

# NEWS UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2010 : A MONTHLY DIGEST FOR PROBATION TRUSTS

## GUIDANCE TO HELP TRUSTS FACE NEW SCRUTINY ISSUES

**P**robation may find itself under a new public spotlight due to legislative requirements of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 which make the service subject to local authority scrutiny arrangements.

These requirements amended the Crime and Disorder Act to include Probation Trusts as Responsible Authorities in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs).

Additionally, the Local

Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 includes a duty to co-operate on Probation Trusts in the Local Area Agreement structure, which also includes scrutiny responsibilities. So trusts face new scrutiny from both these pieces of legislation.

The Association, in collaboration with the Centre for Public Scrutiny, has published guidance for trust boards to plan for and negotiate the necessary scrutiny protocols.

This scrutiny guidance has been published as **Think Local Update 2** on a new Think Local page on the Association's website [here](#). Related Think Local documents are also available for download.

Subject to the views of members, the Association is prepared to run a one-day workshop on scrutiny, jointly with the CfPS. Members interested in such a day are asked to email Ian Fox at [ifox@probationassociation.co.uk](mailto:ifox@probationassociation.co.uk).

## PA AND NOMS FORMALISE RELATIONS WITH PROTOCOL

A partnership agreement between the Association and NOMS has been signed by PA Chair Alan Wooderson and NOMS' Director General Phil Wheatley.

Mr Wheatley said: "This agreement is a sign of the maturity of the relationship between NOMS and the PA.

"We now have rules of engagement and not just a gentlemen's agreement. This is a real protocol which will enable us to handle difficulties if they occur in the future.

"The protocol is also a recognition of the importance of the PA. The Association will become even more important in the era of Probation Trusts."

Mr Wooderson said: "This agreement will be of increasing importance as we move forward into the new Probation Trust environment.

"As the employers' body the PA will grow in importance - not least because of the possibility of support services increasingly being delivered by the Association."

The protocol can be downloaded [here](#).



Signing day: Alan Wooderson (left) and Phil Wheatley sign the protocol document

# CONSULTANCY WORK SUCCESS LEAVES A CONUNDRUM

The Trust Development Programme has now been closed to new applications – by the end of March the Association will have funded 1-5 days consultancy in 26 projects, benefiting 30 boards and trusts.

Most requests have been for scrutiny of, and advice on, the application and reapplication process, including preparation for panel interviews, but wider governance concerns have been addressed, including Best Value, LDU structures, commissioning and business processes, board/SMT functions and structures, and board member training.

Consistently good feedback on the usefulness of this work has included a recurring theme – that the consultants have provided clear analysis with fairly blunt messages relayed constructively. Ben Emm and Ian Clarke

were briefed to adopt this style in two recent workshops which enabled 60 representatives from 35 boards to consider themes which had emerged and identify the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Project Manager Nigel Spencer said the project had shown that targeted and relevant consultancy could provide good value for money, but that its success created something of a conundrum for the Association.

He said: “This was seen as a one-off way to assist members through a particularly difficult year, but it has been so well received that we are now considering whether we can afford to undertake something similar next year. Certainly the workshops provided some signposts to future aspects of governance where a similar centrally funded, locally available, resource would be welcomed.”

## OFFICE DIARY

1 February	<i>PR and Communications Manager:</i> Communications Conference planning meeting, London Probation
2 February	<i>Projects Manager:</i> Trust Development Workshop, London <i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> Employment Relations Working Group <i>Chief Executive:</i> Meeting with John Hutchings <i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> NOMS Employment Relations meeting
3 February	<i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager and HR Manager:</i> NNC Joint Secretaries meeting
4 February	PA Board of Directors Away Day <i>Projects Manager:</i> NOMS SBC Workshop Standing Committee for Chief Officer Grades meeting <i>Chief Executive:</i> Centre for Public Scrutiny Round-Table
8 February	PA Audit Committee meeting
9 February	<i>Chief Executive:</i> Academy for Justice Commissioning executive meeting <i>Chief Executive:</i> Meeting with Director of Probation Trust Programme
10 February	<i>HR Manager:</i> Secondment Protocol meeting
12 February	<i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> Public Services Employers Forum <i>Governance Services Manager:</i> NOMS Estates meeting
16 February	<i>Chief Executive and Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> Period of Reflection meeting, Avon and Somerset
17 February	SCCOG pay meeting <i>Chief Executive:</i> Academy for Justice Commissioning seminar, Manchester
18 February	NNC Joint Pay Meeting
19 February	<i>Projects Manager:</i> Future Options Round Table
24 February	<i>Employment Relations, Pay and Policies Manager:</i> NW PDA meeting <i>Governance Services Manager:</i> NPS ICT Board <i>Governance Services Manager:</i> NOMS OMNI Service Delivery Board <i>Chief Executive:</i> Probation Trusts Programme Board
25 February	<i>Governance Services Manager:</i> NOMS meeting with local Audit Chairs <i>Chief Executive,</i> meeting with Michael Spurr

## 50th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Plans are well advanced for the Association's 50th anniversary reception on 9 March at the RSA, London.

Guest speakers are Bob Morris, former Assistant Under-Secretary of State and Head of the Criminal Justice Department, Home Office, and Dick Whitfield, Howard League trustee, member of the Commission on English Prisons and former Chief Probation Officer.

Please could invitees who have yet to confirm please email [yjankowski-doyle@probationassociation.co.uk](mailto:yjankowski-doyle@probationassociation.co.uk).

## HOW SATISFIED?

Satisfaction surveys have been sent to all board and trust chairs. Please could these be returned to TQMI in the envelopes provided by 1 April. Thank you.