

The magazine of the Probation Institute

PROBATION

Issue 6 | March 2016

Quarterly

PROFESSIONAL REGISTER

A framework for validating your expertise

AN INSPECTOR CALLS

Why inspections are becoming less prescriptive

PUTTING FAMILY FIRST

How we can improve prison visits for children and parents

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Develop your career pathway while working in the rehabilitation of offenders sector

PROBATION *Quarterly*

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sub-editor**

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**Issue 6 : March 2016**

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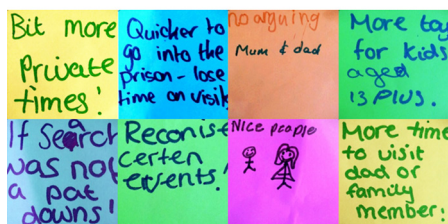
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Welcome

It is my pleasure to write the editorial for the sixth edition of Probation Quarterly. It has been an active time at the PI since the last edition and this is reflected in this issue which publicises a number of documents and frameworks which are now available and published here. We are officially out of our set up phase and as this goes to press our business plan for 2016-17 is being launched. We achieved a lot during the past two years and we now have a robust register (see article by Sue Hall on p.4), professional development framework (see page 5 and 14) and a series of Position Papers, the first of which on Office Arrangements is reproduced here.

We are very much in business and as we develop Position Papers over the coming months we can contribute more robustly to the issues facing the profession. And there's the rub. The world of the probation practitioner remains extremely difficult in the current climate of change and transition. New operating models, E3 in the NPS, the changing role of the PSO, new qualifications frameworks under PQiP, redundancies, disillusionment and low morale make it difficult to think about personal and professional development. But the PI is here to ensure that these issues are not lost and good practice is promoted wherever possible. See our business areas discussed in this edition and seek to meet the Pledge challenge of one of our directors, Laura Martin.

The PI contributed to the new vocational qualification Consultation for probation officers and this is reprinted here and this work had a major impact on the final approved documentation. This is a great example of how we are seeking to work, building partnerships across the sector and working with those partners to keep evidence-informed practice to the fore. Our active Research Committee has appointed an Academic Advisory Panel who will

help us to pursue our intentions to build a Centre of Excellence. We can only do this through you, our members, and with our partners, so we urge you to get involved, to renew your subscriptions and join our fight for the Probation profession.

The articles in this edition support our view that probation is about developing relationships, about working through our values and putting the service user first. Gill Hurst, one of our Fellows, muses on the name or brand of probation. Her challenge is to find a nomenclature that works in the new world, you don't have to agree with her but it will stimulate discussion and debate. Helen Rinaldi of HMI Inspectorate of Probation lays out some of the principles on which the new Inspectorate approach has been modelled. David Coley, one of our Graham Smith Award holders dedicated to practitioner research, reports on his findings and the continued importance of reflective practice for practitioners. His title argued that reflective practice is the cornerstone of all we do and we would certainly endorse that sentiment. His full report has just been published look out for it.

Neera Sharma from Barnadoes reflects on research they have done on children visiting parents in prison and the often inadequate arrangements for this to be helpful, even though family relationships are a key part of desistance. This makes important reading and challenges prisons to look at and improve the arrangements made. Finally we report on the recent Butler Awards highlighting the immense contributions that individual Probation staff still make despite the current difficulties. Probation has always sought to rise about the politics of penal reform and deliver quality, sensitive services to its users.

I encourage you to get engaged with our expanding range of professional networks so we can hear the voice of all across the Probation, community justice and rehabilitation arena.

Paul Senior

Chair

Probation Institute

WHY SIGN THE REGISTER?

by Sue Hall
Director of the Probation Institute



If you are reading this article, then you are probably someone who is interested in probation and rehabilitation, who is keen to support high standards of service delivery.

The sweeping changes brought about by Transforming Rehabilitation mean that the range of organisations delivering probation and rehabilitation services has become more diverse.

The complexity is only likely to increase as the Community Rehabilitation Companies develop their individual operating systems, bringing in new roles with a myriad of new titles, ways of delivering services and training requirement. Alongside this the qualifying framework for probation officers is changing. In this evolving landscape it will become more difficult to assess the comparability of roles and qualifications – both for practitioners and employers.

The Professional Practitioner Register offers a touchstone – a framework for validating the experience, expertise and qualification of practitioners, administrators and managers working in probation and community rehabilitation.

By registering, practitioners, managers and administrators have to sign up to a code of ethics and evidence their commitment to continuing professional development. It demonstrates to employers that you are committed maintaining high standards and to ensuring that your

knowledge and skills remain up to date.

There are four categories of registration for practitioners, managers or administrators working in the probation and rehabilitation sector:

A: Entry level – no minimum qualification needed

B: Professionally competent – for practitioners qualified at VQ3 level or with relevant qualification at QCF level 3, 4 or 5

C: Professionally qualified – for qualified probation officers (QCF level 6 – honours degree)

D: Advanced – minimum of 3 years experience and have obtained a relevant master's level qualification (QCF level 7)

The Register works alongside the PI's Professional Development Framework, outlined in the article by Helen Schofield, opposite.

The registration fee is normally £40 for levels A-C and £80 for level D. However, if you sign up before the end of May 2016, there is a reduction of up to 50% (more details here):

www.probation-institute.org/practitioner-register-launched-with-big-discount-incentive/

Professional Development Framework:

Building a single professional identity



by
Helen Schofield

The Probation Institute Professional Development Framework can be accessed on the Institute website. The Framework captures and elucidates skills and roles across Probation, Rehabilitation and Community Justice in public, private and voluntary organisations.

Working with a project board including NPS, CRCs, Skills for Justice and voluntary organisations the project has been led by Helen Schofield formerly Head of Learning Strategy at the College of Policing, Chief Executive of the Community Justice National Training Organisation and Assistant General Secretary of NAPO.

The Project Board developed and endorsed the principles of the Professional Development Framework which include:

“The Professional Development Framework reflects the commitment by employers, practitioners and managers across Probation, Rehabilitation and Community Justice Services to work with the Probation Institute to build a single professional identity for probation, rehabilitation, youth and community justice services, centred on the

Probation Register.”

and

“The changing environment of probation and rehabilitation services, including adult and youth justice services, requires an approach which will recognise the competence, learning and qualifications of individuals right across the expanded sector in public, private, and voluntary sector organisations”

The Framework includes:

- Guidance on use of National Occupational Standards and Qualifications
- Guidance on Progression Alignment with the Probation Code of Ethics, Community Justice Learning and Youth Justice
- Notes on Advanced Practice, Post Qualifying Studies and Continuous Professional Development
- For each of the Levels A, B, C and D on the Register is defined:
 - ➔ Level Descriptor
 - ➔ Generic Professional Activities
 - ➔ Six Role Related

Professional Activities across the sector

- ➔ Job Descriptions aligned to role related activities
- ➔ Learning and Qualifications

- The Probation Institute Learning Provider Endorsement Scheme
- Endorsed Learning Providers
- Presentation slides

The generic professional activities are:

- Communication
- Professional standards
- Risk in the work environment
- Manage information
- Treat individuals with respect
- Health and safety
- Maintain professional development

Within the Register and aligned to the Framework Level A practitioners are those not yet holding a relevant professional qualification, Level B are those who are professionally qualified, Level C is the specific Probation Officer Qualification and Level D is research, advanced practice and senior management.

Roles	Use of the Professional Development Framework
Practitioners	Identify your Level on the Probation Register Identify your own professional and role-related standards Describe your own competence for review Occupational Standards and progression Look for relevant learning and qualifications Find equivalent job descriptions
Line Managers	Identify your level on the Probation Register Use the tools for staff appraisal Identify your own professional and role-related standards Occupational Standards and progression Identify learning and qualifications relevant to your teams Identify training needs for your teams
HR Teams	Develop job descriptions and job adverts Inform interviewing and selection Identify and procure training
Learning and Development Teams	Identify learning needs for individuals and teams Identify learning from research and lessons learned Develop training
Learning Providers	Develop courses Achieve Probation Institute Learning Provider Endorsement Respond successfully to commissions for training Evaluate training Develop effective assessments

Alignment with Community Justice Learning and Youth Justice

The NOMS Community Justice Learning Framework and Standards are incorporated into the Probation Institute Framework, which will be updated as the NOMS standards develop.

The framework will assist practitioners in building their learning outcomes to meet the Community Justice thresholds and the Learning Provider Endorsement Scheme will provide information about learning providers and opportunities to meet the Community Justice Learning Framework as these come on stream.

The Framework incorporates Youth Justice roles and occupational standards defining practice with young people. It should not be read as development framework for the

work in Youth Justice however.

The Learning Provider Endorsement Scheme is now live and we have approved the first endorsed providers.

The scheme quality assures learning providers in probation, rehabilitation and community justice using 12 standards. Endorsed Providers are able to use the Probation Institute Endorsed Provider Logo and place information about forthcoming courses on the Endorsed Provider section of the Probation Institute Website.

Advanced Practice, Post Qualifying Studies and Continuous Professional Development

The Probation Institute is committed to continuous professional development, and all members on the Register are required to update their CPD

records regularly and to resubmit every 3 years. We recognise that CPD is a significant gap in professional development in the sector and we are keen to know members views on models for making Continuous Professional Development work successfully across organisations, levels and subject areas.

Keeping the Professional Development Framework up to date

We have completed version one of the Professional Development Framework at an early stage in the new probation and rehabilitation arrangements, and we recognise that there are still major changes underway in the National Probation Service, CRCs and Tier 2 and 3 providers.

The Framework will be a living and dynamic product which we will update regularly, with the help and support of all members.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Well, quite a lot actually, argues probation practitioner and former Deputy Chief Executive

Gill Hirst. Here she

makes a case for bringing the word "probation" back into full usage - both in job titles and in how we refer to those we supervise.

The first meeting of the Fellows of the Probation Institute got me thinking again about what people and organisations are called.

My parents were teachers and when I was born, being quite conventional people, they went through the girls' list in the baby names book of the time to consider their options. My Mum's priority was to find a girl's name that didn't remind her of schoolgirls she had taught but barely tolerated. It turned out that Gillian was the only one that met the brief. Being called Gill Hirst has more or less worked for me apart from poor Gill Hurst in the North East getting quite a lot of my emails and spell-check constantly suggesting that my second name should be hirsute. Being able to put a bit of blurb on Linked In and a photo on Facebook means that most people looking for me now can make sure they've got the right one if they want me and avoid me if they don't.

If I'm honest, it's not the name I would have chosen for myself. Over time, I have thought of ones that

better match my sense of self and ambition. If I were to re-name myself now, I'd go for Esme in honour of the greatest witch Discworld, and this world, ever saw. One of the interesting things about Granny (Esme) Weatherwax is that she took the honorific without having children or grandchildren - she just appropriated the status with absolute confidence and no-one ever questioned it. Granny Gill may be a real one but Granny Weatherwax fulfils the role in a much more convincing way.

So... we were thinking in the Fellows' meeting about how best to capture that you don't need to be providing 'probation services' for the Institute to have something to offer you as a member and wondering whether the name might be putting off people who don't have 'probation' in their job title or who aren't commissioned providers of 'probation services'. The plan is that anyone with an interest or involvement in the work being done with people on probation would find a form of membership and involvement that was relevant and useful for them so the Institute can meet its goal of, through the membership, better serving the public by improving services to those people, their victims and those potentially at risk from them in the future.

There are some arguments then in favour of a broader title: Rehabilitation Institute, Community Justice Institute, Council of Desistance... I guess Granny Weatherwax could have called herself 'Giving-People-What-They-Need-Not-What-They-Want Weatherwax' but, if a name has cultural resonance, can be translated into other languages and folk generally have a sense of what it means, I think it's good enough to keep it simple. 'Probation' works for me as long as the Probation Institute narrative continues to make clear that it's the interest in working with

people on probation that defines the membership, not the letters before and after their names.

Mulling this over on the train home brought me back to the question of what we call people on probation as well as the people working with them (some of whom, John Wiseman reminded me, narrowly escaped being called Community Rehabilitation and Punishment Officers, with its unfortunate abbreviation, at one point). Starting with 'clients', 'offenders', or 'service users', I remembered that I had once written on this subject* and tried to find my analysis of Probation Journal articles about people convicted of sex offences: how we referred to them and what this might mean for the work with them...at least, I think that's what it was about, I couldn't immediately put my hands on it!

Anyway, I'm going to make a plea for calling anyone subject to a community order, suspended sentence order or post custodial licence or notice of supervision 'a person on probation' or – if brevity is absolutely critical – 'a probationer'. Probation is a great word: practically everyone recognises what the term implies: being given a chance to prove something, trying a new identity and facing consequences in the event of failure. The actual content of a court sentence (community payback, rehabilitation activity, licence conditions etc.) mean much less to the general public, in my view, than the fact of being 'on probation' and under some kind of supervision. I know we've traditionally not said that people on licence or parole are on probation but other countries use the same

words for both and at least it avoids confusion with people who run pubs.

As the train drew into Wickford, my thinking had moved on to how job titles unite but also divide those engaged in working with people on probation. In the seventies there were, I believe, 'A' and 'B' grade probation officers, grade and rate of pay being determined by factors that included graduate/non-graduate status. In the eighties (or was it nineties?) there was a sense that the titles 'Probation Ancillary' (with its etymological roots in 'hand-maiden') and 'Probation Assistant' were patronising but the introduction of 'Probation Service Officers' did little, in my experience, to reduce the elitism (and inaccuracy) of references to 'qualified' and 'unqualified' staff.

Here's my idea: let's call anyone who is responsible overall for the package of help and controls for someone on probation their 'probation officer' irrespective of who employs them and what training they have been given. There is no legal definition of the qualification you need to be an 'officer of probation' any more** but law does outline what they can and must do...and 'probation officer' will look more sensible at the end of a letter or email while making sense to the person who wants to know who, out all the people they are seeing, is actually their probation officer and the one ultimately responsible for the decisions being made while they are on probation.

Then, how about we call very expert and experienced probation officers, who might coach or supervise others, 'senior probation officers' as long as they still undertake work with people on

probation. This will leave a title: 'probation managers' for those who manage people and activities but are not practitioners.

Following this, we could call just about everyone else working with people on probation on a paid basis 'probation workers' – this could include for example: programme tutors, community payback supervisors, case administrators, resettlement officers, health coaches, peer mentors. Those supporting people on probation for no pay could be called 'probation volunteers' – an advantage of these two titles being to remove the apparent distinction between colleagues who have been on probation themselves ('peers') and those who have not, more accurately reflecting that 'ex offenders' are represented in all job roles, not just the least well paid ones.

Even I don't have the arrogance to suggest job titles for potential Probation Institute members beyond the National Probation Service, CRCs and their tier 2 & 3 providers but it could be that a specialist mental health nurse working with people on probation might want to adopt a title such as 'probation support nurse' and there will, of course, be many potential members working in other public, private and voluntary organisations offering specialist support with, for example, accommodation, substance misuse, employment, training and education with people before, during and after periods of probation for whom use of the word 'probation' would be too limiting in a job title but who would still see the Probation Institute as a useful organisation to join.... after all, you don't have to have grandchildren to be a Granny.

* 2000: 'Work with Abusers; How do We Talk about 'Rehabilitation', Hirst G. in Cox, P. Kershaw, S. & Trotter, J. (eds) Child Sexual Assault: Feminist Perspectives, Palgrave

** Offender Management Act 2007 Part 1 paragraph 9:

"(1)...officer of a provider of probation services means an individual who is for the time being authorised under subsection (2)...

(2) An individual may be authorised to act as an officer of a particular provider of probation services ("the relevant provider") by –

(a) the Secretary of State; or

(b) a provider of probation services (whether the relevant provider or any other provider) who is authorised to do so by the Secretary of State

Institute pledge: support the cause



by **Laura Martin**,
Director of the
Probation Institute

When joining the Probation Institute as a member and then a director I had no idea of the tensions that existed around its inception nor did I envisage that it would have been anything other than a welcome initiative in the wake of the trauma of Transforming Rehabilitation.

The Institute's aim is transparent: To be a place where quality practice is both celebrated and innovated and where staff of all levels can be supported in developing their careers. Whilst the PI was born out of difficult and conflicting times, this is not indicative of its meaning or purpose.

I see the Institute as something that can transcend the barriers that the separation of services has created. It is not about the NPS or CRCs, it is not even just about Probation. Anyone working in the sector can join the Institute and find a home, they can learn and develop, participate in the advancement of research and practice in the field as well as join the professional register.

The PI is about demonstrating your commitment to your own career as well as to the wider industry.

At our recent Annual General Meeting we discussed why the PI has not yet flourished and the message appeared to be that staff saw the Institute as connected to government and to TR, as opposed to something that stands outside (and hopefully above) the changes.

Without doubt we lament the passing of the Service as it was, but we are focusing on the future and working to support practitioners to be successful in our 'brave new world'.

We are working hard to challenge pre and misconceptions and to engage staff to promote and develop the Institute. One way we are seeking to do this is by making pledges making a public promise about one step we are going to take to improve ourselves and the work we undertake.

Maybe this is about promoting the PI in your workplace, entering your details and CPD onto the register or taking that next step in terms of developing your career.

At a time when failings in the provision of criminal justice services are once again in the media, we owe it to ourselves and to the communities we work within to champion the excellent practice, commitment and achievement we represent.

So join the Institute and make your personal professional pledge. And if you feel able to share that with us and other members, so much the better!

Joining the Institute

The Probation Institute offers a range of services and activities that give recognition and support to the professional development of individual probation practitioners and of others working in the sector.

To become a member of the Probation Institute is quick and easy.

Join by following the link below and choose an appropriate level of membership depending on your qualifications and experience level:

www.probation-institute.org/membership/

1. Choose your level of membership
2. Enter your details in the relevant boxes
3. Your employer may have agreed to pay for your subscription and you will have a coupon code for that, or you otherwise have a discount coupon code. Enter that code in the Payment Voucher box
4. Checkout – you will be directed to a payment method

Once you have completed the process to the Institute you will receive email confirmation and a note of your membership password.

There are three ways to pay for your annual membership:

Option 1:

If you wish to renew your current membership and pay via PAYPAL, please log into your Probation Institute account first, and then go to (click link):

www.probation-institute.org/member-checkout/?rid=pkuHFX

This will allow you to set up a payment subscription through PayPal (including the option of recurring payment which may be cancelled at any time).

Option 2:

You can pay your membership by cheque, payable to the "Probation Institute Ltd" and post to 2 Langley Lane, London SW8 1GB.

Option 3:

Electronic bank transfer.

Bank: NAT WEST

Acc Name: Probation Institute Ltd

Sort Code: 56-00-31

Acc No: 26899647

As a member you will benefit from

- Joining professional networks where like-minded colleagues in the sector can share experience and learn
- Professional events throughout the year focusing on specific issues of interest to probation or community justice and contributing to continuing professional development
- Practitioner conferences bringing together probation workers and others from all sectors considering strategic issues and providing opportunities to showcase

innovative practice and its outcomes

- The Probation Quarterly, the Institute's magazine, keeping members in touch with key developments and sharing of good practice
- Up to four Sir Graham Smith annual awards for probation or community justice projects, offering an opportunity for practice based research or evaluation with academic supervision
- Contribute to the development and dissemination of practice guidelines or Institute Position Statements, enabling practitioners to access up to date and relevant information
- An online Knowledge Centre to disseminate and share reports or other documents of interest to practitioners, and (subject to agreement with academic or other library services), wider portal access to other sources


Contact:

Please contact Yasmin Jankowski-Doyle (pictured below) for queries relating to membership, change of address, subscription matters, bank details, etc, by email or telephone:

Email: admin@probation-institute.org

Telephone (main switchboard):
020 3053 3551





Take your professional
career to the next level

wherever you work in probation and community justice

We will support you every step of the way



▶ **Professional Development Framework ...**

gives you the structured framework, developed with employers and trainers, that will enable you to progress steadily throughout your career. It helps employers ensure their employees have the right skills and trainers to plan and deliver courses that are relevant and effective.

See overleaf for full details.

▶ **Registered Practitioners Directory and 'MPInst' designation ...**

ensures your skills, experience and qualifications get the recognition they deserve. One of the benefits of becoming a Registered Practitioner is that you will be able to use the designation 'MPInst' after your name.

▶ **Training and learning events ...**

widen your horizons and give you the chance to move into new roles with the right knowledge and skills.

▶ **The Knowledge Bank and Probation Quarterly Magazine ...**

give you the opportunity to further your professional interests by tapping into the pool of specialist articles we commission from leading experts, covering a wide range of issues of interest to our members.

▶ **Professional Networks ...**

put you at the heart of the discussion on evolving best practice in key areas of probation and rehabilitation work. When you join as a member you can choose from our growing range of professional networks. As well as doing vital work in developing best practice guides, they are great for professional networking.

▶ **Discounts ...**

enable you to save money on selected training courses, books and events.

... read more about our membership benefits online

Your career is a precious commodity that is worth protecting and developing

Whatever the level, our professional development framework is open to any practitioner, administrator and manager employed to deliver probation or community rehabilitation services.

Registered Practitioner Level D

Advanced

You have at least 3 years' experience and have obtained a relevant master's qualification (QCF level 7)

Registered Practitioner Level C

Professionally Qualified

You have a minimum of relevant probation officer qualification at QCF level 6 (honours degree)

Registered Practitioner Level B

Professionally Competent

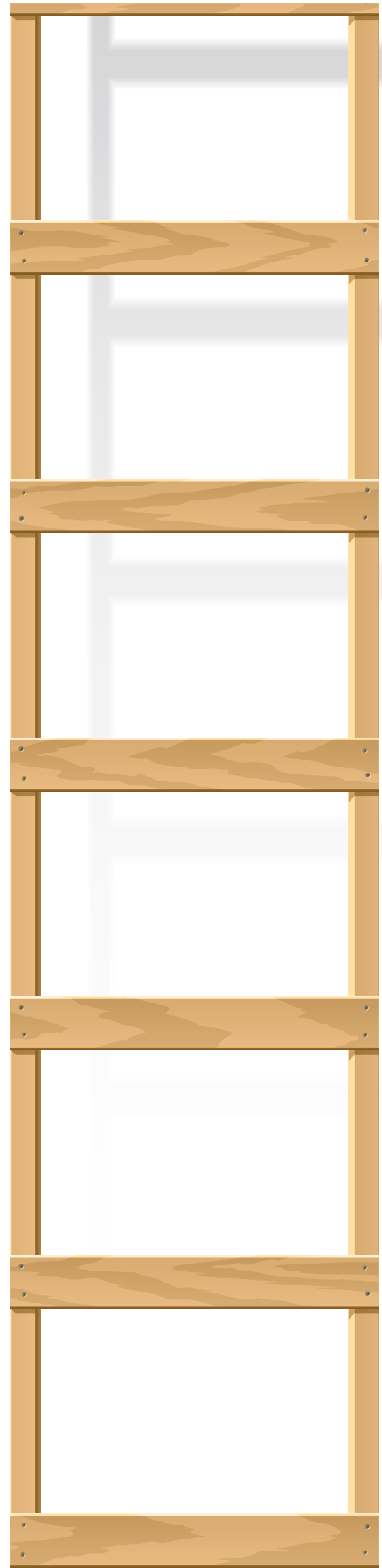
You have a minimum of relevant Level 3 Vocational Qualification, a Diploma in Probation Practice or other relevant qualification set at QCF level 3, 4 or 5

Practitioner Level A

Entry Level

You are a practitioner, administrator or manager employed to deliver probation or community rehabilitation services.

No minimum qualification level.



The Professional Development Framework – and how it will help you

Read Helen Schofield's article about the framework on page 4

This framework gives you the right personal development structure so that you can advance your career in a way which is synchronised with both the needs and expectations of employers and the courses delivered by trainers.

The framework:

- **offers** a holistic view of the probation and rehabilitation professional environment
- **enables** members of the Probation Institute to identify their professional level on the Probation Register
- **describes** the range of generic and specific professional activities and competencies across all types of organisation in the probation and rehabilitation environment
- **aligns** job descriptions with professional activities, national occupational standards and the Probation Register
- **provides** guidance on learning programmes, qualifications and continuous professional development
- **facilitates** a “one-stop-shop” of “endorsed learning providers” for probation and rehabilitation.

Using the framework:

- **HR managers** will be able to apply a consistent approach to describing the professional activity and competence required in new and existing roles
- **learning & development** providers will be able to align learning opportunities with professional activities and competencies
- **practitioners & managers** will be able to identify relevant learning and development; and be able to describe equivalence across the Sector

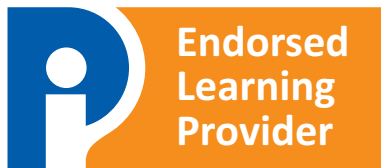
The framework will enhance:

- Recruitment, selection and promotion processes
- Job analysis and job descriptions
- Job applications and preparation
- Performance appraisal
- Procurement specifications
- Bid development
- Development of learning and qualifications

Find out more on our website: www.probation-institute.org



Endorsed Learning Providers - for high quality training



We have set up a scheme to endorse learning providers in the probation and rehabilitation sector and support access to high quality training that fits in with the professional development framework.

Cutting-edge and transferable skills - for whatever the future holds

We recognise that there is a lot of change and volatility in employment within probation and rehabilitation at the moment.

Some people are losing their jobs and often having to move to a different kind of working environment - from public to voluntary or private sector. This uncertainty doesn't mean you should put your career and professional development on hold.

If you are happy where you are, then rapidly developing your expertise

and breadth of knowledge through participation in the Probation Institute is going to put you in an advantageous position when employers are choosing people to fit into new delivery models.

If you are looking to move, then don't undervalue your own experience and the learning you can gain from the Probation Institute.

The fundamentals of probation - knowing how to work with and support difficult and challenging people - is an invaluable skill wherever you go.

The Probation Institute in a changing world



**Professor
Paul Senior**
Chair of the
Probation Institute

"We recognise that it is a stressful time to be working in probation and rehabilitation because of all the change taking place in the wake of the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda.

As professionals, we owe it to our service users, communities and colleagues to continue to strive to do the best quality work we can, within the time and resources we have available. This makes thinking carefully about what makes best practice more important than ever. And this is where we can help.

Conceived prior to TR, the Probation Institute is an independent body that can work with you and your colleagues to further evidence-based professional practice. We believe we have a vital role to play in the evolving future of probation and rehabilitation."

Our Values & Code of Ethics

All our members sign up to our Code of Ethics which underpins the profession and supports the Institute's objective of ensuring the highest possible professional standards in service delivery and conduct. Our ethics are summed up in the eight key principles below.

- ▶ We believe in the ability of people who have offended to change for the better and become responsible members of society.
- ▶ We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of the individual.
- ▶ We are committed to promoting social justice, social inclusion, equality and diversity.
- ▶ We believe in the worth of probation supervision in the community, based on establishing positive relationships with service users, to promote their rehabilitation.
- ▶ We recognise that full consideration should be given to the rights and needs of victims when planning how a service user's sentence will be managed.
- ▶ We recognise the importance of training for identified levels of competence and of continuing professional development.
- ▶ We are committed to the development of knowledge, through research, to inform probation policy and practice.
- ▶ We are committed to acting with professional integrity.

Why joining your Probation Institute matters

The Probation Institute exists for its members and our main source of funding is member subscriptions - so we need you to join and renew every year. With your support, we can work together to shape the type of probation and rehabilitation community we would all want to work in.



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"I joined the Probation Institute because having a very highly qualified and autonomous workforce really matters to me."

Anne Burrell

Senior Probation Officer, Thames Valley CRC



"I joined the Probation Institute because I think it is critical we maintain our professionalism and values"

Diana Binding

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addiction and
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community
engagement



domestic
abuse



desistance



education &
training for
service users



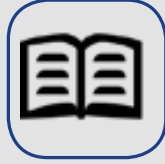
electronic
monitoring



employment
for service
users



equality &
diversity



ethics &
values



evidence
& effective
practice



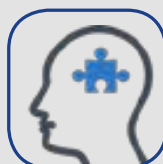
health
partnerships
and practice



homes and
housing



international
comparisons



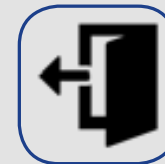
mental
health



peer
mentoring



public
protection



resettlement
from prison



restorative
justice



sentencing



service user
engagement



supporting
ex-services
personnel



women &
justice



working with
victims



young people
& justice

MOVING WITH THE TIMES



Helen Rinaldi, HM Assistant Chief Inspector of Probation, explains how her team has been developing a less prescriptive approach to inspection to reflect the reality of service delivery in a post-Transforming Rehabilitation world.

At HMI Probation we have invested a great deal of time and effort over the past year in reviewing the way in which we inspect both adult probation and youth justice services.

With the huge changes associated with the Government's Transforming Rehabilitation programme, it was timely, and indeed essential, for us to re-evaluate the way we conduct inspection in the new delivery environment.

Given the level of change in the adult probation world, we have deliberately chosen to prioritise developing a new inspection regime for this arena first, but we recognise that, in order to maximise the benefits arising from this review, we need to bring improvements in our inspection practice to the youth justice world too.

So as to allow the new organisations delivering probation services time to settle down and become established, our core adult inspection programme over the past year – the Early Work programme – has taken more of a thematic approach, reporting periodically on a 'batch' of inspections, rather than specifically commenting on the performance of individual NPS divisions or CRCs.

By the time we finish our Early Work inspections in February 2016, we will have visited all of the 21 CRCs and the 7 NPS divisions over the lifespan of this programme. We will produce an overarching aggregate report on the whole programme in the early summer.

In developing our fresh approach to inspection, we want to put the service user 'centre stage' and to provide a greater focus on how services have had an impact on the individual, and, in turn, on the public. We will focus on what has been achieved with individuals and the extent to which the work of probation practitioners (and others

linked to individual cases) has made a difference to what has been achieved.

We hope to get to the heart of whether probation services are effective through examining both the quality of practice and the impact of what has been delivered.

Quality + Impact = Effectiveness is the simple equation for this.

Within our Quality & Impact inspection reports, we will comment on whether:

- Reoffending is reduced
- The public is protected from harm
- Individuals abide by their sentence.

In order to comment on these aspects, we will consider four practice themes; service user engagement, assessment and planning, delivering interventions and reviewing progress. We will also look at leadership, management and partnership working, and evaluate the positive impact achieved in relation to each element.

As with previous programmes, we will examine a number of 'practice inspection' cases during the first of two inspection fieldwork weeks. As before, this will involve an interview with the responsible officer, but one which is much more discursive given the emphasis on outcomes achieved, rather than on adherence to standards or process.

In every case where we can, we will also speak to the service user to gain their unique perspective on progress made. In the second fieldwork week, we will then explore the themes emerging from these practice cases, selecting a small number for greater scrutiny via more in-depth 'case reviews'. All this means that inspection activity will be more flexible, although we will be operating to a published framework

which is now available on our website.

Since the implementation of TR, there is now much more scope for those providing services to decide upon the details of service delivery. On that basis, it was vital to ensure our new framework was less prescriptive than previously.

We will no longer dictate the 'what' and 'how' of service delivery; but rather we will explore whether the services being provided are contributing to positive change for individuals.

We will no longer dictate the 'what' and 'how' of service delivery; but rather we will explore whether the services being provided are contributing to positive change.

We will address the questions:

- are we convinced that the probation work that is being done should achieve a positive impact, and
- what indicators are there, so far, of progress towards individual desistance?

Through this inspection, by identifying what we have called 'enablers', we will promote effective practice in England and Wales. We will also make recommendations to address 'barriers' to effectiveness.

Although fieldwork for the adult inspections will be undertaken by HMI Probation alone (rather than jointly with other inspectorates),

inspections in England have the underpinning support of inspectors from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Ofsted and HMI Constabulary (HMIC). When inspecting in Wales there will be similar support from HMIC, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW), Estyn and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW). For youth justice inspections, we believe that a multi-inspectorate approach will be necessary, given the multi-disciplinary nature of YOT work.

We recognise the value that deploying 'local assessors' (from the inspected body) has given in previous programmes, and as the Q&I programme becomes established, we will continue to explore the possibilities for their inclusion in Q&I. We will be consulting on how best to do this over the coming months.

As we move towards implementation, our plans for introducing our new Quality & Impact inspection programme have gathered pace. We have now piloted the new methodology twice (in West Yorkshire in June 2015 and in Devon & Cornwall in September 2015), taking a PCC area as the discrete geographical 'unit' of inspection, so that reports have relevance for local people.

The new approach has gone down well with individual offender managers, who gave feedback along the following lines:

"The inspection was very fair".

Another said:

"The experience was... not intimidating in any way. There was less emphasis on process and more on offender engagement than in previous inspections".

We are now poised to conduct

a final 'dress rehearsal' in Bedfordshire (BeNCH CRC and Southeast & Eastern NPS) in February and March 2016, before implementing the new programme from April 2016. We are very grateful to those pilot sites whose feedback has helped enormously in the development of the new programme.

We will also be turning our attention to developing new youth justice inspection methods

over the coming months against the 'backdrop' of the ongoing Youth Justice Review and hope to introduce the Q&I approach to youth justice inspections from October 2016.

All of the above makes for a very exciting period within HMI Probation. We recognise just how challenging the new environment is for probation practitioners and managers alike, and we are keen to play our part in helping to promote

positive outcomes for those coming into contact with probation services, regardless of which organisation is responsible for delivering these. We believe that the new approach to inspection will contribute to the overall improvement of services.

If readers want more information about the new approach, please see our website in the first instance, or get in touch with us at HMIP. enquiries@hmiprobation.gsi.gov.uk Thank you.

The Griffins Society has a vision where the response of the Criminal Justice System to women and girls is proportionate, fair and just.

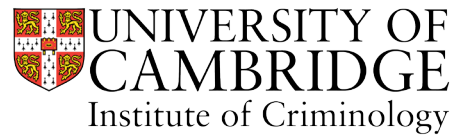
Applications are now being invited for the 2016 Griffins Fellowship Programme. Would you like to contribute to practice and policy debates about women offenders by undertaking your own pioneering research? The Griffins Society promotes effective practice in working with women and girls who are in prison or subject to criminal justice interventions in the community.

Our Visiting Research Fellowship Programme, in partnership with the Institute of Criminology,

University of Cambridge, offers practitioners from the public or voluntary sectors a unique opportunity to contribute. Previous research experience is not necessary as the Programme supervisors provide comprehensive academic supervision and support. For more information and to express an interest, please e-mail:

research@thegriffinsociety.org

The deadline for applications is: **Noon, Monday 9th May 2016.**



The Griffins Society Research Fellowships Programme

A unique research opportunity

Would you like to contribute to practice and policy debates about women offenders by undertaking your own pioneering research? A Griffins Research Fellowship could provide the opportunity you have been looking for. The Griffins Society promotes effective practice in working with women and girls who are in prison or subject to criminal justice interventions in the community.

Griffins Research Fellows carry out their year-long research projects alongside their employment; they receive support from the Society and from our partners, the Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge; the Society provides a modest research grant and travel bursary and we help with promoting Fellows' findings at the end of the Fellowship. Previous research experience or a degree is not necessary, although applicants must be capable of studying and writing at or near degree level.

Griffins Fellowship research is influential, so if you are passionate about the need for more effective criminal justice engagement with women and girl offenders, this is your chance to help shape the future.

For more information about the Griffins Society Research Fellowships Programme and how to apply, please email the Director: Chris Leeson
chris.leeson@thegriffinssociety.org

The closing date for applications for 2016 is: Noon,
Monday 9th May 2016

THE CORNERSTONE FOR ALL WE DO



Reflecting on practice is advocated by the Ministry of Justice and NOMS - with the ultimate aim of enhancing service user engagement. Social researcher **David Coley** examines its use in

the post-Transforming Rehabilitation landscape and discovers that unmanageable workloads are leading to a lack of time for reflection.

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and its executive agency the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) value reflective practice as a key aspect of probation officer skills training. They place it within a context of Civil Service continuous professional development (CPD) and have in recent years expended extensive resources in enhancing its everyday application amongst frontline staff. Both agencies advocate use of the Gibbs model of reflective practice and encourage its ongoing use amongst probation staff within a framework of reflective line management supervision, ultimately designed to enhance service user engagement (NOMS, 2012; MOJ, 2011; CSL, 2015).

Whilst the development of reflective practice is advocated by the MOJ and NOMS, its recent application has occurred within a context of seismic organisational transition. With the advent of the Transforming Rehabilitation (TR) programme, intended to introduce a mixed economy of service provision, probation services in England and Wales have arguably undergone one of the most turbulent transitional phases within their history. Perhaps the dust has not yet settled on the extent to which any transformative effects have occurred, as academic contestation in this area continue to flourish (Dominey, 2012; Burke, 2014). The TR initiative has led to the reorganisation of the National Probation Service (NPS) and creation of 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies across six England based divisional areas. Wales forms its own division.

In the context of wholesale structural changes over the last two years, questions arise relating to the extent to which reflective practice actually occurs amongst frontline staff. A current empirical study facilitated through the Sir Graham

Smith research awards, working in collaboration with the Probation Institute, is exploring such questions. The extent to which reflective practice is undertaken by probation officers within the NPS is being examined. If it happens, how, where and when does it occur? What barriers may exist to prevent its application and how are these overcome? Do probation officers value it as an aspect of their practice and what meaning does it hold for them?

The research study is designed in part to allow the voices of probation officers to be captured. The narratives of ten experienced probation officers practicing within the NPS are conveyed through semi-structured interviews from across the South-East and Eastern Division. A balanced mixture of male and female officers provide the research data, with a patterned response being sought in relation to the analysis of findings. Their practice experience includes working within Offender Management Units, prisons or courts. Some of the respondents speak of reflective practice within a multi-agency working environment and relate their reflective experiences to such forums as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Committees or Integrated Offender Management. Most bring a wealth of life experience to their roles from previous employment sectors and this can assist them in making sense of their current working environment.

Martin offers this interim research report its title when expressing that for him reflective practice provides a “cornerstone” and “foundation” for all his professional probation work. For Camilla; “I don’t think I could do my job without it, you’d drive yourself completely crazy”, whilst for Carl, without the time and space to reflect “you’d just be delivering a

programme of mechanically checking people in”. These personal accounts speak of the value and meaning of reflective practice for probation officers, whilst prompting questions around the personal agency and identity of those who put themselves forward as research respondents. Voices speak of the context in which they practice and the daily challenges they face during turbulent times.

In seeking some patterned responses within the interim

“Respondents express views of this (Transforming Rehabilitation) being a morale sapping, unpleasant working experience. An experience in which the fear of, or witnessing of, staff exhaustion and burn-out is apparent.”

research findings we begin with the most strident themes that form a backdrop to all respondent narratives, namely those of unmanageable workloads, lack of time to reflect and information overload. Much of the work and information overload has occurred following the implementation of the Transforming Rehabilitation programme in 2014 and its resultant transitional phase. Research respondents express views of this being a morale sapping, unpleasant working experience. An experience in which the fear of, or witnessing of, staff exhaustion and burn-out is

apparent. This is within an increasing culture of directive management style and probation officer insecurity, with feelings of distance from any form of meaningful involvement. This then forms the context in which probation officers have attempted to overcome these structural barriers and undertake reflective practice over the last two years, as their comments portray a world of competing interests, needs and professional assumptions.

So what are the interim research findings telling us in terms of how probation officers understand reflection and apply it to their daily work? Respondents indicate that reflection is seen as more of a process than a one-off occurrence, with ideas of ‘digesting’, ‘absorbing’, and ‘discussing’ everyday practice, interactions and events being identified. This implies a sense of applying structure and formality to reflective practice. Within this process, specific areas being reflected upon relate primarily to issues of service user interaction and skills utilisation within supervision sessions. In broader terms probation officers reflect upon casework management practices and within this a sense of professionalism within their job roles. Self awareness and self improvement appear within expressed understandings of reflection, as does colleague support across all grades, especially Senior Probation Officer (SPO) line management supervision.

Interim findings further indicate that reflective practice remains valued by probation officers as all interviewees attach significant personal value and meaning to it. This value sits within wider professional identities and within a continuous development process, enhanced further if also perceived as being valued by the NPS through its line management structure. Experiences of the personal value of

reflective practice are additionally associated with job satisfaction, being 'honest' with oneself, maintaining wellbeing and feeling a sense of agency and control.

So how do probation officers actually go about practicing it in an everyday context? One clear theme to emerge is that probation officers do not reflect on their own. None of the respondents spent individual, personal time using such devices as the Gibbs reflective cycle. What is seen as preferable is a more one-to-one approach either with SPO line managers in supervision or through adopting a reflective stance if having access to a psychologist or counsellor. This would be traditionally seen as a more clinical approach to thinking about ones practice in a structured manner. Equally valued and occasionally utilised was that of some form of group reflection, generally referred to as occurring in peer group learning settings. With all favoured approaches, the issue of trust between participants is seen as a key element of the process.

In terms of what subject matters probation officers focus on within their reflective practice an array of areas emerge. As indicated earlier, skills development provides a strong theme, set within a wider context of treating all individuals with fairness, honesty and equity. This includes diversity awareness that intersects issues of gender, impairment, ethnicity and economic status. It is reassuring to know that probation officers participating in this study give reflection to issues of risk decision making, public protection and individual rehabilitation of

those in their charge. What is less reassuring is that risk decision making is usually too hasty, prioritisation of risk is difficult with all cases being of heightened risk, and inter-agency dynamics can be counter-productive. Further areas of reflection include the individual emotional intelligence and expression of probation officers within a less than fully supportive organisation and when coping with a backdrop of information overload.

What are the emergent findings to be drawn upon in order to initiate future professional dialogue? Whilst within research narratives some conflation can be seen across ideas of reflective practice, counselling and broader therapeutic SPO interventions, the overriding theme is one of staff needing individual time and space to better manage the demanding emotional and psychological aspects of their roles. Expressed ideas found here are wide ranging. Access to free, unlimited, in-person counselling, beyond what is currently provided, is suggested by several interviewees. More reflective supervision could provide the necessary time and space to address emotional needs as well as consideration of ethical and value driven practice. Lastly, clinical supervision, irrespective of who facilitates it, should in the opinion of some be made mandatory for probation staff. It also has to be noted here that notions surrounding more reflective supervision within a CPD culture were promoted within the SEEDS programme (NOMS, 2012) and continue to find some resonance here within respondents' accounts.

In terms of collective reflective practice, interviewees speak of some form of peer group learning as being most advantages. Again, this needs to be on a regular basis and timetabled into staff diaries as opportunities for group discussion form a strongly patterned response within the research study. This is in contrast to responses and ideas surrounding individually conducted reflective practice methods such as using reflective models, albeit it equates strongly with one-to-one opportunities for discussion through differing forms of line management supervision. Perhaps then, as many questions as answers arise from this study, especially around the areas of clinical supervision, CPD and peer group reflection.

What is clear is the respondents' belief in the professional status of their role and the expectations of reflective practice space being provided. This sits next to notions surrounding probation officers seeking to maintain their emotional wellbeing and work based resilience in the face of an increasingly demanding job role. These expectations carry resource implications and assumptions, but with the prospect of improved case management and service user rehabilitation. Ultimately, the experiences of Martin, Camilla and Carl speak to us of seeking a way forward to a more structured, formalised, timetabled approach to reflection. This is positioned within a broader context of professional development that allows probation officers to make reflective practice the cornerstone of all they do.

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Position Paper 1/16

Date: 1 February 2016



The Probation Institute is starting to publish its views in the form of Position Papers. These are intended to cover issues of the moment as well as more strategic themes. Here is the first on Office Accommodation for probation staff, an issue that appears to be challenging both CRCs and the NPS.

Principles for office arrangements

Introduction

Over much of probation history single room occupancy was a key feature of office arrangements as probation officers dealt with their cases in splendid isolation though perhaps in more recent years with panic buttons. But as the service changed and newer buildings were purchased those arrangements changed. Open plan offices became more popular partly driven by a belief in their creative potential but also because slashed budgets necessitated more frugal arrangements. A more diversified workforce encouraged working together too as did an increasingly office-based culture. Offices became more security conscious as growing concerns for the safety of staff also influenced design.

This paper explores the principles behind constructing office arrangements which support the primary endeavour of rehabilitation, give due regard to the confidential nature of the service user-staff engagement whilst maintaining public and client safety. It examines the latest demand for 'agile working' defined as bringing '*people, processes, connectivity and technology, time and place together to find the most appropriate and effective way of working to carry out a particular task*' (The Agile Organisation 2010). These principles are driven by putting the needs of the service user first in any changes in office configuration.

Principle No 1:

Planners need to ensure that open plan arrangements are appropriate for the target population.

Open plan offices were first mooted by German designer, Le Corbusier in the 1950s. The assumption has always been that it creates worker cooperation, the spread of innovative ideas and a collective work environment. The incidental benefit being cost effectiveness. Recent research now questions this orthodoxy suggesting actually that there are clear physical and mental distractions in the open plan environment and that the loss of privacy, dissatisfaction amongst workers and thinking space are the greatest losses. In social service organisations the loss of privacy also escalates to a serious concern which has to be addressed in any design, given the confidential nature of the interaction with service users. These service users can be vulnerable, have mental health issues, share confidential interactions and thus raise data protection concerns and any design must put their needs at the top.

Principle No 2:

Open plan should not be driven by cost considerations alone or as a backdoor way to encourage home and community working.

Where open plan working has put strain on worker engagement the end result has been the increased use of home working usually at the cost of the worker. It can also lead to unsafe practices in seeing service users out in the community. It is therefore a false economy to assume cost savings through open plan arrangements. The stress of this for workers leads to isolation, mental incapacity and thus impacts on the efficiency of the business model. Probation workers need to be able to find spaces they can discuss their work and receive support. Also whilst community working is an aspiration the PI would support it should be promoted in its own right not as a consequence of a failure of office environments.

Principle No. 3:

In any office environment there must be private space for confidential and difficult conversations.

At the heart of engagement between probation and service users is the gaining of mutual respect to encourage the rehabilitative endeavour. This is not possible where arrangements are inadequate to deliver a secure and private space for such conversations. A current trend towards the use of pods with half height screens between them is inappropriate and cannot be condoned. Whilst the worker needs arrangements where they can be safe this has always been possible in conventional interview rooms and this should be the norm. Sufficient space must be available so that all such interviews can be conducted in the right therapeutic and safe environment. Workers are asking service users to be open and honest in their interactions this is simply not possible if their conversations can be overheard.

Principle No: 4:

Open plan arrangements must facilitate workers to develop good working practices with service users

Evidence suggests that open plan can cause stress and lower productivity, particularly for work that requires contemplation and thought. Noise, such as phones ringing or colleagues chatting, is a problem for concentration and distracts workers from tasks requiring concentration, complex processing and creative thinking. Few can work without interruption and many staff find it a major source of stress which is exacerbated when workload demands are high. Blueprints for change which may look convincing on paper are not worth the anticipated savings if not conducted with worker satisfaction in mind. Workers and service users should be consulted and their views taken on board when open plan arrangements are being introduced.

Principle No 5:

Open plan arrangements must ensure that there are no costs to the physical well being of their staff

Although introducing open-plan offices may appear cheaper in the short-term, providers must acknowledge the indirect costs to the wellbeing, performance and retention of staff. One piece of research reported that *'people who work in open-plan offices are less healthy. They typically experience more headaches, fatigue and stress-related illness, and are at increased risk of infectious diseases'* (Kinman and Garfield, 2015) Probation's productivity comes from its staff and such a finding should give rise for concern about introducing practices which would increase stress and dissatisfaction already experienced by the dislocation caused by the new spilt arrangements.

Principle No 6:

In planning office environments planners need to take note of the research evidence and act accordingly.

Despite the apparent support for open plan arrangements *'In 2011, a review of more than one hundred studies about office environments found that, although open offices fostered a symbolic sense of organizational mission, and made employees feel like they were part of a more laid-back, innovative organization, they were damaging to the workers' attention spans, productivity, creative thinking, and satisfaction'* (Taylor, 2015) one study citing a 62 % rise in staff sickness. Younger staff appear to cope better in open environments. Research findings distinguishes between planning the work and doing the work. The former is best achieved in open environments where interchange and ideas creation is at its height. However when undertaking the work this reverses and privacy and quiet space is needed. Respect for service users demands an appropriate level of privacy.

According to a survey of more than 10,000 workers across 14 countries, published in September 2014, a lack of privacy is the number one complaint from workers. (Taylor, 2015) Office workers said they were losing as much as 86 minutes a day due to distractions. The persistence of open plan design in the face of clear evidence against is simply explained.

“From a financial perspective you can get more bums on seats in the open-plan layout,” she says. “It is easier and cheaper to heat and cool and cheaper to fit out than having the same number of people in enclosed offices.” (Taylor, 2015) It is also a design which has greater surveillance capacity on staff. The known benefits of open plan linked to innovation and collegiality are only present when the right balance essential for productive work is achieved; including breakout and quiet spaces, private zones for phone calls, interview rooms for private service user-staff conversations. Open offices can work if this balance is achieved but, research is clear *‘if you ‘rack ‘em and stack ‘em’ with no place for people to chill out, then you’re going to have unhappy, stressed and distracted workers’*(Taylor, 2015)

Conclusion

The PI is in favour of making the most of more modern arrangements for office accommodation but urges serious attention to the evidence base which challenges the conventional wisdom that open plan is the best and only solution. Staff understand the arrangements which enable them to work effectively and their views are crucial to the construction of workable arrangements. Service users can be unpredictable and care must be exercised to introduce arrangements which protect the security and well-being of staff, accessibility and inclusivity, adaptability, openness and interaction across workspaces as well as ecological sustainability.

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Locked out

Children's experiences of visiting a parent in prison

More time
to visit
dad or
family
member!

Quicker to
go into the
prison - lose
time on visit!

no arguing
Mum & dad

More time
for kids
aged
13 PLUS.

Nice people


Recognise
certain
events!

If Search
was not
a pat
downs!

Bit more
Private
times!

PUTTING THE FAMILY FIRST



A prison visit to a parent is an important experience for a child. But viewing children as security risks can easily lead to feelings of humiliation which may damage the process of family integration.

Neera Sharma, Assistant Director of Barnardo's Strategy Unit, tells *PQ* of a new report by the charity which seeks to ensure that all prison visits are positive and meaningful for children.

A new research report from Barnardo's: *Locked Out* looks at children's experiences of visiting a parent in prison. It makes recommendations, based on children's voices, as to how prison visits could be positive and meaningful for children, so they feel more inclined to visit their incarcerated parent.

On the whole prisons understand maintaining strong family ties is the key to successful resettlement and reducing reoffending up to 39 per cent.¹ In reality, however, 45 per cent of prisoners lose touch with their families while inside.²

Prison rule 4 is clear: "Special attention shall be paid to the maintenance of such relationships between a prisoner and his family as are desirable in the best interests of both."

Over the past year, Barnardo's has been researching what the prison system does in practice to 'best promote the interests of [the prisoner's] family'.

To find out, Barnardo's spoke to children and their families about their experiences of visiting one of three male prisons --in focus groups, during domestic visits, and family visit days.

A Freedom of Information request from Barnardo's reveals more than 17,200 individual visits were made to prisons every month by children in 2014 in England and Wales. Government estimates suggest each year around 200,000 children experience the imprisonment of a parent (England and Wales).³

Family visits are important for the children, the prisoner and society so it's imperative that attention is paid to making them easier and more pleasant so families and children feel more inclined to keep in touch.

Above all Barnardo's has been inspired by some pockets of excellent practice to ask that all family visits are seen as part

of a positive process of family integration, rather than as a security risk.

Making searches and visit halls child friendly

One of the main barriers to comfortable, positive visits which Barnardo's researchers discovered was the assumption that family members - even small children - visiting prisons are a security risk.

The majority of prisons put visits management in the hands of their security teams meaning that searches and the conduct of domestic visits are tinged with suspicion, leading to feelings of stigma and shame for children. Children aged 5- to 18-years in focus groups, as well as mums and grannies, told researchers that each time they were searched they felt anxious and humiliated.

Quite young children are asked to stand on the spot separately from their carers—who, worryingly, may already be the other side of a closed door; dogs sniffed the faces of the smallest children; guards did not speak to them, and hairbands were removed and taken away.

Researchers even heard about a week-old baby whose nappy was searched and expressed breast milk opened and sniffed. These stressful experiences are likely to deter, rather than encourage, children from visiting parents in prisons.

To help make visits easier for families, Barnardo's recommends searches be made more child friendly and proportionate to the security risks posed.

Staff could speak to children they are searching and even smile. Young children should be searched together with their carer. Children and families experience the visit as a special occasion and dress up a bit. Some girls were saddened by having their accessories taken away.

There is no clear evidence

that parents are using young children and babies to smuggle in contraband; Barnardo's suggests that intrusive searches be restricted to cases where there is clear intelligence of smuggling.

Beyond searches, Barnardo's urges prisons to make a cultural shift in the way they approach family visiting. Prisons should view visits as part of the family intervention/integration process, rather than a matter for the security team.

Children...told researchers that each time they were searched they felt anxious and humiliated. There is no clear evidence that parents are using young babies and children to smuggle in contraband; Barnardo's suggests intrusive searches be restricted to cases where there is intelligence of smuggling.

This has already been achieved at HMP Parc where the report notes that during social and family visits officers actively engage with families to promote positive relationships between fathers and their children. Parc prison is currently analysing reoffending data and noting improvements, as well as better behaviour during, and after, family visits.

As part of the research, Barnardo's

researchers also joined play workers inside visits halls and observed children whilst providing play activities. There was a noticeable difference between regular domestic visits and the friendly, informal atmosphere on Family Visit days.

Children attending those days really appreciated the difference, especially the chance to have physical contact and play freely with the parent in prison.

Sharing a special meal, having cuddles and doing crafts together during a visit of four or five hours visibly improved the closeness of children to their dads. Significantly, though, family visit days in most prisons are only available to prisoners on enhanced status.

Beyond the observations of Barnardo's researchers, children also told us they would like to see improvements to play facilities and the chance to bring in schoolwork and homework to share with their dads.

As a group of primary school children told us: "We like it when there is a homework club and we can show our dads what we are doing in school."

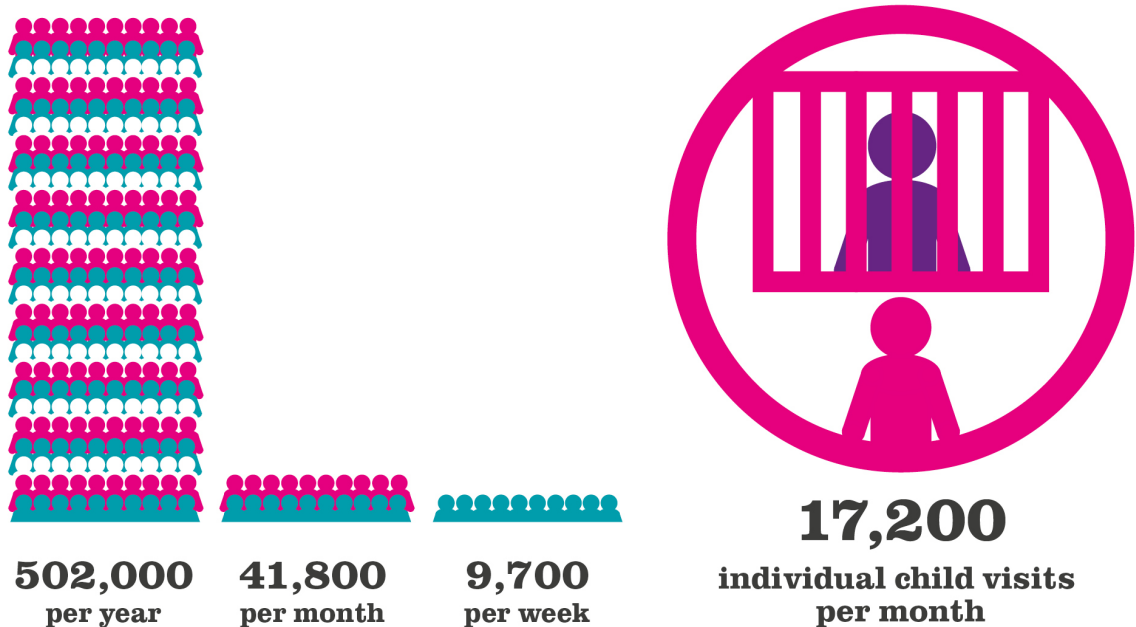
An outstanding example of bringing in children's education into the prison is the *Children's Showcase* at HMP and YOI in Bridgend. At these events, the child's teacher comes into the prison to discuss their progress with parent inside, connecting the parent with their education in a way that other parents take for granted.

Allowing children to bring in homework, school reports and reading scheme books into prisons may be one way to incentivise prisoners to improve their own literacy and numeracy.

Lots of excellent organisations run play facilities and visitor centres, often with volunteers and with the support of Governors. However availability can vary and many older children found the facilities too

Locked out

Prison visits made by children:



Let's stop punishing
#ChildrenOfPrisoners

**Believe in
children**
 **Barnardo's**

young for them. Barnardo's would like to see a consistent national standard informed by Ofsted, for these facilities and for children to be able to share their educational progress without suspicion around bringing in reading books.

Towards a family friendly prison visiting policy

One of the most significant recommendations from Barnardo's report is that children's visits to male prisons should be separate to the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme (IEP). This would impact on thousands of families, allowing many more to have improved and extra visits and special child-friendly family visit days.

The IEP scheme was tightened up

in 2013 and between 2012-2014 there was a 52 per cent increase in the numbers of prisoners on basic status (900 men) and a 16 per cent decrease in enhanced (5,900) reducing meaningful contact with their fathers for many more children.⁴

Readers of *Probation Quarterly* will be aware that it is now much harder to achieve enhanced status,

especially for prisoners in overcrowded jails, or with mental health or addiction problems; researchers met some children who had never had a family visit day and were unlikely to have that close contact with their father or even have more frequent domestic visits.

Visits from family are not in the same category as games consoles, TVs or gym time, so Barnardo's argues they should not be part of the IEP scheme.

The guidance for women's prisons states that children should not be penalised from visiting or contacting their mother because of the mother's behaviour.

The number of visits by children should not be restricted to service the needs of an incentives scheme. Incentives schemes should therefore never be linked to any access to family visits. Barnardo's would like to see this sound guidance

replicated in male prisons.

The guidance for women's prison explicitly acknowledges the right of the child to have contact with their parents according to the UK-ratified United Nations

the parent—with downgrades on the IEP sometimes decided on the word of just one officer.

Furthermore the child's right to maintain contact with a parent through prison visits

The right of the child to have contact with their parents...should not be affected by the behaviour of the parent - with downgrades on the IEP sometimes decided on the word of just one officer.

Convention on the Rights of the Child.

From Barnardo's perspective this is the most important reason to promote positive visits for children to their parent in prison. This right should not be affected by the behaviour of

should not depend on the gender of that parent.

This is why Barnardo's is asking for visits to be detached from the IEP in men's prison exactly as recommended for

The full **Locked Out** report can be downloaded from the Barnardo's website: <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/locked-out-report.pdf>

¹ Ministry of Justice and Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) *Children of Offenders Review*.

² Nacro (2000) *The forgotten majority*. Nacro, London.

³ A Freedom of Information request by Barnardo's revealed that there were around 502,000 visits by children to public prisons in England and Wales in 2014. This amounts to an average of 41,800 visits per month or 9,700 prison visits per week. The same data shows that around 17,200 individual children visit prisons each month (a number of children will visit prisons more than once a month or year).

⁴ Prisoners can be given just 2 hours a month (two one hour visits) to see their children under the current 'IEP system' (2013), which award prisoners 'statuses' of 'basic' (2 hours), standard

(3 hours) and enhanced (4/5 hours). Since 2012 the amount of prisoners on basic has increased by 52% whilst those on enhanced has decreased by 16%. These visiting hours are a guide, though, & in reality vary from prison to prison - with some allocating just 20% of the visiting time to basic prisoners in comparison to enhanced.

Source: Table 1: *Prisoners by Incentives and Earned Privileges (IEP) status as at 31 March, 2011 - March 2014 NOMS offender equalities annual report Annex A*

Prisons often take away weekend visiting rights and family visit days making it extremely difficult for children to see their fathers. <http://www.inbrief.co.uk/prison-law/prison-visits.htm>

Consultation Response

Date: 3 February 2016



Review of Level 5 Diploma in Probation Practice

Consultation Response from the Probation Institute

The Probation Institute hosted a Consultation Workshop with NPS on 14th January 2016 at 2 Langley Lane SW8. Attendees represented the National Probation Service, CRCs and Higher Education. See Appendix A.

Summary of the Response

The consultation group like the qualification but have made a number of points which in the view of the Probation Institute would greatly improve the qualification.

1. It is understood that this qualification should define the occupational competence of a probation officer and it is recognised that this competence needs to be informed by a programme of academic study. In turn therefore the assessment of competence should assess the ability to reflect on and apply the relevant knowledge, understanding and values from academic study. The consultation group take the view that further work is required to achieve this in the vocational qualification.
2. The consultation group recognise that the Community Rehabilitation Companies have not yet reached a clear view of their requirements of practitioner/managers at this level, and that new roles at this level may be developed. Nonetheless the group were firmly of the view that there should be one clear role and one (final) qualification for a probation officer, and that revision of this role and qualification should not at this early stage seek to second guess developments in the CRCs. It is of note that CRC representatives in discussion with the Probation Institute have agreed with this view.
3. The group noted that the Level 5 qualification once available could be used by some organisations as a stand-alone qualification unsupported by an academic programme. It is not clear if NOMS will seek to prescribe the use of the qualification. The consultation group have made strong recommendations, below for demonstrating the need for applied knowledge and understanding in this qualification and of the need for academic rigour.

Questions

Section 1 Background of attendees

- See Annex 1

Section 2 Revised Qualification

Q2.1 Do you agree that the Mandatory Units are accessible to all users?

The group expressed some concerns about the evidence of practice requirements in both NPS and the CRCs as these will need to be considered carefully in order to ensure that all the assessment criteria are achievable by all. The concerns include recognising that;

- Some PO roles now hold cases for very short periods of time eg report writing, and may not easily be able to provide evidence of assessment of change over a sustained period

- Few POs now operate in court setting
- It was suggested that placements in wider agencies should be considered, particularly Tier 2 and Tier 3 Providers as well as reciprocal arrangements for placements between CRCs and NPS.

Q2.2 Do you agree that optional Unit 6 Produce reports on service users including those who present a risk of serious harm, is accessible to learners in the NPS field?

This unit was seen to be appropriate and achievable by NPS practitioners, however it was the unanimous view of the group that it should be redrafted to be achievable by both NPS and CRC trainee POs. All four learning outcome sections of Unit 6 should be achievable by all candidates.

Q2.3 Do you agree that optional unit 7 Produce reports on service users for professional audiences, is accessible to learners in the CRC field?

This unit was seen to be unnecessary, see below in response to Q2.4

Q2.4 Do you agree that there should be two separate optional units on producing reports

The consultation group was invited to consider this question in three small discussion groups. The groups then presented feedback in a plenary session. The three groups were unanimous in their view that there should not be separate optional units for the following reasons;

- Two units would be divisive in terms of future roles, ability for staff to move between NPS and CRC and prison based roles.
- As the consultation group had accepted that unit 3 could apply to both NPS and CRCs there seemed little logic in separating at this point in the qualification
- POs in CRCs will prepare reports assessing risk for formal hearings and make recommendations, they will need to present these effectively in context. This should be the competence, not the situation
- NPS must have confidence in POs working in the CRCs, and not see them as a second class practitioner
- When practitioners change agencies it is incumbent on the receiving employer to provide training and staff development for all new staff. This should not become a bar to employment.

Q2.5 Do you have any comments in relation to the proposed level of the qualification?

The consultation group recognises that the underpinning knowledge for a fully qualified PO reaches up to Level 6 and that two of the proposed six (required) units in this proposed qualification, which is a significant stage in the overall qualification process, are at Level 6.

The RQF level 5 Qualification Descriptor states:

Has practical, theoretical or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to find ways forward in broadly defined, complex contexts. Can analyse, interpret and evaluate relevant information, concepts and ideas. Is aware of the nature and scope of the area of study or work. Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the reasoning behind them.

Identify, adapt and use appropriate cognitive and practical skills to inform actions and address problems that are complex and non-routine while normally fairly well-defined. Review the effectiveness and appropriateness of methods, actions and results.

The RQF level 6 Qualification Descriptor states:

Has advanced practical, conceptual or technological knowledge and understanding of a subject or field of work to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors. Understands different perspectives, approaches or schools of thought and the theories that underpin them. Can critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and ideas

Determine, refine, adapt and use appropriate methods and advanced cognitive and practical skills to address problems that have limited definition and involve many interacting factors. Use and, where appropriate, design relevant research and development to inform actions. Evaluate actions, methods and results and their implications

The group were concerned that the Revised Diploma at Level 5 does not adequately describe and test the application of conceptual and technical knowledge and understanding required for the PO role, or by the qualification/units level. Knowledge and understanding should be assessed as an applied/integrated part of the work based competence. Unless the knowledge and understanding is sufficiently described there is a risk that the academic component will not be recognised or valued and might be omitted as an employer requirement going forward. This could damage practice. It could also seriously undermine the Community Justice Learning framework, the PO qualification, and could deepen the recent NPS/CRC divide. Therefore whilst not seeking to raise the level the group was keen to achieve better articulated academic/vocational integration.

A number of contributors felt that a greater proportion of the qualification could be pitched at Level 6, with particular reference to Units 1 Professional Ethics, Values and Practices and Unit 5 Rehabilitate, Resettle and Promote Desistance. The two units currently proposed at Level 6 are those addressing risk, and it was observed that the qualification and its level should reflect skills not risk.

Q2.6 The proposed TQT time for the revised Level 5 Diploma is 410 hours. Do you agree with this estimate?

This was accepted as a viable estimate.

Section 3. Unit Content

Unit 1 Demonstrate professional ethics, values and practice

Q3.1 Is there anything you would like to change in the detailed content of this unit?

- What ethical and value concepts and statements is the unit referencing? Suggest at least reference to the Probation Institute Code of Ethics
- It is important to demonstrate professional ethics through reflective practice, and to recognise the importance of reflecting on practice at this level
- Need to include knowledge and application of the Human Rights Act as this grounds all ethical principles
- Need to include challenges of addressing and seeking to resolve ethical tensions/dilemmas
- Need to include awareness of own prejudices, discrimination, labelling; including how this can be expressed through use of language and body language, and reference to theoretical frameworks, could usefully reference Dissonance Theories
- LO 3 presents an opportunity to include “ Demonstrate application of theory/ies” as an assessment criteria and might reference in the guidance theories concerning desistance, punishment, recidivism, welfare, risk, organisational culture
- Suggestion that this Unit should be Level 6 particularly in view of the comments above and the overarching nature of the unit as presents diagrammatically in the draft. If it remains at Level 5, it would mean it overlaps with at least two Level 6 modules but does not have to meet that level.

Unit 2 Assess the risk, needs and responsivity of service users

Q3.2 Is there anything you would like to change in the detailed content of this unit?

- The language in this unit was seen by some as not reflecting a Level 6 Unit
- The group would like to see reference to the application of risk knowledge developed in probation work
- 2.1 Guidance, what is the purpose of stating that “victim impact statements” might be included? Why not a full list of examples, or omit this one.
- 3.3 Remove “needs and..” as this is already covered at 3.2
- 3.4 Add “of responsivity” at the end
- LO 2 and 3 Guidance “assess” should be “assessing”
- LO 4 Suggest retitle “Assess the risk of harm presented by service users”
- 4.1 Add risk of self harm to the Guidance
- 4.3 Replace “opinion” with “assessment/s”
- Reverse 4.4 and 4.5

5.2 should it be users? user’s? or users’?. Behaviour is misspelt

- LO 6 Should there be guidance?
- Pleased to see the term service users instead of offenders.

Unit 3 Manage risk of serious harm to the public

Q3.3 Is there anything you would like to change in the detailed content of this unit?

- Currently the work in NPS and CRCs is not well organised to support all learners to evidence unit 3 but could be arranged
- University timetable; and in house trainers need to be sequenced to reflect the modules
- Request for greater focus on engagement, negotiation and collaboration – working “with” rather than “on” offenders
- Like to see more reference to application of knowledge eg consideration of effectiveness of different types of interventions in particular circumstances
- Guidance states that “Interventions include controls and restrictions” – here as at Unit 2 the group wondered why these two “interventions “ listed and not others?
- Suggestion to rename the unit “Manage risk of harm to the public “
- The group felt that the skills required to assess risk in a CRC are at least as complex as in NPS, if not greater, as the risk of harm in the CRC is not known.

Unit 4 Create an environment conducive to change

Q3.4 Is there anything you would like to change in the detailed content of this unit?

- Summary – Is there evidence to demonstrate what is an environment conducive to change? If so this should be referenced. The consultees would like greater clarity.
- Overall the unit lacks any reference to theoretical evidence and frameworks, which would assist the student and the assessor.
- Could include reference to theory and practice of prosocial behaviour
- Could include reference to theory and practice on benefits of working in partnership
- Could include theories re motivational interviewing, why is this useful in promoting desistance, rehabilitation and resettlement
- LO 2 Assessment criteria may need to be simulated if “complex situations” do not arise naturally, and appropriately with service users, colleagues and other staff

- 3.3 and 3.4 “Engage with and motivate” and “Review of effectiveness of behaviour change” suggests ongoing contact, many POs no longer have continuing contact with service users, eg Report writers. Assessment criteria may need to recognise this and guidance may need to suggest providing opportunities for more extended contact
- 4.4 Concluding relationships may be difficult to evidence, perhaps an assessment criterion about concluding the relationship in a positive and constructive manner, without the second part about encouraging sustained behaviour change would be better
- It was considered that group work should be referenced in this unit as part of the environment conducive to change
- LO 5 Suggest that in this unit which is very much about sharing information emphasises appropriateness, confidentiality and use of protocols

Unit 5 rehabilitate, resettle and promote desistance

Q3.5 Is there anything you would like to change in the detailed content of this unit?

- The group, including very recently qualified officers, were disappointed with this Unit and felt strongly that an important opportunity to develop applied practice should not be missed.
- Both the title and the summary were not reflected in the body which was more focused on the progress of orders. This is an opportunity missed to focus on the practice implications of the important concepts outlined in the title and in the summary.
- Title of the unit includes “rehabilitation” but this is not mentioned in the unit learning outcomes or assessment criteria, suggests the content and language not consistent with/ or meeting the intentions of the unit
- The language is “backward looking” (outdated); the revision offers an opportunity to update it
- Re Desistance – only one of the seven principles is covered (3.5 concerning positive changes)
- No assessment of an individual’s strengths which are protective factors
- Headings are not related to the content, the actual focus is on enforcement
- Does the title and summary need changing, or the content to better align?
- No mention of knowledge of application and processes of theory and concepts; not appropriate to rely on the university alone for this input. Absence of requirement to assess knowledge and theory at this level makes the PTAs role more difficult
- Needs to refer to good practice and National Standards
- The language should be more straightforward, less implicit meaning and should include greater focus on inclusion and collaboration, currently very transactional

Unit 6 Produce reports on service users including those who present a risk of serious harm

Q3.6 Is there anything you would like to change in the detailed content of this unit?

- Summary should include courts and formal hearings
- Separation of the units deskills the CRC PO role, which seems divisive and to have longer terms risks, CRC POs need to be prepared for management and for moving to NPS, prison roles.
- If separated into two units this negates any need for CRC PO placements in NPS
- Criteria 3 and 4 are relevant to CRC POs if the “courts” is changed to “formal hearings” – these two could be combined
- Language is not appropriate to practitioners eg Stakeholders
- Units 6 and 7 could be combined, removing 7 completely

Unit 7 Produce reports on service users for professional audiences

Q3.7 Is there anything you would like to change in the detailed content of this unit

- See comments at questions 2.4 which strongly suggests units 6/7 need to be presented as a single unified unit.

Section 4 Any other comments

- Suggestion to agree national terminology for learners who may be PSOs or wider. Service Users should know that a practitioner is a trainee.
- Comment that the qualification should be “skill based” not “risk based”
- The Probation Institute is happy to assist in drafting or reviewing any of the proposed changes. We would also draw attention to the Probation Institute Professional Development Framework which articulates the professional roles in Probation, Rehabilitation and Community Justice by professional activities and levels. The comments received by the consultation group consolidate the evidence gathered for the Professional Development Framework, but also point to the need for continuing review of the roles and responsibilities of practitioners at all levels, managers and leaders in this changing environment.

Annex 1. Attendees at the Probation Institute Consultation Workshop 14th January 2016.

- Carol Agana London NPS PTA
- Ayesha Begum London NPS Foreign National Unit
- Sean Carter London NPS PQF Programme
- Eric Colwell Essex NPS PTA
- Elaine Dacosta NPS
- Rory Faulkner London NPS PTA
- Dave Ferguson London NPS SPO Equality Manager
- Ursula Finch London NPS PQF Programme
- Rachel Goldhall, University of Portsmouth
- Raphael Hill NPS Manchester ABPO
- Annete Jeter London NPS PTA Lead IQA
- Krystyna Pilinski London CRC
- Claire Presley London NPS SPO
- Saman Quresh London NPS PQF Programme
- Raver Rain London NPS PTA
- Anne Robinson Principal Lecturer, Sheffield Hallam University
- Keith Smith London NPS PTA
- Patrick Wilkes Learning and Development Manager West Yorkshire CRC
- Professor Paul Senior, Chair, Probation Institute/Sheffield Hallam University
- Helen Schofield, Board Director, Probation Institute
- Catherine Fuller, Projects Manager, NPS
- Savas Hadjipavlou, Chief Executive, Probation Institute

ELEVEN "REMARKABLE" PEOPLE HONOURER BY PRINCESS ROYAL

Eleven remarkable people were honoured for their work in the probation services at the 2016 Butler Trust Award Ceremony.

The Trust's Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, presided over the annual event, held at St. James's Palace – 'the Senior Palace of the Sovereign' and which is not open to the public – in the heart of London.

The Butler Trust Awards are perhaps the most prestigious in the field. Around ten Awards and twenty Commendations and are given each year to both recognise and celebrate good practice by people working in prisons, probation, and community and youth justice, across the UK.

Last year saw the 30th Anniversary of the Trust, which was named in memory of the reforming Home Secretary R.A. 'Rab' Butler. Furthermore, although Patron or President of some 340 organisations, the Princess Royal has taken an active interest in the Butler Trust since its inception, and each year visits numerous Butler Trust winners at their place of work.

Additionally, a rigorous process is involved in whittling down the several hundred nominations made annually. It's notable that many of these are made by, or include enthusiastic contributions from, offenders themselves.

Senior panels of experts from across the field in turn read and sift each nomination, produce and debate a shortlist, and then finally judge who will receive an Award or Commendation. Reaching these decisions is made more difficult due to the very high standard of outstanding people working in the sector – as this year's winners attest...

At Kent, Surrey & Sussex CRC, the extraordinary **Joanne Wood** is described as "the mould for the perfect probation officer" while **David Morris** delivers "excellence from behind a desk". **Nigel Hosking** of London CRC is recognised for "pioneering innovative probation practice now regarded as the 'industry standard'".

Dr Julie Carlisle and **Sarah Kane** of the National Probation Service Northwest are praised for developing the innovative Psychologically



Informed Consultation Service, supporting probation staff in the management and care of offenders with a personality disorder.

At Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset & Wiltshire CRC, **Andrew Murray** and **Lisa Potter**, together with **Sue Smith** of Swindon care provider SEQOL, have transformed approaches to autism. Meanwhile **Andy Cereseto**, a volunteer for the Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire & Rutland CRC, has helped turn around a drop in centre for vulnerable people. At Essex CRC, Diversity Officer **Hannah Hunt** has given "the Hannah treatment" to driving changes in policy and practice that have garnered praise from the renowned Stonewall charity, while **Paul Brown** has tackled housing for high-risk offenders with impressive gusto.

The importance of staff recognition – especially during a period of significant challenges and dramatic changes – simply cannot be overemphasised. Indeed, one Gallup survey suggested a lack of employee recognition was the number one reason for staff leaving their post.

The Butler Trust has pioneered this emphasis on recognising and celebrating the outstanding work people do across the sector. Their original focus was on prisons, but 2016 marks the 10th anniversary of its extension to include the probation service – and this year's winners offer an impressive array of the width and depth of inspiring work in the sector.

Although each and every Butler Trust winner is worthy of a detailed article, space here is limited – but the Butler Trust website has extensive and detailed write-ups which can be found under 'Our Winners' in their 'Annual Awards' section.

This year one story among the probation service Butler Trust winners stuck out in



particular as an exemplar of outstanding practice: it also helped that Joanne Wood's nomination included a gripping tale of the power of cake-making – and cycling – to achieve that 'breakthrough moment.'

Jo is based at the Crawley office of KSS CRC, and deals with "some of the toughest cases in probation – those who are under 25 or those with families, who are prolific persistent offenders", explained her nominator, Shane Bruton of the Resettlement Team.

"She is the first to arrive at work and the last to leave and the one who sets the benchmark for everyone around her. She stands out, she's looked up to, and she gets enviable results. Reoffending rates for PPOs in Crawley have reduced by about 20 per cent more than the national average – and I have no doubt that the reduction in crime is in no small part down to one person: Jo."

Praising Jo's "incredible empathy with her service users", Shane explained that "she uses it time and again to make emotional connections which in turn lead to that breakthrough moment when she knows she's completely won the trust of the service user and the real rehabilitation

work can begin."

Shane gave an example in which Jo connected over bike riding: "When the service user wanted a travel warrant one day, she cycled a 10-mile round-trip to deliver them to his door one evening. As she had predicted, they talked about her cycling gear and when she entrusted him with her bike and let him ride it around, he reported back to her that he'd never before ridden a bike he hadn't first stolen."

Another example of Jo's "highly creative approach" is particularly affecting. In Shane's words, again: "When one of her service users, who was newly out of prison and wanting to rebuild his relationship with the young mother of his baby, became anxious about an upcoming birthday present for his partner, Jo went around to his assisted accommodation one evening and together they baked a cake for her. Not only did he experience melting chocolate for the first time in his life, but he learned he didn't have to steal a present for her. He also discovered that his partner – who was brought to tears when she saw the cake – was more impressed by the thoughtfulness and care he'd put into it than any stolen or bought present could have

achieved." They've since asked Jo to help them bake another cake – this time for their daughter's first birthday.

Shane concluded Jo's nomination by noting that "if I had committed an offence and was on probation, I wouldn't want anyone but Jo looking after me because I know for certain she'd be in my corner, believing in my ability to change, fighting her heart out for me."

Jo joined as a trainee and has now been in the job for 10 years and, says Suki Binning, Deputy Chief Executive at KSS CRC, "she lives to help her service users. She is the mainstay in their lives: their focal point for support; the one that understands them and believes in them; she's their role model, and sometimes even – to all intents and purposes – their only family." As Jo says, "I want them all to have the best future. I do believe in them. I believe they can change and that in itself helps to build their belief in themselves. Acknowledging their achievements enables them, so they can make changes and that opens the door to tackling the bigger offending issues." Suki adds that "everyone should have a Jo in their office."

Service users agree. "Jo goes out of her way to help, when other people wouldn't care. She's nice and just cares a lot," said one. "I know she believes in me and that makes me feel good and it's made me want to prove to others that I can and have changed. Jo also helps me think in different ways and do good things for my girlfriend and family and I've learnt a lot from her as well as got new skills. Jo can always just tell when something ain't right, it's like she's got some magical power, she's superhuman!"

In Jo's own words: "I believe in my cases. I understand them as people – and I believe and know they can change. I build trust and I won't give up on them – I'll just keep going until I get that break-through. I always think about the bigger picture. I like to really explore what type of change is a genuine possibility. My cases are complex and I frequently have to use creative means to get to that all important break-through moment."

Jo concludes by saying "If I had to write a formula for getting great results in probation, I'd say it was about the right balance between empathy and toughness, a thoroughness borne of innate curiosity, a belief in what's possible and a commitment to not give up until that possibility

has been reached. I'd like to disseminate this formula across my own CRC and then across probation in general."

The full write-up of Joanne Wood's award-winning work on the Butler Trust website runs to almost 3000 words – and her example, along with real case scenarios and feedback from chief executives to service users, could easily be used as training materials. As, indeed, could most of the stories behind each of this year's probation service winners. From drugs to diversity, from autism to learning disabilities, and from management to reception, the winners shine a spotlight on the complexities and rewards of great probation work.

For decades The Butler Trust has celebrated & promoted work that all too often is unsung. For more than three decades the Trust has been celebrating and promoting the exceptional but all too often unsung work that happens every day in the UK's prisons, probation service, and community and youth justice.

In that time the sector has witnessed enormous change, and a series of demanding challenges, but one consistent factor has consistently emerged: remarkable people doing life-changing work. Look around at your colleagues and consider those who have inspired you, or others, with their dedication, innovation, or leadership and influence that comes from doing their work extraordinarily well: the 2016-17 Butler Trust Award nominations open in May (you can sign up for a monthly or so email that will keep you informed of this and other news at the bottom of the Butler Trust website home page). The Butler Trust is also committed to promoting excellence as widely as possible: its sister website, good-practice.net offers a growing library of relevant expertise from across the sector, which can be explored by key topics.

The consistently impressive commitment of so many people working in the probation services is rarely reported. Yet every day, across the United Kingdom, people are delivering excellence where it counts: in the difficult and often troubled lives of service users. It's complex, challenging, demanding work and, as this year's as well as previous Butler Trust winners show, at its best, it's work that's full of amazing people and stories.

www.butlertrust.org.uk

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