



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Probation
Service



Introduction to ongoing learning in the Probation Service V1

Probation Workforce Programme – Capability team

January 2022



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Introduction

The Probation Service values your professional development and values helping you to improve your knowledge of policy and processes, develop and refine your skills, and understand the theory behind the work that you do.

Everyone's learning needs will be individual and will vary throughout their career. The responsibility for identifying and addressing learning needs sits with you and your line manager, to ensure it is an individualised process that takes account of feedback and confidence in your day to day work. You should work together to identify and address your learning needs and should seek out relevant learning when it is needed.

Identifying learning needs

You should discuss your learning needs with your line manager as part of your regular supervision, who will help you to develop a learning plan and give you reasonable time to complete any learning.

Different people will have different learning needs, and these will vary at different points in a person's career.

There are several reasons why you may have more learning needs than others at any given point in time:

- You may have recently moved into a new role or been promoted
- You may have returned after a period of absence and need some extra support
- You may be struggling with a certain aspect of your role, or the work may have changed
- You may want to develop your skills or expertise in a specific area in order to take on a new challenge
- Your line manager may require you to undertake learning in a specific area to improve your practice

All staff in the probation service should have the opportunity to have regular conversations about their professional development, no matter what role they are in. These conversations may include career progression, goals and aspirations but should also include development needs in their current role. These conversations will be happening through existing supervision processes:

The Reflective Practice Supervision Standards (previously known as the Supervision and Line Management framework)— Through reflective practice discussion and observation of practice develops and further areas for development can be identified.

The Regular Conversations (revised SDPR process) is an opportunity to set objectives, identify areas for development, refresh and think about career development.

The Touch point model and core quality framework activities – When undertaking management oversight work, through feedback given, a manager has an opportunity to develop the staff member and together to identify additional learning needs.

Team meetings – Team meeting and development days offer an opportunity to arrange inputs on those areas of practice development which would benefit the team. This could be instigated by the manager or by team members. This includes emerging trends in offending behaviour, best practice and changes to legislation and policy. The use and discussion around quality development tools can also be used in a group or individual session.

To find out more about the different types of supervision read the [7 minute](#) briefing.

Line managers also have a responsibility for their own professional development and ensuring you have the right knowledge, skills and practice to best support your team and your own development.

Learning for your role:

We know that at present finding the right learning for your role may not always be easy within all of the available learning on myLearning. The role packs, which will be available on the probation hub ([link](#)), set out the mandatory, required and desirable learning for each role. These are being developed with subject matter experts and with the learning having been tested with the staff in the role. We will add and develop these as more learning becomes available for each role.

The learning is separated into the following categories:

Mandatory learning is that which you are legally required to complete for your role. This is the learning set out in the CBF.

Required learning is learning that is required to effectively complete the role you are in.

It is expected that most staff moving into that role will benefit from undertaking the required learning, but there may at times be specific circumstances where the required learning does not meet your needs. This should be discussed with your line manager and, where an exception is made, this should be recorded in supervision notes, including the rationale. This must be based upon your learning needs as agreed between you and your line manager and should not be due to a lack of time to complete the required learning.

Desirable learning will help you to more successfully carry out your role.

Optional learning is all additional learning which is not role specific, but you may find it useful depending on the cases you encounter. This learning will support you to develop your breadth of practice, to develop areas of specialism and to support career development.

There may be learning which is not identified as 'Required' for your role but which your line manager requires you to undertake as part of improving your performance in a particular aspect of your role.

Where to find learning

Role packs: These set out the relevant learning for each role with direct hyperlinks to the learning in the relevant system. The packs will start to go live from January, and once live packs will be updated on a regular basis.

myLearning: The learning system used across MoJ. The system hosts all HMPPS specific learning and acts as the record of the learning you've undertaken. Where you undertake learning outside of myLearning you should add a record of it here to ensure you have a complete learning record. Some of the learning listed on myLearning is accessed via Civil Service Learning – where this is the case links within myLearning will take you to the Civil Service Learning site.

Civil Service Learning: Accessed via myLearning the Civil Service Learning platform hosts learning for all civil service departments, so generic learning that is not specific to HMPPS or the Probation Service. This includes subjects such as project management, health and safety and leadership.

Insights events: These are events organised by HMPPS but open to other colleagues across the CJS. Insights events are intended to offer insights into areas of the business from subject matter experts (internal and external).

MOJ events: MOJ offer a variety of events open to all staff including those working across HMPPS. These cover areas such as wellbeing and mindfulness, equality, diversity and inclusion as well as themed events.

EQUIP: Contains process maps and guidance for the work undertaken in the Probation Service

Ways to use available learning products

The probation L&D model will use a combination of learning methods, ensuring teams and individuals have access to a robust continuous professional development offer. Internal systems have a range of different learning opportunities including easy to access digital resources and tools such as videos, 7-minute briefings, case studies, checklists and FAQs, academic articles, evidence-based practice summaries, while utilising face to face/virtual training for when such a setting can really add value and provide staff with opportunities for specific skills practice.

Whilst formal learning opportunities are important, we know that a learning through experiences as part of your role is also very important, with up to 90% of your learning and development taking place outside of a completion of formal learning activities. This includes

- learning is through experiences as part of your role (on the job, research, reading, experimentation, and reflective practice)
- learning with or from colleagues (observation, feedback, mentoring, coaching, communities of practice, and peer support)

We know that learning is most effective when it happens at the point of need. Professional development learning products are available online to support this and to enable you to access to refresh learning when required.

Individual learning: Some learning products will be for information giving or to refresh knowledge. This will also be true of academic articles and evidence-based summaries. A staff member can complete these individually and record completion and reflections in their MyLearning 'other evidence' portfolio.

- Example: Practise using the techniques/knowledge you have learned and reflect on your progress using journal entries. Discuss with you manager how you have applied this lenirng in the cases you are discussing during supervision.

Example:

A team member has an oral hearing coming up, they are experienced and confident but following recent media interest they are concerned about changes to parole processes and rules on hearsay evidence. They access the videos on myLearning covering 'Hearsay evidence' and 'How to be an expert witness'

<https://mydevelopment.org.uk/course/view.php?id=3620> and this gives them the information they need to prepare effectively.

Peer based discussion: It is often helpful for staff to embed learning and check understanding with colleagues, this may be a mentor, coach, manager or peers. This will depend on whether they are learning a new area or need further input or if they are updating knowledge.

Example:

- Complete the same piece of learning as a colleague or group of colleagues then compare notes and discuss. Which part seemed particularly important to each of you? How could the learning be applied to your role? Do you foresee any challenges with applying what you have learned?
- You could form a virtual study group on Microsoft Teams where yourself and colleagues can individually complete different pieces of learning at the same time. We know that blocking out time in your diary for learning helps to ensure that it is prioritised, and meeting with others helps to improve accountability.

Example:

A Newly Qualified Officer (NQO) is finding it challenging to identify how they can embed desistance theory into practice. They read the evidence-based summary on Desistance theory and watch the video with Professor Farrell

<https://mydevelopment.org.uk/course/view.php?id=3531> . They discuss their thinking with an experienced colleague who can give examples of how they have put this into practice and some tips and reflections on good practice.

Facilitated discussion: There may be updates to learning, new research or changes to systems/ legislation that the whole team need to be updated about. This can be provided in team meetings or through inputs such as Lunch and Learn sessions and online QDO led learning events. Lunch and learns are beneficial for information giving sessions as a large number can attend in an online setting.

If your team has an additional need, for example project management, writing a business case or understanding policy then Civil Service Learning is the first place to seek learning. If what you are looking for is not available, contact your regional learning lead. If they cannot offer a suitable learning package, they can work with you to commission a bespoke package via the Design Faculty's (the design part of the L&D model) commissioning route for learning products.

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