



## Speech

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**Dame Glenys Stacey**

**National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO) Annual General Meeting 2016**

Cardiff, 30 September 2016

Good morning and thank you so much for the invitation to speak.

I am delighted to be here in St David's Hall, a fantastic venue and a jewel in Cardiff's crown. As I reflect on the challenges in creating this building, I wonder at the achievement: built to accommodate more people than ever, and built to fit across an existing, part-built site, it took five years from conception to completion. Now - here - we have arguably the best acoustics in Europe, and an innovative range of other facilities and services, including the conference facilities we are enjoying today. There must have been times over those five years when completion seemed far off and an uphill struggle, much as perhaps Transforming Rehabilitation has been for you and your colleagues.

Inspectors, we are not always popular, or welcomed. All the more reason then for me to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you, and to learn from you, working at the heart of things as you do, in delivering much needed probation services. Thank you.

We are each asked to talk about what changes need to take place to best serve all those involved. In thinking of 'all those involved' I think of you - professional, committed people working hard to deliver effective probation services in sometimes the most difficult circumstances, yes, but I think predominantly of those you work with, those whose lives you wish to change for the better.

For those of you working in the NPS, please forgive me if what I say is predominantly CRC focused. I hope you will accept that, given our recent inspections, they occupy much of my thinking at the moment.

But to answer the question: in the light of the Probation Services review, what changes are needed to the current model? I very much welcome the review, and have three expectations of it.

The first is the development of effective performance measures, measures most likely to encourage and stimulate the provision of quality services and enable probation professionals to deliver well. Current measures are task orientated. They do not tell all of us interested - government, parliament, the public, you and service users - how effective you and your colleagues, managers and leaders are in your work to protect the public, resettle and rehabilitate, and ensure the sentence of the court is served, and served well.

Performance measures necessarily drive management priorities and attention. The world over responds to incentives. So the trick is to find measures that drive the right priorities and behaviours. Evidence-based outcome measures should always be prioritised over more immediate process measures, but in probation, sufficiently immediate outcome measures are not readily available or conceivable, as reoffending date is always far off and causation is often indirect. We cannot be sure our efforts today map sufficiently directly to future

reoffending rates - and so there is a place for more intermediate, output measures. Of course they bring their own problems, as all measures do, but in our world I suggest they have their place.

Effective measures are tricky to define, and again in our world I suggest they need to encourage and recognise joint working locally, and through the prison gate. So my first expectation and hope is for mature performance measures.

Secondly, CRCs need to be placed on a sufficiently secure financial footing so as to enable them to settle their operating models, staff their organisations sensibly and sustainably, and commit to others they want to work with to provide services - women's centres, for example. That means looking again at the payment mechanism with the benefit of experience, so as to be sure that even in these straightened times, an acceptable level of service can be delivered across the country, consistently and over time.

Thirdly, these two things, measures and payment, should demonstrate and should stem from what is to be expected from probation. Big initiatives like Transforming Rehabilitation accrete expectations. Aspirations are layered, and stated at various times and in different ways so that too often, what success might look like, and what really matters is lost or hard to spot amongst the many aspirations. So here in probation, is success innovation, of itself, or the extensive involvement of the third sector, even more so than in the past, or simple, compound or weighted reductions in reoffending, or delivering more for the same, or else something else?

These are important questions because the definition of success should in turn influence and drive the payment mechanism and incentives on the one hand, and the performance measures and targets on the other. People the world over respond to incentives, and that includes those leading probation services. And so I would like to see a clear and hopefully simple understanding of expectations, and measures and payments that flow from that.

Let me move now to the second question, what a future service can look like. Here I appreciate I likely have a different perspective to NAPO, in that my job is broadly to set standards, drive improvement and provide public accountability, that is to show how things are working. If I assume then that I and my colleagues in HMI Probation are successful in our endeavours over the next few years, then what will the future look like? Again I have three points to make:

I expect to see greater clarity around standards, and what good looks like in the new world. So for example, in our current thematic inspection of Rehabilitation Activity Requirements, you in this room could almost write the report now, as you know how things stand and what you are doing with RAR. And of course we will write and publish our report. But we will also write and publish our expectations for RAR. Inspection standards, showing what good RAR looks like. We will begin to do this for other areas of work as well, to plug the standards gaps and to hopefully assist practitioners and leaders as they plan and undertake key areas of work.

Secondly, I hope to see a greater focus on the sharing of good practice, with common aims in mind. We can play our full part in that, by making clear and considered and well-grounded recommendations, and by finding much better, IT-enabled ways to spread the good practice we find. And we can evaluate and comment on those aspects of organisational health and design that promote or else get in the way of good practice. Here our respective interests - those of NAPO and the Inspectorate - do touch, as we at HIM Probation are interested increasingly in staffing, in spans of control, in the ratio of professional staff, in staff morale, in leadership and management, in training and development, in systems and processes, indeed in all areas that influence and affect the quality of services delivered.

Thirdly, I expect to see a mix of the innovative and the tried and tested. We are already seeing innovations in organisational design, and systems, and I have great hopes for the case management systems now being developed. With legacy systems so clunky, unreliable

and lacking in functionality, I do think that modern software could be so liberating for professionals such as yourselves. The interesting question is not whether we will continue to see innovations in systems and in organisation models - we will - but whether we will see many innovations in the way you support, supervise and otherwise assist service users to change their lives for the better and so reduce reoffending. We are seeing some, and I have no doubt that, liberated from some of the most immediate pressures, you will have many more ideas to try out. If through the Probation Services Review, CRCs can be more certain of their finances then there will be more scope for more expansive thinking.

We speak of innovation, and I hear the term often, but I am acutely aware of the difference you and others can make simply by being able to go the extra mile. By doing all that can be done to enable every individual service user you are supervising make changes in their lives, for the better while at the same time you do all necessary to protect the public. I do hope that as time passes, you remain motivated to go the extra mile and have the space, capacity and encouragement to do so.

I will finish now with one final thought. Innovation or not, some 250,000 people are supervised by you and your colleagues each year. I have no doubt that much remarkable work is done, day after day. I have seen it, and I would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you.

And thank you for listening, thank you.

**ENDS**