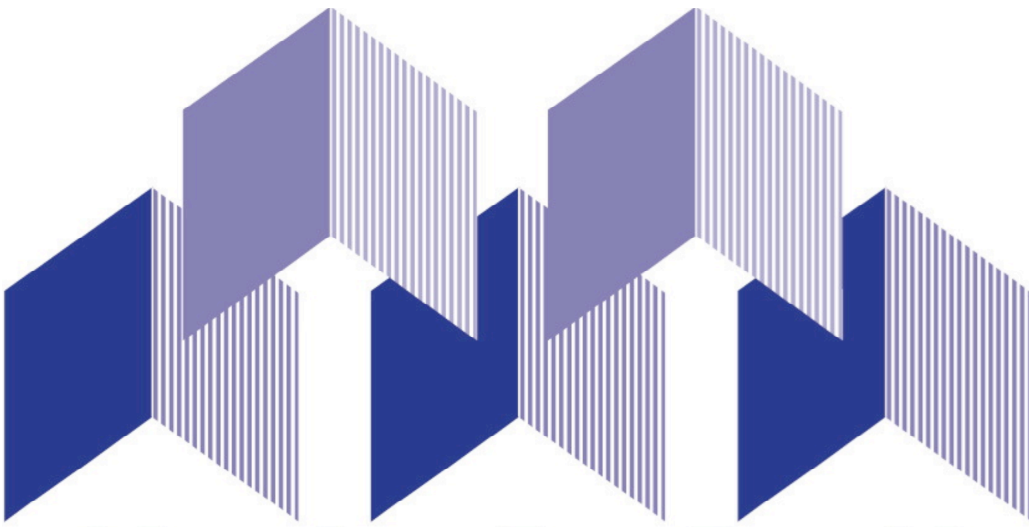


**National Approved Premises Association**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**



**2009/10**



# ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

## *WORKING WITH APPROVED PREMISES PROVIDERS AND COMMISSIONERS*

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### 1 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2009/10

JUDITH POOLE JP (CHAIRMAN)  
TONY GRAY (TREASURER)  
CHRIS GELDER (VICE CHAIR)  
TED OWEN MBE (UNTIL NOV 09)  
CHRIS COOK  
HEIDI DOUGLAS  
LIZ TRY  
NEVILLE THOMPSON  
MIKE TENNANT(UNTIL DEC 09)  
DUNCAN MOSS  
GHISLAINE MARRIAGE  
LOUISE CANTLEY  
PETE DAVIDSON (FROM NOV 09)  
JILL DILKS (FROM NOV 09)

## 2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Our aim is to deliver a range of services and functions that support and assist the work of both our membership and NOMS by contributing to the achievement of best practice, consistency and high quality service delivery and risk management across the whole Approved Premises sector.

We particularly seek to:

**Influence** policy and practice to achieve both the best use of Approved Premises and the highest standards of practice in the work they undertake.

**Work in Positive Partnership** with approved premises, managing bodies, the Ministry of Justice, The National Offender Management Service (NOMS), and other relevant agencies

**Represent** employer/manager perspectives relating to the provision of Approved Premises and the staff that work in them

**Disseminate** information on practice and policy developments and opportunities

**Promote** understanding of the work of Approved Premises; the development of quality standards; appropriate levels of resourcing; and best use of all Approved premises

**Contribute** to the identification of training and staff development needs; the provision of training; and the sharing of good practice.

Funded by the Ministry of Justice, membership of the association is comprised of every voluntary or probation managed Approved Premise in England & Wales

### 3 CHAIRMANS REPORT

Once again I have pleasure in presenting to you the annual report of the National Approved Premises Association which I believe demonstrates another year of solid achievement at a time when the pressure of funding shortfalls and financial threats had a real impact upon our future. In the event of a sudden reduction of 30% in funding from the centre, the committee were faced with the need to draw upon the limited reserves that the organisation held to bridge the gap for the year, whilst planning the development of a longer term 'survival' strategy. As the accounts for the year show we had to draw upon these reserves to cover a reduction of over £20k in our funding. Thankfully, and I think as a result of the recognition that the centre has for our contribution, our funding for 2010/11 has been restored to its pre 2008 level, thus enabling us to take forward some significant pieces of work in 2010/11 that had to be put on hold last year.

The committee was however particularly determined that we should hold another round of NAPA Awards for 2010, and I was very pleased that the number of nominations was almost double that of last year and all were of a very high standard. It is clear these awards have given the entire Approved Premises sector the opportunity to celebrate the excellent work and contribution of its staff. Michael Spurr, CEO of NOMS presented this year's awards at our Spring Seminar which gave us an excellent opportunity to emphasise the importance of the work done in Approved Premises. We certainly intend to hold the awards again next year.

During the year we had meetings with the majority of the DOMs who it seemed would be commissioning future AP services regionally. We were keen to emphasise the value of Approved Premises and to help them understand the particular position of the Independent providers. We also cemented the important alliances with both the Probation Association and Probation Chiefs Association with regard to our common interests in the provision of Approved Premises, and I was pleased to agree and sign on behalf of NAPA, memoranda of understanding with both these organisations.

NAPA also contributed to the Specification, Benchmarking and Costing work during the year and saw the resulting document as a well described specification of AP activities with the potential basis for a realistic funding level finally being established. However, the way the material is being viewed by potential commissioners is raising concerns particularly amongst the Independent providers, and there is continuing uncertainty and anxieties about the future funding levels for Approved Premises; not to mention the prospect of competitive tendering and payment by results being raised.

Needless to say NAPA will continue to work hard to promote the important role of Approved Premises as the best value providers of high quality residential provision that protects the public and reduces offending.

**JUDITH POOLE JP**

## 4 WORKPLAN ACTIVITIES/ACHIEVEMENTS

It is an express aim of our organisation to contribute in very practical and concrete ways to policy and practice development in order to help achieve both the best and most effective use of APs and also the best standards of practice in the work they undertake to protect the public, prevent offending and deliver high quality care and support for offenders supervised in the community.

Despite the reduced funding level NAPA worked hard to maintain a full developmental work programme and to continue our representational role, particularly regarding the Independent sector, across a wide range including a seemingly forever increasing range of NOMS departments, regional and national, whose work relates to Approved Premises provision in one way or another.

After almost two years work in bringing it together, the year began on a positive note with the publication of the much awaited Approved Premises Handbook 2009; the 'all in one place' reference document that NAPA had worked on in conjunction with the AP policy Unit. This has received considerable praise for its comprehensive coverage and its ease of use.

We also published the results of the Training and Skills Audit of the Approved Premises Sector that we had researched and produced in the early part of 2009. This revealed some very interesting data from across more than half of the estate and an extremely revealing snapshot of the changing staffing structures happening rapidly across the estate.

As well as our regular ongoing activities we were able to make a significant contribution to two key pieces of work during the year:

Firstly, at the invitation of the policy unit, we chaired a working group of operational managers from around the country to review and revise the National AP Rules. This work should result in a new version of the rules being issued as a Probation Instruction and as well as having guidance for staff on enforcement of the rules will also include explanatory guidance for residents to help them understand and comply with the rules.

Secondly, we were also very pleased to be identified as one of the key consultative partners that Peter Rogers made extensive use of during the Specification, Benchmarking and Costing exercise for Approved Premises. As well as being involved in providing advice, information and views at every step, from planning the fieldwork to the earliest drafting we were instrumental in arranging specific seminars with both the voluntary managed (Independent) and female estates, in order to ensure their particular perspectives were understood and taken on board by the SBC team.

During the year we held our traditional two national seminars, both of which were full houses and attended by a wide range of managers, staff, committee and Board members from around the country.

At the April seminar we presented the 2009 NAPA awards and delegates were able to hear from Mark Farmer , Head of NOMS Sex Offender Policy Unit and Louise Hubbard Head of NOMS Extremists Policy Unit about the most up to date developments in both of their areas of work and to consider and discuss the implications of these for the work of APs with both categories of offenders.

Our Autumn Seminar provided a further vehicle, and timely opportunity for Peter Rogers to provide a progress update on the SBC work and to hear further views from the providers. The meeting also heard from Ian Sammut-Smith about his role within NOMS as Head of the Critical Public Protection Unit Casework team, and his relevance to Approved Premises when taking such cases.

Throughout the year NAPA have been central to ongoing discussions, and have convened several meetings between the voluntary managed providers and Sean Langley, Head of AP unit to clarify issues faced by the Independent providers as a result of developments in commissioning arrangements and the service specification work.

NAPA has been involved in a wide range of consultative and representative roles during the year that saw us contributing to, or commenting on amongst other things; use of the womens estate; grant agreement payment to voluntary managed APs; East Midlands Regional Pilot; AP Design Guide 'Consultation'; Discharge Grant proposals; AP benchmarking exercise; Service Specification development work; Probation Training Consultation; Skills for Justice Review of level 3 units; and security CCTV specifications for APs.

NAPA also attended meetings and engaged with: NOMS Health & Safety Forum; EPDU Estates; Probation Association; Skills for Justice; NOMS training sector; NAPO and UNISON, as well as the NNC Approved Premises sub-group and full NNC .

Alongside these more visible and tangible activities, we continue to take every opportunity to represent the interests and concerns of all AP providers, and offer individual support particularly regarding matters affecting the Independent (voluntary) sector, as well as doing all we can to assist the Ministry of Justice to work effectively and appropriately with its residential service providers.

## 5 DIRECTORS REPORT

It feels that 2009/10 was a somewhat frustrating year for NAPA; having to curtail some developmental plans and devote more time than we would wish to securing our own financial survival; whilst planning for a new commissioning future based on the literal decimation of the sector through regional commissioning by DOMs ,whose very diverse approach and in many cases limited levels of knowledge or understanding of the Approved Premises sector gave us cause for concern.

Yet as I write some of the issues of 2009/10 seem a long time away from the

changed world we have entered with a new government; new priorities; new structures and a world of even tighter financial stringency than probation has already experienced in recent years.

Many commentators over the years have expressed the view that the criminal justice sector has faced so many change , that nothing has time to be properly implemented and given the chance to work . Yet we inevitably seem to be heading for a whole lot more change as the public spending belt tightens under the new government, and another consequent NOMS restructure and the details of the rehabilitation revolution begin to unfold.

The SBC was a key piece of work from last year that has emerged as a template for interpretation in the new world we are now facing. NAPA were pleased to be closely involved with the project and do believe that both the specification and costings that have been published provide a sound basis on which Approved Premises providing quality services should be commissioned and funded . I would however make two points in the light of what seems to have happened since its recent roll-out. Firstly , the misinterpretation by some of the 'operating model'. This is a theoretical model that makes transparent how the costings were arrived at. It does not advocate the wholesale adoption of the model by all providers; it clearly says that alternative models that fit within the same cost parameters are perfectly acceptable,'if it aint broke don't fix it' Secondly, the specification needs to be embraced and commissioned as a whole for Approved Premises to deliver the levels of risk management and intervention that mark them out from other accommodation provision . It should not be seen as a 'pick and mix' menu from which commissioners or providers can trim to reduce costs.

We firmly believe that Approved Premises providers and NAPA continue to have an integral part to play in bringing the benefits of a national sector network and perspective to local delivery but believe this would best be delivered through a continuation of national commissioning of the Approved Premises estate from the centre.

On the positive side in the face of so much uncertainty I am pleased we have now already this year been able to move forward on some of the work put on hold last year , including the development of several practitioner focussed training events.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank both Sean Langley and Paul Douglas from the NOMS AP Policy Unit, for their unfailing courtesy, assistance and encouragement for the work of NAPA.

I would also like to thank all those people who have given of their time, expertise and energy to contribute to the work of NAPA in various ways . Your assistance in a range of ways has been invaluable and served to inform and validate our representational role and the work we do on behalf of the sector.

MIKE SHORT

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#### THIS REPORT IS ALSO AVAILABLE

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OR BY E-MAIL: AS A WORD DOCUMENT or PDF ATTACHMENT, by request.

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