



HM Prison &
Probation Service

Probation
Service



Learning Strategy for the Probation Service (2022-2024)

Capability Project - Probation Workforce Programme

September 2022



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Forward

From setting up the new probation learning model, to the publication of the continuous professional development (CPD) framework, to the coordination of the wider learning landscape, progress has been made in the learning and development space, but there is more to be done to realise our ambitions. This strategy sets out our focus for the next two years to continually improve the learning and development experiences of our staff. At the core of this is a learning offer that places you, the learner, at its centre, giving you access to the right learning experiences at the right time.

This strategy sets out how we will meet our ambition to drive forward a culture of learning which enables you to not only perform well in your current role but also to develop you and your career. Delivering a professional, quality service needs to be underpinned by access to, and time for, professional development. Setting the strategic objectives for two years reflects that as the workforce changes, our focus will also change.

Working in the Probation Service and being part of the wider MOJ and Civil Service family enables access to numerous learning and development opportunities. The learning you access within HMPPS comes from a range of different learning partners. I am really pleased that the following key learning partners have committed to the four aims set out in the strategy: Probation Learning Services and Design Faculty, Effective Practice and Service Improvement Group, Insights Group, Counter Terrorism Learning and Development Project, MOJ Leadership Talent and Capability team, National and Regional ICT training team. The One HMPPS programme will bring increased opportunities to work together, enabling opportunities to learn collectively across the different parts of HMPPS alongside the probation practice specific learning.

For you as staff this means that you will see increased relationships between the products that you access and better coordination of communications about learning products and experiences, leading to a more accessible learning and development offer for all.

Ian Barrow

Executive Director,

Probation Workforce Programme

Introduction

The [Probation Workforce Strategy](#) set five strategic objectives; promoting wellbeing for everyone, attracting and retaining talented people, supporting and developing our people, creating more diverse workforce where everyone feels included, fostering confident leaders who inspire and empower others. The learning strategy for the Probation Service sets out our aims and commitments for you, probation staff, over the next two years in relation to our objective of 'supporting and developing our people'.

We continue to evolve as an organisation post-unification and acknowledge the impacts of resulting from COVID-19 recovery and the resource challenges in parts of the organisation. We are proud of the work that has been undertaken to develop and set up a new probation learning and development model but recognise it is still relatively new. We are excited to see the benefits realised for you and will be reviewing its operation as it embeds to ensure we continuously improve. We know that learning and development is most effective when it is embedded within practice. We recognise that your ongoing professional development involves learning, personal development and practice development, that all are interlinked and of equal importance.

Our four strategic aims are:

- **To place you as a learner at the heart of the learning, enabling meaningful learning experiences for you, whatever role you are in**
- **To enable you to prioritise the time and space for your learning**
- **To maximise use of technology to improve accessibility and quality of the learning you undertake**
- **To work collaboratively, across HMPPS and with external partners to create learning experiences with impact**

We know that the recruitment of new staff is welcomed, but that it also takes time and resources for new staff to become experienced. In April 2021 we published the first [Probation Service Recruitment and Retention Strategy](#). An update to this strategy was published in May 2022 and from a learning perspective it aims to ensure that everyone in the probation service has the tools and time they need to develop and progress through the service if they choose.



This learning strategy is for two years, recognising that where we are as an organisation in two years' time will feel quite different. We want this to have resonance for you whether you are new to the service, developing or more experienced in your role. The strategy sets out that where we are aiming to be as an organisation is for us to have sufficient time and space to engage in learning and development. As workloads decrease, the time, space and energy staff have to engage with learning will change, SEEDS2 learning for practitioners and managers will have been rolled out and the professional recognition agenda will have progressed. This is a strategy that looks to the future but is set in the reality of the present. The work we undertake now in the learning and development space is building strong foundations for the future for all staff working in the probation service.

To date the Probation Learning model has developed a number of different learning packages. This includes core facilitated packages such as Skills for Effective Engagement, Development and Supervision (SEEDS2) and Safeguarding, as well as digital learning resources available at point of need that can be integrated into the flow of work, addressing day to day concerns and learning needs (e.g. recent MAPPA learning). We listened to the feedback from staff that accessing the right learning can be challenging and have launched the learning for roles pages, setting out of the mandatory and required learning and development activities by role and will continue to develop and refine the offer. We have launched a framework for continuing professional development, including setting out core curriculum learning areas for all staff. We have a clear process for prioritising of the development of new learning products which incorporates the learning areas set out as current priorities by the Regional Probation Directors.

Now is the time to set out our strategic direction for probation learning, building on the progress made so far and setting out where we want to get to over the next two years.


1. Place learners at the heart of the learning enabling meaningful learning experiences for all staff

What makes any single learning experience meaningful will vary from individual to individual, however we know that meaningful learning experiences tend to be those that:

- Are timely, available at the right time for that individual
- Have relevance to the individual, this may be relevance to their current role or a future role
- Develop skills and knowledge that you can practically apply and that will help you to perform well in your role and, for those who want to, progress into a new role.
- Recognise, understand & reflect the diversity of our staff, of people on probation and of victims
- Take a place in a safe learning environment where you can be open, share mistakes and grow
- Are based in evidence, both on the subject matter and of adult learning theories

We will do this through:

- Taking a learner-centred design approach, listening to you as learners to shape the design and delivery of our learning products, ensuring they meet the needs of you and your colleagues
- Empowering you to apply learning on the job with the support of digital recourse, reflective practice and applied practice
- Incorporating your feedback as learners to inform the evaluation and continuous improvement of the learning offer
- Ensuring learning is engaging, reflective of a range of learner preferences and accessible at point of need
- Working with subject matter experts to ensure our learning is aligned with organisational policies and practice
- Considering all aspects of equality, diversity, inclusion & belonging to ensure learning products take account of the diversity of probation staff and persons on probation, including intersectionality of diversity

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- Ensuring the staff who create and deliver learning keep their knowledge and skills up to date
 - Having processes in place to ensure the currency and relevance of learning on mylearning is reviewed so that you know the materials you access are up to date

We know that learning and development is important to support people to do their current role and also to progress to new roles if they choose to do so. We have set out in the Recruitment and Retention strategy that there will be more support and training available for staff from ethnic minority backgrounds as part of embedding a fairer and more inclusive approach to recruitment across the service.

2. Prioritise the time and space for learning

We are focussed on providing learning that is accessible at point of need, increasing autonomy and supporting staff performance in the workplace.

Learning and development is a core expectation of probation staff and we want to make sure that our processes and policies reflect this. During the period of this strategy, we will be working to ensure your learning and development time is protected and prioritised. Enabling you to develop and maintain your professional expertise relevant to your role.

We know that workloads for staff in the Probation Service are currently higher than we would want in some areas and that finding time for learning can be challenging. Work is underway to improve workloads, but we know this takes time and can create challenges in prioritising learning time.

The Probation Senior Leadership Team are committed to supporting staff in creating time to undertake learning and development but also recognise that for learning to be effective it needs to be applied to practice. Reflective practice and case discussions are important spaces where this happens. Supervision provides a space where you can reflect on what recent learning means for your practice or work, how you can embed the learning and, along with your line manager, identify areas for development. We are introducing protected development days to ensure you have time ringfenced to focus upon development.

This strategy focusses on the period up until April 2024, for this period, we will focus on the following:


- Ensuring staff have access to information about learning and development resources (how long it will take and the type of resources) so they can access the most suitable resource for their needs at that point in time
- Through working collectively across HMPPS we can be efficient with the learning and development materials and with your learning time, ensuring the time spent on learning is meaningful and worthwhile (see objective 4 below)
- Ensuring all new staff have a comprehensive induction into their role, whatever role they are in
- Provision of effective learning programmes for all new probation officers and probation service officers
- A robust support model for PQiP learners, with an emphasis on peer groups, mentors and retention of newly qualified officers post qualification
- Launch the Framework for Continuous Professional Development
- Ensure that everyone in the Probation Service has the tools they need to develop and progress through the service if they choose.
- Provide greater access to information on roles and career pathways to facilitate career progression and widening experience.

3. Maximise use of technology to improve accessibility and quality

Our aim is to make best use of modern technology to improve your learning and development experience by:

- Enhancing learning accessibility
- using technology to develop engaging, interactive learning for all
- using technology to deliver learning and utilising virtual classroom learning for the practicing and embedding of skills
- creation of learning trends and data analytics that can inform future learning priorities and development

We believe that the burden of additional work created through the use of technology sits with us as the ones creating and delivering the learning, not with you as the



learner. We strive to use technology to enhance and smooth your learning experience, to break down barriers to accessing learning, not to create them. We are committed to improving and increasing our use of innovative learning and development opportunities that allow learning that is delivered at point of need.

There have been phenomenal advances in technology in learning globally and we want to harness these advances more effectively in probation to give you the best learning experience we can. We know that finding and accessing learning via myLearning could be simpler and so the new model is exploring both how we maximise use of our existing learning system and wider technology, whilst also ensuring that probation is in a strong position to benefit from future technology.

Facilitated learning and learning with peers is an integral and valuable part of your learning experiences, we recognise this is key to developing skills in probation practice. We want to make sure we reserve time for the learning which really benefits most from being facilitated. This is core to our learning model with packages such as SEEDS2 being designed as facilitated learning. Alongside this, we know that access to learning at the point of need is really important and that is why the learning model also includes learning that is being developed to be accessible, flexible and integrated in the flow of work meaning that it is available at your fingertips in the workplace, addressing day to day learning needs.

4. Work collaboratively across HMPPS and with external partners

Across the wider HMPPS landscape we will listen to each other and work together to provide coherence across the learning and communications that you receive. This will help to ensure that the learning you access is relevant and meaningful to your work and to the other associated communications you receive. We will work collaboratively with colleagues in change management to consider the timing and impact of new learning alongside other activities.

When developing new learning we will work with, and listen to, subject matter experts from within HMPPS and outside of HMPPS to ensure the learning is based on up-to-date evidence and aligned to the wider HMPPS activity in that subject area. We will use the Advisory Panel on Probation Learning (APPL), a panel of internal

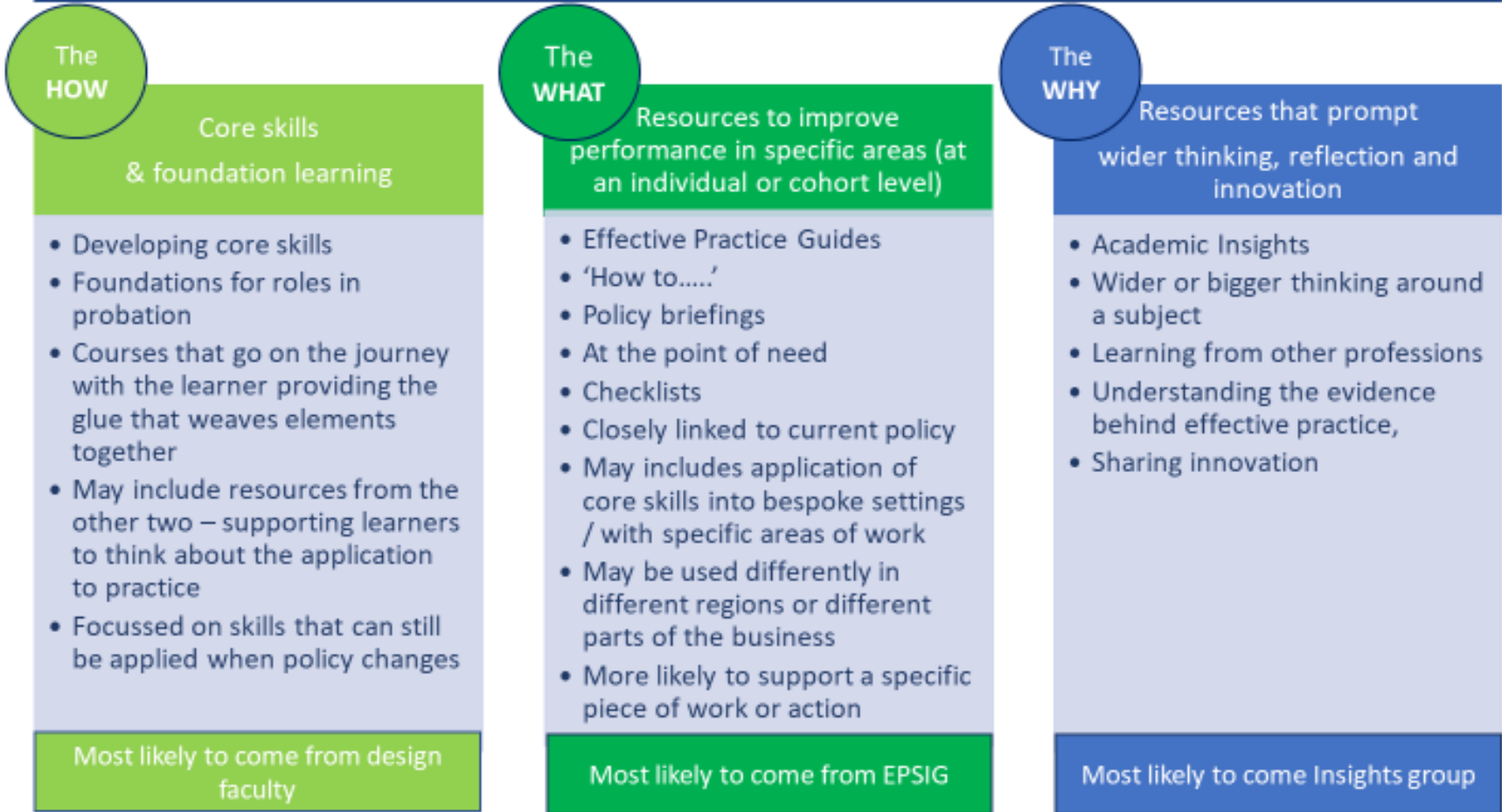
and external experts to act as a critical friend as we develop new learning, bringing new thinking, perspectives on up-to-date evidence and challenging us to be innovative in our learning offer

The probation learning model has at its heart the Design Faculty and Learning Services who focus on probation specific learning; however we understand that learning and development materials and experiences for you as probation staff come from a wider range of teams within HMPPS. This strategy has been agreed across teams who create learning and development resources for you. This is our commitment to you as learners that we will work together to create the best learning experiences we can for you. This commitment is underpinned by a new probation learning coordination panel and a probation learning communication group with representation from across these teams.

To help you to understand the purpose of different learning resources more easily we will now have three categories of resources, The How, The What and The Why. As new learning and developmental resources are created you will be able to access resources that support you to develop understanding of **how** do to a piece of work, **what** you need to do and **why**. Through working together across HMPPS, we will identify the most effective type of resource, or range of resources, to meet your diverse development needs as learners.



Three types of learning or development resources for the Probation Service



Annex A:

Strategy commitments

1. Place learners at the heart of the learning enabling meaningful learning experiences for all staff			
	Commitment	Owner	Timescale
1.1	Continue to develop new / re develop existing learning products as prioritised by the Capability & Learning Board utilising methodologies aligned to industry best practice	Design Faculty	Ongoing – The DF provides a quarterly update to the Capability & Learning Board.
1.2	Facilitated learning – creating a safe learning environment for all including responding to individual needs through reasonable adjustment forms and provision for all learners prior to learning, and feedback forms for learners, post learning	Learning Services	For all delivered products
1.3	To fully embed a consistent and rigorous evaluation and quality assurance approach throughout the development of all Design Faculty products commissioned through our	Design Faculty	Findings from 6 and 24 month reviews will be shared with regions via Probation Learning Leads and will include feedback about the learner experience and the impact of the learning where possible (a schedule for



	single commissioning route. This includes reviews at 3, 6 & 24 months of rollout to identify best practice and lessons learned to achieve a culture of continuous improvement for L&D products		product reviews will be regularly updated and available from September 2022)
1.4	Produce guidance for staff and line managers about identifying, recording and reflecting on development needs across the different types of supervision	PWP Capability team	September 2022
1.5	We will review the learning offer for staff in Case Administration and Senior Administrative Officer roles and seek to address identified gaps through the submission of requests via the Single Commissioning Route for Probation Learning	Capability and Single Commissioning Route for Probation Learning	By September 2023
1.6	Re-organisation of myLearning, including the introduction of new naming and tagging conventions to support learners to quickly identify relevant learning.	PWP – infrastructure & HMPPS L and D	Ongoing, key benefits to begin to be realised late 2022

2. Prioritise the time and space for learning

	Commitment	Owner	Timescale
2.1	The introduction of Protected Development Days	Regional Probation Directors	Introduced from November 2022 initially to run until March 2023



2.2	Completion of learning for roles pages and review of their effectiveness	PWP capability	Completion by September 2022, Review by Feb 2023
2.3	Launch and promote the framework for continuing professional development and core curriculum areas, helping staff to direct their learning time	PWP capability	Until December 2022
2.5	Provide greater access to information on roles and career pathways and improve access to the current available learning so it is clear to staff what learning is required/desirable for their current and future roles they would like to move into.	PWP Capability	By the end of the strategy
2.6	Focus on the development of learning resources which can be accessed in the flow of work, addressing day to day concerns and learning needs.	Design Faculty	Ongoing

3. Maximise use of technology to improve accessibility and quality

	Commitment	Owner	Timescale
3.1	Maximise the use of modern technology to enhance learner accessibility and personalisation of learning with progress against this reviewed alongside the Quality Assurance of each product	Design Faculty	In every product as part of the quality assurance process during design and at the 3, 6 and 24 month review points.



3.2	Communicate with the regions, especially learners and line managers, about how to maximise myLearning functionality to support effective reporting.	PCET, Design Faculty and Learning Services	Communications from Sept 2022, then ongoing as necessary to support embedding of new approach.
3.3	Harness potential of myLearning to enable quarterly reports for all regions about learner completion of mandatory and required probation learning. Reports to be disseminated via Probation Learning Leads (PLLs) into regions	Learning Services	Transition to new approach to begin from September 2022, phased approach to be adopted.
3.4	Ensure all learning material compliments organisational policies and procedures, providing hyperlinks to relevant documents on EQuIP.	Design Faculty	In each product designed by the Design faculty and captured through the L&D QA process
3.5	Develop face to face learning activities which maximise learner engagement and participation through the use of a range of online applications such as live polling.	Design Faculty	Ongoing – with iterative development through the process of evaluation and continuous improvement
3.6	Utilise a range of digital applications to create innovative learning resources available at the point of need.	Design Faculty	Ongoing - with iterative development through the process of evaluation and continuous improvement

4. Work collaboratively across HMPPS and with external partners



	Commitment	Owner	Timescale
4.1	To collaborate, share resources and coordinate the design, and delivery of learning to staff in the Probation Service through the Probation Learning Coordination Panel	DF (membership set out in Annex B)	Monthly coordination panel, with a review at 12 month stage
4.2	Ensure the effective communication of key messages in relation to learning for Probation staff	PCET (chair group), Design Faculty & Learning Services]	Monthly meetings established, held week following Co-ordination Panel
4.3	Filter all new learning for probation staff through one single place for decisions whether it should be 'mandatory' or 'required', ensuring the totality of the learning offer for any role is considered	Capability and learning board, process managed by PWP capability team	Currently in place and will continue
4.4	To work collaboratively to strengthen our processes of capturing feedback from learners on the delivery, content and impact of learning undertaken, disseminating key findings	Design Faculty & Learning Services	Mandatory and required learning reported upon a quarterly basis, with findings disseminated to probation regions via Probation Learning Leads.
4.5	To utilise the Advisory Panel for Probation Learning (APPL) to remain sighted on industry best practices whilst ensuring that latest evidence is embedded into all stages of the design and development of new/existing L&D products	Design Faculty	Quarterly panel with review anticipated January 2024.



4.6	Taking an outward facing approach to the development of new learning, actively pursuing opportunities to work with external partner agencies, charities and subject matter experts to ensure promotion of best practice.	Design Faculty	In each product developed by the Design Faculty
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Annex B:

Strategic Learning Priorities and commissioning of new learning and development products for probation

Strategic Learning Priorities (SLP) are agreed by the Probation Senior Leadership team following a process of consultation with stakeholders. They are informed by the priorities of the business including feedback from HMIP inspections. The SLP are used to inform the triage process for the Probation Learning Design Faculty to ensure that we prioritise requests for learning in line with the direction of the business, with requests for the design of new probation specific learning being prioritised when it meets one or more of the learning priorities, over those which do not.

A balance of Providing direction whilst enabling responsiveness to emerging needs

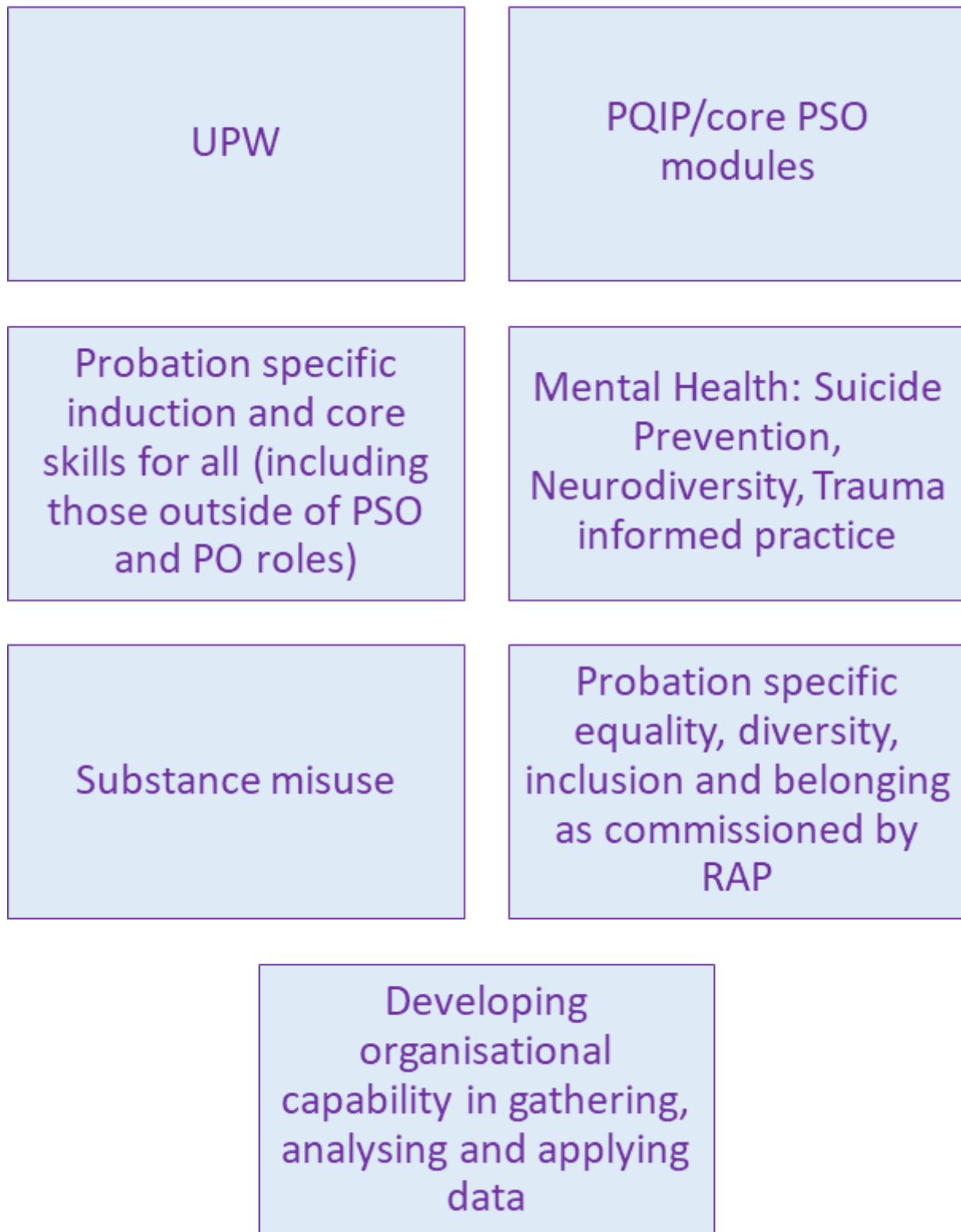
They provide direction over a two-year period, so are necessarily overarching. Setting narrow SLP on a two-year cycle would not provide the necessary longer-term direction for this period, whilst setting the priorities which are too wide risk losing meaning and not providing sufficient direction. With each set of priorities, we aim to provide a framework and direction for the key areas where learning needs are known or anticipated, whilst the priorities themselves are written to be wide enough to enable meaningful scoping work on any commission to ensure that the product that is progressed meets the needs of the organisation. For example, we may know at the time of setting the objectives that there is a need for the organisational capability in analysing and using data but the exact roles where is needed or the nature of the input required to drive improvements will not be known until commissions are received (based upon the specific needs identified by those within the business) and scoping work is undertaken to understand the specific nature of the need.

New commissions to the Design Faculty are discussed at the Probation learning coordination panel. This enables learning partners across HMPPS to look at the learning requests from a range of perspectives, to see the interdependencies and links with other workstreams and to consider the most effective response. For example, whether the identified needs may be more effectively met via a practice development product created by EPSIG or a through an Insights event. Requests for new development products with other HMPPS teams should also be shared at the panel for this same process to be undertaken.

The role of Strategic Learning Priorities going forward

As the learning culture further develops and progress is made on the objective within this strategy of working together, the purpose of strategic learning priorities for the Probation Service may need to change, so that they support commissioning decisions across the wider learning and development landscape.

Strategic Learning Priorities for 2022-2024

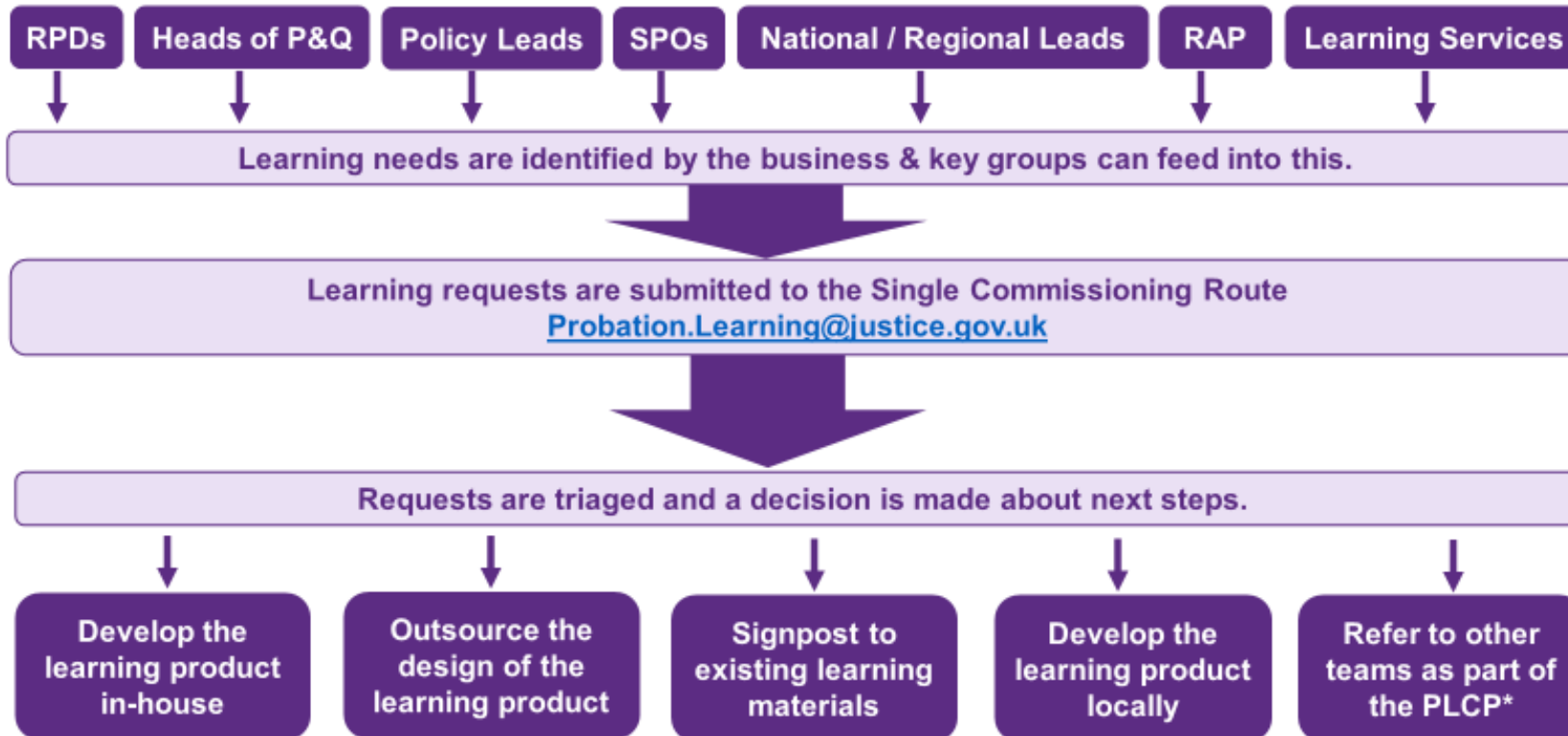


Annex C:

The Probation learning design faculty commissioning process

The Single Commissioning Route

Ensuring that learning is appropriately prioritised for staff & its delivery effectively sequenced



*Probation Learning Coordination Panel (PLCP) includes teams such as the National ICT Training Team, EPSIG, Insights, Evidence Based Practice Team.