**MODEL LETTER**

…………………….MP

*(via email)*

*POSTAL ADDRESS*

*(to include to ensure MP knows you’re in their constituency or you will not get a response)*

Date:…………….

Dear……………………

**Probation Workload Crisis**

I work as a………………………………. for the Probation Service and live in your constituency. I am writing to raise my concern over the workload crisis which is affecting my colleagues and I at work.

In 2014, the government split up a successful Probation Service run by 35 Probation Trusts; privatised half of it and centralised the rest as part of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). This was called Transforming Rehabilitation, and it was a total disaster.

10 years on, Probation continues to suffer the fallout from these botched reforms. Staffing shortages – the result of private sector downsizing and MOJ salary cuts - remain in many probation functions. These are made worse as experienced staff leave due to burnout and new inexperienced staff get thrown in at the deep end without proper supervision because of managerial overload.

The Probation unions, Napo, UNISON and GMB/SCOOP launched their ‘Operation Protect’ workloads campaign last year and have been trying to work with the MOJ on a strategic workload reduction programme. Earlier this year talks produced some potentially promising proposals to scale back non-essential probation work as part of the Criminal Justice Bill now before Parliament.

However, just when we thought we were making progress, the latest government knee-jerk reaction to the prison capacity crisis has heaped yet more unplanned and un-resourced work on probation staff like me. The announcement on 11 March that the prison early release scheme would see prisoners released 35 days before the end of their sentence has thrown all the unions’ careful work up in the air.

The additional work heaped on the Probation Service by the latest change to the early release scheme was not planned or catered for in any way by HMPPS. When Prison fails, probation staff are instructed to pick up the pieces with no thought to our capacity, the safety of those we supervise or community safety.

**I come to work every day to give my best to people on probation and to victims. My colleagues and I want to protect the wider community from harm, but excessive workloads and poor handling of the prison numbers crisis are hampering everything we do.**

(*Please insert your own experiences of your workload here)*

I would like to ask you to raise my concerns with the Secretary of State for Justice and ask him to do more to tackle the workloads crisis in Probation and to stop making undeliverable demands on probation in response to the prison capacity crisis. If you would like further information, then you can contact ………………………. at my union.

*(If you would be happy to meet your MP in person then please add this here)*

I look forward to hearing from you/meet you to discuss in more detail (*amend as)*

Yours sincerely,