



**CONTINUOUS  
PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT IN  
PROBATION,  
REHABILITATION AND  
RESETTLEMENT**

# Continuous Professional Development in Probation, Rehabilitation and Resettlement

## Introduction

### What is Continuous Professional Development (CPD)?

A Profession needs to be confident that practitioners have up to date skills and knowledge. Continuous Professional Development is the means by which professionals maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills. A CPD Scheme is a system of recognition of this continuing learning and development.

For practitioners, CPD is an investment that you make in yourself; a way of reviewing and planning your development that links learning directly to practice. CPD can help you keep your skills and knowledge up to date and prepare you for new roles and responsibilities. CPD can enhance your confidence, strengthen your professional credibility and help you become more creative in tackling new challenges.

The workplace is a learning community and must be committed to providing opportunities for the continuing learning and development of its entire staff. Professional development is the means by which the employer is able to deliver agency, team and individual development priorities. Our learning comes from many sources, both informal and formal, including reflecting on practice, reading, professional discussion, training, research outcomes and attending conferences as well as accredited qualifications.

In many professions it is the Regulatory and /or Professional Body which recognises and helps to plan and structure such opportunities for continuous professional development, guiding practitioners to new learning opportunities and encouraging them to record their learning systematically. The Probation Institute is committed to supporting all probation Practitioners to have a right to CPD throughout their career and we have the technology through membership to record and acknowledge all learning.

### Why does CPD matter?

Organisations which do not have a systematic approach to CPD cannot be confident that professionals - practitioners, managers and leaders - act on the basis of knowledge and skills that are current and relevant, to help them to bring the most appropriate solutions to the challenges in their work. This matters particularly in areas where there is risk of harm to individuals and where what is considered best practice is fluid and subject to change. This includes updating around policies and procedures but also the time to enhance knowledge and skills and remain relevant to current thinking and evidence-informed practice. This is a shared responsibility and organisations must have an expectation that all employees will take an active role in their own professional development and that all employees have a reciprocal responsibility to support each other.

## Principle 1: Access to CPD must be guaranteed in Probation, Rehabilitation and Resettlement organisations

The lack of a formal continuous professional development scheme for practitioners and managers in probation, rehabilitation and resettlement has been recognised by HMIP and others with concern. This lack of recognition of CPD undervalues the advanced skills and knowledge of the qualified practitioners in the sector, and it condones the absence of recognition for many in a range of organisations.

Employers in probation, rehabilitation and resettlement in the public, private and voluntary sector clearly state that they value professional skills and qualifications. They recognise that practitioners need to learn continuously and refresh their skills working in an environment with vulnerable people and with responsibilities towards the safety of the public. Currently there is no system by which employers can enable their staff to measure, evaluate and record their continuous professional development. In the current period of change and financial pressures it is more important than ever to set clear expectations of professional development for all practitioners and managers. All staff must have an entitlement to access high-quality induction and continuing professional development. The key elements of that CPD entitlement comprises:

- *effective induction and identification of training needs* - needs will be identified through mechanisms such as performance management, self-evaluation, national and local priorities, other internal and external monitoring and feedback evidence and through informal and formal discussions with individuals and teams. The outcome of the needs analysis will form specific CPD plans
- *appropriate access to provision to meet those learning needs* - a CPD commitment will require specified time to be guaranteed to support learning and development
- *evaluation of the impact of such provision* - the quality of training and learning resources must be evaluated to ensure fitness for purpose.
- *organisational commitment to dissemination of evidence-informed practice* - a learning community needs to have access to the latest findings from research



## **Principle 2: All staff should have access to an independent Professional Development Framework and Register to log progress**

A Professional Development Framework sets standards of knowledge and skills (competence), and standards for teaching, learning and qualifications, it offers a map for practitioners and managers to identify routes for progression and to build their knowledge and skills throughout their career in this field. Competence, qualifications and adherence to values are then tied together by Registration which requires ongoing evidence of continuing competence at agreed intervals.

The Probation Institute Professional Development Framework, launched in November 2015, is an inclusive Framework encompassing job roles, professional activities, role related activities, occupational standards and qualifications for all practitioner and manager roles in probation, rehabilitation and resettlement. The Professional Development Framework is aligned to the four Levels ( A-D) of the Probation Register.

The Probation Register is currently voluntary. Registered Practitioners are requested to submit their professional qualifications and professional development plans on Registration and to resubmit every 3 years. The Probation Register encourages and promotes recognised Continuous Professional Development.

## **Principle 3: All employers should endorse an agreed Continuous Professional Development Scheme**

A Continuous Professional Development Scheme offers a formal structure through which employers working with a Regulatory and Professional Body can set a clear sector requirement for CPD, and the method by which CPD should be recorded. A CPD Scheme should be inclusive and accessible; it should set an expectation that practitioners and practice managers will continue to learn and enhance their practice, and that they can demonstrate this. The employer will provide and support opportunities for professional recognition including accreditation of the CPD undertaken.

A CPD Scheme for probation, rehabilitation and resettlement would formally recognise the learning, competence and qualifications underpinned by professional values set out in the Probation Institute Professional Development Framework and the Code of Ethics.

In this diverse and plural field it will be important that a CPD Scheme recognises the wide range of ways in which practitioners and managers learn. The scheme will also need to encourage practitioners and managers to recognise new learning opportunities, and to reflect on and describe their learning.

Different models take more or less formal approaches to the recognition of CPD. These models include

- A Points System in which only professional development that is assessed, approved and quantified by points can be used in a Register ( eg a specified Conference attracts 5 points)
- A system in which CPD must meet agreed learning outcomes to be recognised - eg aligned to NOS in the Professional Framework
- A system in which CPD must meet both agreed learning outcomes and agreed learning hours to be recognised
- A fluid scheme which gives guidance on learning outcomes and learning hours but does not over specify
- Simple guidance in which all recordable learning is accepted - examples might include in house course, qualification, attendance at a workshop or conference, research, case study)

The Probation Institute will work closely with all employers to produce a CPD Scheme acceptable to all and endorsed by learners at all grades.

#### **Principle 4: A set of standards for delivering CPD will quality assure all CPD provision**

All continuous professional development opportunities should only be offered if they:

- meet identified individual, area or national priorities
- are based on recognised evidence-informed practice
- contribute to raising the standards of practice to service users
- respect cultural diversity and the Code of Ethics
- are provided by those with the necessary experience, expertise and skills including those who are Endorsed Training Providers through the Probation Institute
- are planned systematically and staff are supported to take part
- are based, where appropriate, on relevant standards
- are informed by current research and inspection evidence
- make effective use of resources, particularly ICT
- are provided in accommodation which is fit for purpose with appropriate equipment
- provide value for money

- have effective monitoring and evaluation systems including user feedback
- provide opportunity to measure impact

### **Principle 5: A suggested model for a CPD Scheme in Probation, Rehabilitation and Resettlement**

The Probation Institute favours a flexible approach to a CPD Scheme and proposes the following:

1. All CPD should align to the Core or Role Specific Professional Activities or the National Occupational Standards for Probation, Rehabilitation and Resettlement and for Community Justice
2. All CPD should be measured in one hour units eg length of a conference or training course (one full day is 7 hours), length of study, equivalent length of reflection on practice, credits of a qualification.
3. For Regulated Professionals in Probation, Rehabilitation and Resettlement CPD should be recorded as part of the Professional Register
4. The Regulatory and Professional Body for Probation, Rehabilitation and Resettlement should set a minimum requirement of CPD to be recorded annually by all regulated professionals in the sector, and a minimum expectation of those who are not required to be regulated.
5. The Regulatory and Professional Body should produce appropriate and agreed metrics and documentation for a CPD Scheme for Probation, Rehabilitation and Resettlement
6. The Regulatory and Professional Body should produce annual guidance on CPD in terms of key areas for further development
7. The Regulatory and Professional Body should produce an annual report on CPD in the sector with recommendations for improving practice.

## Conclusion

The importance of CPD cannot be overestimated and this Position Paper sets out a direction of travel to which we invite comment and debate. Qualifications are important setting off points for staff and provide benchmarks for the levels at which organisations can expect their staff to be able to perform. However the complexity and range of interventions which all practitioners meet and the continuing need to update, refresh and assess practice means that continuing professional development is vital to the life of all organisations and its staff working in the probation, rehabilitation and resettlement fields. There are now many opportunities for career progression not just within but between organisations and to have an independent verified record of CPD will help and enhance the efficacy of any recruitment process. We commend these principles to you and look forward to engaging in the detail of these issues.



**PI Trainees Conference: April 2017 Learning in action**