



**Ministry
of Justice**



**National Offender
Management Service**

A Competent Workforce To Transform Rehabilitation

From 1st February 2015

Foreword

- 1.1.** These guidelines are issued by the Secretary of State for Justice under Section 10(2) of the Offender Management Act 2007. The guidelines describe the qualifications, experience and training required of an officer of a provider of probation services in relation to work involving the supervision of offenders and other work requiring direct contact with offenders.
- 1.2.** For National Probation Service staff who hold the role of officer of provider of probation services, which now includes the role of Enforcement officer as per the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014 Schedule 4, the Probation Qualifications Framework (PQF), and any successor, will continue to apply. The National Probation Service (NPS) must therefore use the PQF to train and qualify new entrants without the PQF qualifications. Former qualifications recognised by the PQF Regulatory Framework providing eligibility to apply for Probation Officer posts are still recognised, but are no longer available to new entrants.
- 1.3.** For other contracted providers of probation services, staff managing offenders must be competent and suitably trained, and providers must be able to evidence this. This can be evidenced through use of the PQF or an equivalent qualification or an accredited training programme. Any equivalent qualification or training programme should relate to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Probation, produced subsequent to the national functional analysis in 2009 and 2013.
- 1.4.** The NOS highlights the critical knowledge, skills and understanding required for work in the Sector including changes in probation policy/practice relating to professional judgement; offender engagement; desistance from offending; rehabilitation; protection of the public; prison work and restorative justice.
- 1.5.** Details of the PQF, the National Occupational Standards and the accompanying Regulatory Framework, can be found on the Skills for Justice website: <http://www.sfjuk.com/probation-qualifications-framework>

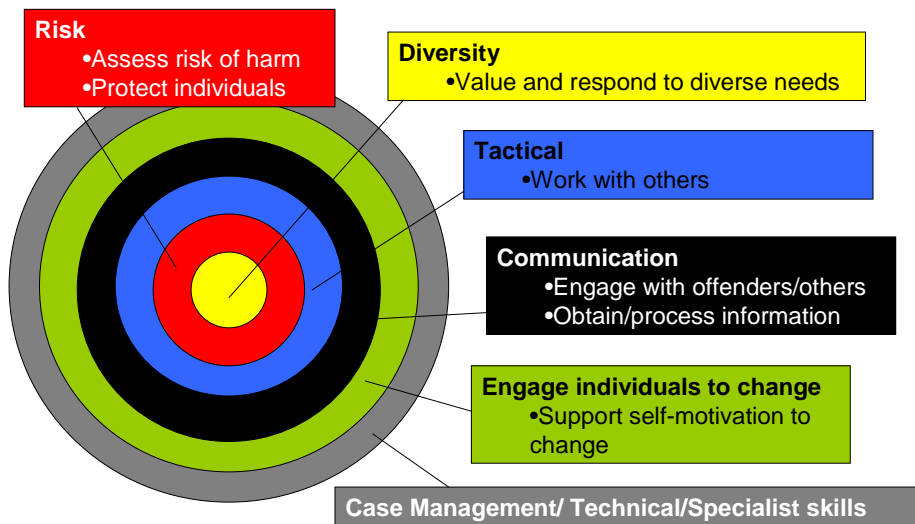
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2. The Core Skill Sets underpinning the National Occupational Standards

The diagram below summarises the core skill sets within the National Occupational Standards:

- a. Assess and respond to Risk of Serious Harm to others
- b. Respond to diverse needs of individuals (Diversity)
- c. Communicate with a range of different people in different settings
- d. Work with others as part of a team and/or with other agencies (Tactical Skills)
- e. Engage individuals to change
- f. Work in a specific work setting (Case Management or other Technical/Specialist area)

Probation Core Competences



Within these skill sets, the range and level of competence will vary depending upon the role undertaken. Further details are provided in Annex A.

3. Core Competences for Responsible Officers, Supervisors and Supervising Officers of contracted probation providers managing offenders.

Case managers will be expected to demonstrate minimum competence within the following skills sets:

3.1. Risk of Serious Harm

An officer of a provider of probation services will need to demonstrate that they can:

- a. Explain the legal and organisational requirements relating to risk assessment and risk management including responsibilities and accountability for ongoing risk identification work
- b. Explain the principles of assessing risk of serious harm and the need for intervention to address that identified harm
- c. Identify the risk of serious harm indicators as they relate to an individual offender and their circumstances
- d. Identify, monitor and review need for interventions by being able to identify the most relevant intervention to address identified need and risk of serious harm
- e. Notify appropriate other colleagues and/or agencies of the likelihood of risk of serious harm in line with organisational requirements
- f. Record and report changes in the assessed level of risk of serious harm of an offender and escalate the case when appropriate
- g. Consider the need to protect victims and take appropriate steps to do so
- h. Identify safeguarding issues where there is a risk of serious harm to vulnerable individuals and demonstrate an understanding of the organisational process for reporting safeguarding issues
- i. Develop risk management plans for offenders assessed as medium risk of serious harm, that address identified risk factors and safeguard others involved

Competence in identifying, assessing and managing risk of serious harm is so central to probation practice that it permeates throughout all the other competence sets.

Case managers of high risk of serious harm offenders will need to demonstrate that they can – (as evidenced through the PQF or its successor):

- a. Summarise the legal and organisational requirements applicable to undertaking risk-led assessments of individuals
- b. Explain the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in public protection, safeguarding children and multi-agency arrangements in assessing individuals posing a threat of risk
- c. Describe key risk factors for serious re offending
- d. Specify the information needed for making an assessment of individuals risk of causing serious harm including any child or adult safeguarding issues and determine the relative significance of the identified risk factors
- e. Be able to assess the risk of serious harm posed by individuals and determine the level of risk based on the identified risk factors
- f. Set out the conclusions of the risk assessment and develop risk management plans that address identified risk factors for individuals and identify those agencies and/or individuals that should be involved to support the individual and safeguard others involved
- g. Undertake specialist assessments and identify when specialist assistance is required to provide appropriate interventions
- h. Evaluate the contribution of key protective factors to support effective risk management
- i. Review with the individual the areas of risk of serious harm and associated factors to be addressed

3.2. Diversity

Offender engagement is one aspect of good quality service delivery that is key to achieving effective outcomes, including reductions in re-offending.

Learning from international studies¹ has helped identify what is effective in helping offenders desist from crime. Two main sources of research evidence point to the importance of engaging offenders effectively in purposeful work aimed at reducing their offending.

A further aspect of effective offender engagement is accommodating diversity; working with offenders as individuals; recognising their own unique identity and set of characteristics. An officer of a provider of probation services will need to demonstrate that they can:

- a. Explain the key features of a culture which promotes equality and values diversity
- b. Positively influence others by responding appropriately to each individual. This will include responding to their different experiences, including race, gender, religion, age, ability, and sexuality; and challenging inappropriate attitudes
- c. Identify and understand barriers to engaging with individuals including mental health and disability issues and take this into account in their work with offenders.

3.3. Communication Skills

- a. Explain effective communication techniques and how to overcome barriers to achieving this
- b. Effectively communicate with offenders in a way that promotes engagement and compliance

¹Taxman F (2008) *No illusions: Offender and organisational change in Maryland's proactive community supervision efforts*, *Criminology and Public Policy*, 7, 275-302.

Sorsby, A., Shapland, J., Farrall, S., McNeill, F., Priede, C. and Robinson, G. (2013) *Probation staff views of the Skills for Effective Engagement Development (SEED) project*. Sheffield: Centre for Criminological Research

Bonta, J., Bourgon, G. & Rugge, T. (2013) *Taking the Leap: From Pilot Project to Wide-Scale Implementation of the Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision (STICS)*, *Justice Research and Policy*, 15(1), 17-35.

Robinson, C.R., Lowenkamp, C.T., Holsinger, A.M., VanBenschoten, S., Alexander, M. & Oleson, J.C. (2012) *A random study of Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Re-arrest (STARR): using core correctional practices in probation interactions*, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 1-22.

Raynor, P., Ugwidike, P. & Vanstone, M. (2013) *The Impact of Skills in Probation Work: A Reconviction Study*, *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 1-15.

Maruna S (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild their Lives*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Fergus McNeill and Beth Weaver (2010) *Changing Lives? Desistance Research and Offender Management* (<http://www.sccjr.ac.uk>).

- c. Engage and communicate appropriately and effectively with a range of stakeholders; verbally, non-verbally and in written form
- d. Demonstrate an understanding of inter-agency frameworks, procedures and protocols for effective communication between agencies
- e. Maintain security of information.

3.4. Tactical Skills

It is essential that an officer of a provider of probation services has the knowledge and skills to work appropriately with other workers across the Sector as well as within their own organisation. The imperative of sound co-operation and communication between workers must be embedded from the very outset. Those that hold the statutory supervisory role for offenders will need to demonstrate that they can:

- a. Develop and sustain effective working relationships, both with offenders and also between staff in their own and other agencies
- b. Understand and ensure clear lines of accountability, which are central to achieving a joined up provision of services which effectively protect the public and reduce re offending.

3.5. Engage Individuals to Change

- a. Identify factors which influence offending behaviour and assess how they relate to the individual offender
- b. Support individuals to identify reasons and promote confidence to change offending behaviour
- c. Support individuals in changing their behaviour through the use of appropriately targeted interventions and rehabilitative activities
- d. Identify, access and manage sources of intervention/activities to assist and maintain effective change
- e. Record and report details of working with individuals.

3.6 Case Management and other Technical/Specialist roles

- a. Obtain information relating to individuals' offending behaviour
- b. Develop proposals and provide information to inform sentencing proposals or other court proceedings, for example: enforcement action.
- c. Supervise low to medium risk of serious harm offenders serving sentences in the community and upon release from custody on licence and/or post sentence supervision
- d. Assess an individual's re-offending and rehabilitation needs and plan appropriately targeted activities
- e. Supervise and support integrated interventions delivered by other providers
- f. Staff should be trained and competent to the appropriate level in accordance with their role.

3.7 Placement Requirement

Contracted probation providers will be expected to establish placements for the National Probation Service PQF learners at an early stage of their practice development. Such placements will need to comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Framework and provide the required range of practice experience and assessment. Reciprocal placement arrangements will be available in the National Probation Service where contracted probation providers choose to access the PQF.

3.8 Demonstrating meeting these guidelines

Officers of a provider of probation services within the NPS will meet the requirements set out in these guidelines by virtue of obtaining the PQF. Officers of a provider of probation services within contracted providers will need to demonstrate continuing compliance with these guidelines in accordance with the obligations set out in the Service Agreement. The Ministry of Justice contract management function will monitor the contracted probation provider compliance with their contractual obligations, including meeting these guidelines.

Annex A

Summary of National Occupational Standards for Probation (2013)

The table below summarises the National Occupational Standards for Probation. Providers must evidence how they will equip staff with the competence to achieve these standards. Staff will need to demonstrate competence within each skills set. The range and level of competence will vary depending upon the role undertaken.

Diversity
Promote equality and value diversity
Risk
Contribute to the protection of individuals from abuse
Assess risk of harm and the need for intervention
Contribute to the prevention and management of abusive and aggressive behaviour
Tactical Skills
Contribute to the quality of team working
Develop and sustain effective working with staff in other agencies
Maintain and develop your own knowledge, skills and competence
Communication, information
Communicate effectively with people, maintaining the security of information
Assess individuals' offending behaviour to plan provision
Engage Individuals to Change
Help individuals' address their offending behaviour
Reinforce positive behavioural goals during relationships with individuals
Enable individuals to access services and facilities
Enable individuals to understand and address their difficulties
Recognise indications of substance misuse and refer individuals to specialists
Provide services to those affected by someone else's substance use
Support individuals who are substance users
Case Management and Technical Skills - as appropriate to specific specialist roles
Case/Offender Management/Supervision
Obtain information relating to individuals' offending behaviour

Develop proposals and prepare reports to inform sentencing
Supervise low to medium risk of serious harm offenders serving sentences in the community
Assess individuals' needs and plan activities
Supervise integrated interventions and support to address the offending behaviour of individuals
Community Payback
Conduct an assessment of risk in the workplace
Assess individuals' needs and plan activities
Provide development activities for individuals
Approved Premises / Hostels
Obtain information relating to individuals' offending behaviour
Assess individuals' needs and plan activities
Supervise integrated interventions and support to address the offending behaviour of individuals
Provide development activities for individuals
Court Work
Exchange information at formal hearings
Develop proposals and prepare reports to inform sentencing
Programmes
Develop proposals and prepare reports to inform sentencing
Assess individuals' needs and plan activities
Deliver accredited programmes
Victims, Survivors & Witnesses
Provide initial support to victims and witnesses
Assist victims, witnesses and survivors to manage the effects of their experience
Exchange information at formal hearings
Maintain contact with victims throughout the custody and release of offenders
Enable people to support victims, survivors, witnesses in managing the effects of their experience
Deliver interventions towards supporting victims at risk of serious harm
Community Safety

Determine the concerns and priorities of communities in relation to safety, social inclusion and the prevention and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour
Prison work
Obtain information relating to individuals' offending behaviour
Supervise integrated interventions and support to address the offending behaviour of individuals
Provide development activities for individuals
Support individuals towards their resettlement in the community from a custodial environment.
Restorative Justice
Prepare participants and agree an appropriate restorative process
Facilitate participants' interaction within a restorative process
Implement and monitor agreed outcomes from a restorative process