**April 2016 Developments in Community Justice Learning and the new Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP)**

**Community Justice Learning**

The new professional qualification (PQiP) is set to go. It is equivalent to a Higher Education, Level 6 qualification and is a 15 month work-based qualification which focuses on both skills development and applied academic learning. It replaces the PQF.

**Any individual interested in gaining this qualification is strongly advised to access the *Further Information* - see below.**

Three universities have been successful in their bids to be the Higher Education providers of the academic elements of the course. They are DeMontfort, Sheffield Hallam and Portsmouth. There now has to be a 15 day pause prior to the actual award of the contracts, but, subject to this, hopefully it will be all systems go by the end of April.

Recruitment onto the first course (due to start in October 2016) should then start at the end of this month (April). The proposal is for an NPS cohort of 100 plus any further places purchased by the CRCs. There will then be a second intake probably in Spring 2017 also for around 100 new learners. Again this will be open to both NPS and CRC staff as well as external applicants. Externals can apply via either the NPS or a CRC, or both.

Offers of places on the first course due to start in October are likely to be made in August.

Applications for the first new PQiP course should open on the HAVAS site on 25th April and close on 6th June.

***Access routes & Assessment Service***

Details of what qualifications and experience are needed to apply for the PQiP can be found on the websites cited below but in essence, there will be far more ways to access the qualification and it will no longer be restricted to those with a 'relevant degree' as was the case with the PQF. Pathways to the Level 6 qualification are also described on the websites, but here is some brief information about them.

Recruitment to the Level 4 and Level 5 access qualifications will commence imminently.

From April the contracted universities will open the Gateway Assessment Service which identifies whether required knowledge areas have been met for the PQiP and gaps which need to be filled. This will be shortly followed, in May 2016, by the Level 4 assignment(s), and Level 5 modules.

The cost of the assessment will be £75 and for a limited time NOMS will sponsor some applicants, both internal and external, to undertake this assessment.

The NPS has also now identified that each division will sponsor up to 20 candidates across the two access levels. Divisional Training teams have devised an application selection process, which will shortly be launched.

Information on staff sponsorship for the access routes is being disseminated now within NPS divisions with a view to applications being returned towards the end of April.

There will also be an opportunity to self-fund the required knowledge modules by applying direct to a NOMS contracted university if sponsorship is unavailable.

It is anticipated that the access routes would require a time commitment of about one day per week. Some of this would be personal study time which the individual would be expected to find from their own time. Where an NPS staff member gained sponsorship for one of these routes, workload relief could be expected for 2 days per month. This would be addressed in a Learning Agreement between applicant and line manager.

It is not possible to say what arrangements CRCs might make to facilitate their own staff progressing through these access routes since these are all likely to be different and CRC staff should discuss this with their own employer. The same is true of applications to the Assessment Service.

These new access routes will enable individuals to gain the necessary credits/qualificationsto then apply for the PQiP. The timeframe is such that anyone needing to plug these knowledge gaps prior to application for PQiP will probably be looking at applying for the Spring 2017 intake at the earliest.

*Further information:* FAQs and updated information has been published on the Skills for Justice website [www.sfjuk.com/community-justice-learning/](http://www.sfjuk.com/community-justice-learning/) and also on the HAVAS recruitment website [www.traintobeaprobationofficer.com](http://www.traintobeaprobationofficer.com) and also their Facebook site (Train to be a Probation Officer"and a leaflet will shortly be available. Specific FAQs for CRCs have been provided to CRCs. The HAVAS site is the main one for recruitment purposes and should probably be a first port of call and questions will be answered as they are raised on the Facebook site.

***Vocational Diploma in Probation Practice Level 5***

This was recently reviewed. The public consultation attracted a high level of responses. The Diploma has been signed off and approved by Ofqual and is ready to go.

***Delivery Model for PQiP***

A course calendar with proposed delivery methods is being devised. This will ensure that academic learning, professional skills training, practice opportunities and assessment points are co-ordinated and learners progress on schedule.

***Regulatory Framework***

The Regulatory Framework and accompanying Users’ Manual are being prepared with a view to completion of the former by the end of April 2016. The Regulatory Framework will include an outline of Community Justice Learning, the PQiP knowledge and vocational requirements, Access routes, Gateway to Practice, Probation Case Administration qualification, Higher Education contracts and Code of Practice, Level 3 vocational qualification, PQAB terms of reference, Equality Analysis and Stakeholder responsibilities. Guidance on how this will be delivered will be included in the Users’ Manual.

***Community Justice Learning Phase 2***

Phase 2 of the Community Justice Learning will commence in April 2016 and will include a matrix of qualifications with bridges and ladders to staff development across the Community Justice Sector. Additional career development pathways for Probation Case Administrators and Probation Services Officers will be included in this matrix. Skills for Justice Sector Skills Council have been commissioned to contribute towards the development of the matrix and to include qualifications developed by CRCs. Skills for Justice Awards will start to review the Level 3 vocational Diploma in Probation Practice and the vocational qualification in Probation Case Administration from April 2016.