



UNISON PROBATION NEWS 13/2024

26 September 2024

HAVE YOUR SAY ON 2025 PAY CLAIM

UNISON will shortly be consulting members over what we seek to include in the joint union pay claim for 2025. UNISON's Probation Committee is proposing the following:

- One year claim (not multi-year)
- 12% increase on all pay points
- 12% increase on all cash allowances: London Weighting/Geographical Allowances etc
- A guarantee that the lowest pay point does not fall below the real living wage figure for 2025.

Look out for the pay consultation materials which will come to you from your local UNISON branch.

SDS40 PAY ENHANCEMENT PACKAGE

UNISON is concerned that the SDS40 overtime extension scheme and bonus scheme are not being offered in every Region in the same way. This is not acceptable and suggests that the cap on funding for the two temporary schemes is less than we originally thought. If you think you should be being offered one, or both of the schemes, and you are not, please contact your UNISON branch in the first instance.

LIST OF FORMAL DISPUTES GETS EVER LONGER

If the unions are unable to make progress on issues which are important to members, we have the option of registering formal disputes with HMPPS to seek to resolve matters. Unfortunately, we are having to do this more and more recently. Here is a list of the disputes, and the reasons behind them, which we have lodged on members' behalf with our sister unions in the last 12 months:

Implementation of One HMPPS: failure to conclude an implementation agreement, disagreement with matching process and the definition of probation being used for matching

Single Facilitator Role Job Evaluation: failure to agree job description prior to evaluation, failure to follow agreed job evaluation process, failure to consistency check outcomes with similar roles

Use of Private Sector Security Guards in Approved Premises: failure to consult trade unions, no business case for outsourcing, health and safety risks, damage to pro-social modelling, and denial of shifts for directly employed staff

Bail Information Service: failure to consult with trade unions, failure to follow definition of probation, appointment of bail information officers on prison service pay and conditions, and damage to the profession of probation.

CONTESTED BREACH TRIAL ROLLOUT DELAYED

Under pressure from the trade unions, HMPPS has thankfully agreed to pause the implementation of its badly thought out plans to require court staff on pay band 3 to prosecute contested breaches. We have previously raised concerns over these proposals particularly around the lack of appropriate training, conflict of interest and pay. Members have said very clearly that they do not want to do this work, so we are pleased that at last HMPPS appears to be listening.

WOMEN'S POLICY FRAMEWORK

UNISON responded to the HMPPS draft Women's Policy Framework in August and called for the phasing out of imprisonment for the vast majority of women in favour of community orders, including the creation of Women's Day Reporting Centres as an effective alternative to custody.

UNISON therefore welcomes the announcement from the new Justice Secretary Shabana Mahmood this week that the government plans to reduce the number of women in prison. This will require more community options for sentencers and therefore increased funding and staffing for the Probation Service. UNISON wants to see trade union representation on the new Women's Justice Board which the Justice Secretary is setting up to oversee her prison reform.

PROFESSIONAL REGISTER

UNISON remains opposed to the HMPSS proposals to set up an in-house professional register which cannot command the confidence of staff, people on probation or the public. An employer cannot be judge and jury on professional matters relating to registration – it is a complete conflict of interest and abuse of power. We oppose it on this basis.

Whilst HMPPS has said that it will consult on proposals for a proper external professional register, its plans in the meantime to create an 'independent panel' to oversee the register have the feel of a stop-gap measure from a civil service employer unwilling to cede oversight of professional matters to a competent and

qualified outside body. A probation professional register must be fully independent, like the registers which cover health professionals or social workers.

UNISON WRITES TO JUSTICE SECRETARY

In July, UNISON wrote to the new Justice Secretary Shabana Mahmood, welcoming her into her new role and asking to meet to discuss a range of issues including:

- The urgent need to remove the Probation Service from the Civil Service and re-establish it as a local service under local management and local democratic control. Labour committed to reviewing this in its 2024 election manifesto.
- The ongoing workloads crisis which has been added to by the demands of SDS40
- The recruitment and retention crisis which will only be solved if probation salaries recover the spending power which they have lost since 2010
- The importance of increasing the range of community orders that the courts can hand down as an effective alternative to prison sentences

JOIN UNISON

It was union action which got probation staff their pay rise this year brought forward from 1 October to 1 April, giving members an additional 6 months' pay at higher rates. Good pay and conditions don't happen by accident; they are the result of workers joining trade unions and campaigning for a better deal at work.

If you are not already a trade union member in the Probation Service, join UNISON now to add your voice and support to our campaign.

You can join here: <http://join.unison.org.uk/>

Please give the Probation Service as your employer on your application form.