



keep it public – **keep it local**

PROB/06/2014

CHAOS FOLLOWS STAFFING SPLIT

27 June 2014

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CRC BIDDERS WITHDRAW FROM COMPETITION	2
STOP THE SELLOFF CAMPAIGN	3
UNISON SUPPORTS TUC "SPEAK UP FOR JUSTICE" CAMPAIGN	3
Join UNISON	4

UNISON warned the Government prior to the staffing split that took place on 1 June that staff and services were just not ready for transfer into NPS and the CRCs. Our 'Complicating Rehabilitation' Report set out clearly the risks to probation services and to public safety. Despite our evidence, the MOJ Permanent Secretary was not prepared to halt the timetable for splitting the workforce.

Here are just a few of the problems that have been reported to us since 1 June:

Predicted problems with nDelius have meant that CRC staff have been unable to check on offenders they are seeing to see what their risks are, whether they are engaging with their Offender Manager, any diversity issues they need to be aware of, or whether particular offenders are a risk to staff etc.

Some NPS Divisions do not have enough NPS staff to resource their courts. MOJ had to be approached to see whether these NPS areas could use PSOs assigned to the CRC until these staffing problems were fixed. At first MOJ declined the request, but has now had to allow some CRC staff to work on courts duty in the NPS 'temporarily'. This has led to some CRC staff being

told that they are being seconded to the NPS.

As predicted, some areas have found that the staffing split has left them with too many Probation Officers in CRCs and not enough in NPS Divisions. From 1 June this has led to PSRs being assigned to Probation Officers assigned to the CRC.

There are also problems with PSRs not being completed due to inadequate staffing numbers in NPS and a rise in PSR demand. Volunteers have been sought in CRCs to write PSRs, with NPS paying them overtime to do the work.

CRCs with mutual bids underway have been told by MOJ that their staff seconded to the

mutual bid will not now come back to the CRC prior to October, when they were promised back by July.

The impact of these major staffing problems on staff health and well-being is enormous and UNISON is taking these issues up directly with NOMS.

Please let us know what particular problems you are experiencing. Let your UNISON representative know and ask them to pass the information on to us at the UNISON Centre.



CRC BIDDERS WITHDRAW FROM COMPETITION

The closing date for bidders to submit their bids to run a CRC is Monday 30 June. As the deadline approaches, there is increasing evidence that the mutual bidders and the small and medium sized bidders are struggling to meet the conditions set by MOJ.

In the last few weeks, the following bidders have withdrawn:

Shaw Trust: this voluntary sector body was in the running for Dorset, Devon and Cornwall CRC, Gloucestershire, Avon, Somerset and Wiltshire CRC, Thames Valley CRC and Hampshire CRC. No particular reasons have emerged regarding Shaw Trust's withdrawal, but the organisation has confirmed that, '...as the bid process gathered pace we felt we could add greater social value in other ways within the justice sector.' Shaw Trust's exit probably signals the end of the Devon and Cornwall staff mutual which was working with the Trust. The implication of Shaw Trust's departure for the staff mutual in Hampshire is less clear.

Chalk Ventures Consortium: this was a partnership between the Kent/Surrey/Sussex staff mutual (Co:here) and A4e and Bridges Ventures. It withdrew from the bidding recently claiming that there were commercial and operational terms in the contract which were too difficult to bear. It is reported that one of the Chalk Ventures partners, A4e, had already

taken a decision not to bid for any CRC in its own right.

This raises a big question over A4e's interest in the following CRCs: Essex, Derby/Notts/Leics, Norfolk & Suffolk, South Yorkshire, Hampshire, Thames Valley, and Merseyside.

If A4e has withdrawn from the bidding for these CRCs this will be a major blow to the MOJ. As previously reported by UNISON, a number of ex-A4e staff are currently on trial at Reading Crown Court on fraud charges.



Manchester College: it has been reported to staff in the Cumbria and Lancashire CRC and the Merseyside CRC that Manchester College is unsure about continuing with its bid to deliver probation services in these two CRCs. This raises a big question over the continuing viability of the staff mutual Innovo (CLM) Ltd which was working in partnership with the College. It is not clear whether Manchester College is continuing with a separate bid for the Cheshire and Greater Manchester CRC.

The exit of these bidders, and the detrimental impact that this has had on the viability and credibility of the staff mutuals, with whom they were in partnership, sounds a death knell for the MOJ's claims that the CRC competition is open to a wide range of private sector, voluntary sector and staff mutual bidders. UNISON predicts that when the bids are announced after the 30 June deadline, most of the bidders left will be the usual suspects – the big multi-national outsourcing companies.

STOP THE SELL-OFF CAMPAIGN

UNISON, Napo and the GMB are meeting regularly to plan the on-going campaign to stop the sell-off of the CRCs to the private sector. We have a number of initiatives planned which you will hear about separately. It is really important that all members get behind the campaign and there really is everything to play for. The sell-off is not a foregone conclusion and there is much that the unions can do working together to try to keep the CRCs in public ownership.

UNISON SUPPORTS TUC "STAND UP FOR JUSTICE" CAMPAIGN

Alongside Napo, GMB, PCS, the POA and UNITE, UNISON is supporting the TUC's 'Speak Up for Justice' Campaign. The campaign seeks to highlight the risks which the government is taking with its funding cuts, privatisation and reform plans across probation, policing, the courts and prison. You can find out more about the campaign by visiting: www.speakupforjustice.org.uk

Stop gambling with Justice!

Cuts and privatisation are jeopardising our Justice system. Justice is being denied and public safety put at risk. Tell Chris Grayling and Theresa May to put Justice before profit.



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Join UNISON

If you are reading this as a non-union member in the Probation Service, it is not too late to become a member and help keep Probation Services public and local. The more members we have, the stronger we can be on your behalf. Speak to your local UNISON representative for details of how to join, phone us free on 0800 171 2193 or join online at: www.joinunison.org

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*See unison.org/tbr-members/legal-services/tbr-eligibility