finance Group
18 September	<i>Chief Executive:</i> Meeting with Robin Wilkinson, NOMS
22 September	<i>Chair, Chief Executive and Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> NNC
23 September	<i>Governance Services Manager:</i> OMNI Service Delivery Board
24 September	<i>Governance Services Manager:</i> Dip PS Standing Panel meeting PA Review Group <i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> Coaching Effect Project Launch
25 September	<i>Projects Manager:</i> FORT meeting
29 September	<i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> SCCOG Joint Working Group <i>HR Manager:</i> PQF HR Interfaces Group <i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> CO Forum <i>PR and Communications Manager:</i> Community Programmes Award meeting with Howard League
30 September	<i>Governance Services Manager:</i> NPS ICT Board <i>Chief Executive:</i> Probation Trusts Programme Board

QUALIFICATION HR ISSUES ARE FULLY SCOPED

The Association is working closely with members and NOMS to scope the complex HR issues relating to the new Probation Qualification Framework in order to produce solutions which will meet the needs of boards and trusts.

The specific work being undertaken will provide:

- Clarity as to the routes through the Qualification Framework
- Model documents for Boards and Trusts to use e.g. letter of appointment
- Guidelines
- Model selection criteria
- Model poor performance procedure

The Association's Chas Dowden is acting as the key contact point for HR matters. He can be contacted at cdowden@probationassociation.co.uk or on 0203 008 7930 or 07974 772053.