

JTU 17/2025



19th March 2025

HMPPS ABANDONS CONTESTED BREACH PLANS

In a victory for the Napo and UNISON campaign to oppose Court PSOs and Enforcement Officers being required to prosecute contested breach trials, HMPPS has finally agreed to abandon these plans in their entirety.

Napo and UNISON want to thank our Court PSO and Enforcement Officer members who have resolutely stood against these unworkable plans. HMPPS, and previously NOMS, had insisted ever since the E3 reorganisation in 2016/17 that they were determined to make contested breach trial prosecution a key part of court staff duties.

The unions opposed this from the start on the grounds that it risked grave conflict of interest for court staff, that the training for it was wholly inadequate to prepare staff to go up against barristers or solicitors, that it increased the likelihood of unsafe prosecutions, that there would be no extra pay for such onerous new duties and that HMPPS had failed to respond to our counter proposal for a new Senior Enforcement Officer role to take on this specialist work.

When we surveyed our court members back in early 2023, 91% of members responding to our survey said that they would object to taking on this new work without any increase in pay. 51% said that their court team would be unable to cope with the additional work and pressure which this would bring. 83% of members supported our alternative proposal for a Senior Enforcement Officer role to take on this work. But HMPPS persisted with their plans.

Back in December 2024 Napo and UNISON were therefore forced to lodge a formal dispute with HMPPS over our members' concerns about the roll out of contested breach trials work. This hearing was originally due to have been held in February but was then postponed to 19 March.

Last week however, HMPPS told Napo and UNISON that they had listened to the concerns of our court members and confirmed that they would abandon the plans for contested breach trials on a permanent basis. Napo and UNISON welcome this long

overdue decision. As a result of this, there will no longer be a requirement for staff to volunteer for training for contested breach work.

Napo and UNISON remain very clearly of the view that our original proposal for a Senior Enforcement Officer role, is again worthy of consideration. We will keep members informed as to the response we receive from the employer.

Once again we want to thank our court members for standing up for their principles and opposing these unworkable plans. By campaigning together we have won. Now we need to make sure that the alternative plans are also in our members' interests.



Ian Lawrence

Ben Priestley

General Secretary

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Napo

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