

LORD TUNNICLIFFE



Minister in the Government Whips Office

**The Baroness Gibson of Market Rasen
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW**

26 January 2010

Dear Anne,

**PROBATION REPRESENTATION IN NATIONAL OFFENDER
MANAGEMENT SERVICE**

During our debate on probation services on 21 January you asked how many of the NOMS headquarters staff have a probation service background.

I am afraid I am unable to give you exact figures and could only do so by looking at the individual service records of staff. However, I can assure you that staff with a probation background are represented at all levels of NOMS, including at Director level. Currently, 4 Chief Officers of Probation are seconded to NOMS HQ from probation Boards and Trusts, along with many other staff of different grades. Probation staff are also employed in most prisons. When the NOMS Agency was created in April 2008, 113 staff from the National Probation Service transferred into the Agency. The HQs of the former National Offender Management Service and HMPS were also merged at that time, with 742 staff transferring from the former NOMS HQ.

However, there is a misconception about staffing numbers in NOMS HQ which I think it is important to explain. The NOMS Agency provides strategic direction to prisons and probation through the HQ function, in addition to managing public protection casework and supporting Ministers in ensuring proper accountability for the work of those services. As set out in the NOMS Annual Report and Accounts for 2008/09, c.1,600 staff are engaged in this core HQ work, operating across both prisons and probation. This staffing group is comprised of career civil servants, as well as staff from prison and probation services seconded in to the centre. C.500 staff are also currently involved in supporting change programmes across the NOMS footprint.

Within NOMS, there are different delivery models. Probation services are commissioned through local Boards and Trusts (each with their own local HQ)



and other services (some prisons, electronic monitoring, prisoner escorts) are contracted out to the private sector. However, public sector prisons are directly managed by NOMS and as a result there are a range of services provided to public sector prisons from the centre – Operational Delivery Support (458 staff), clustered centralised services (1,299 staff) and the NOMS finance and HR shared service centre based in Newport (1,035 staff). This activity is almost entirely focused on operational support to prisons and directly employed staff. The staffing make-up of these groups will, quite properly, be dominated by staff with a prison service background given the specific nature of the work. However, as noted above, there is a balance of staffing in the core strategic HQ functions that work across the prisons and probation footprint which does ensure proper input from prison and probation professionals, working alongside career civil servants.

I will place a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Yr Deu".

LORD TUNICLIFFE