

The Offender Management Act 2007 Part 1 Section 10 (1) and (2) requires the Secretary of State to publish guidelines about, “any qualifications, experience or training required to perform the work 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 (including offenders held in custody).

Work has commenced and will continue during 2008 to establish efficient and effective National Probation Service and HM Prison Service training arrangements in the new combined delivery agency so that staff receive the appropriate training at the optimum cost.

A Project Board and Reference group on the new qualification framework has been established with a membership that includes key stakeholders from the Unions, Probation Boards Association, the sector skills council (Skills for Justice) and employers.

In the meantime, as an interim measure, an extension to the Diploma in Probation Studies (DipPS) programme (for training new probation officers) has been agreed in order that there is no gap in the supply of new probation officers.

Similarly, during this interim phase, the learning and development of other non-probation officer staff who work with offenders (e.g. probation services officers and equivalent grades of practitioner staff) will continue within the framework of Probation Circular 18/2007 PSO Learning & Development Programme 2007-08 and Probation Circular 41/2005 PSO Induction and Development Programme 2005-06.

Therefore, for providers of probation services to comply with these, the Secretary of State’s guidelines (published under Part 1, Section 10 (1)(2) of the Offender Management Act 2007), they will need to ensure that:

- Probation Officers should hold or be working towards the DipPS or any equivalent qualification (as recognised by the MOJ);
- Probation Services Officers, or staff in equivalent practitioner posts, should have undertaken, or be undertaking, training which complies with the requirements of PC 18/2007, PC 41/2005 or any equivalent training (as agreed by MOJ) or comply with any subsequent PCs which revise, replace or update PC 18/2007.