



**LAURUS**  
DEVELOPMENT

**SFJ Awards Level 4 Certificate**  
**in**  
**Community Rehabilitation (QCF)**



**LAURUS Development**, working in partnership with Skills for Justice Awards, has developed this new qualification to address the skills requirements of the workforce involved in *Transforming Rehabilitation* through the delivery of services by Community Rehabilitation Companies and partner organisations.

It presents an alternative to the Level 3 Diploma in Probation Practice, taking into account the demands on staff at level 3 to continue to operate effectively in a changed working environment.

A diverse range of new operating models will change the way rehabilitation services are provided. This qualification addresses associated developments in the knowledge and skills required for effective rehabilitation practice. Its central themes are:

- \* Developing strong and engaging relationships to motivate crime-free lives
- \* Assessing, communicating and managing fluctuations in risk
- \* Work that is based in communities and neighbourhoods and alongside partners

The design of this new qualification has involved a literature review and consultation with

- \* CRC staff and managers
- \* New providers
- \* The VCSE sector
- \* Service users

It has been driven by the need for a modern and relevant qualification that validates the professionalism of the workforce in its task of transforming rehabilitation practice to achieve reduced reoffending and diminish the impact of crime on victims and communities.

LAURUS Development is a staff mutual whose founder partners have respected experience in the delivery of learning, development and qualification in the probation sector. We are in tune with the benefits of accreditation and apply this to all our work. In parallel with this qualification we have an accredited learning programme underpinning the knowledge requirements. Please see details of this below. Further information about this programme is also available.

To speak to us about this initiative or with any other query, please contact

Julia Summerfield, Chief Operating Officer

[julia@laurusdevelopment.co.uk](mailto:julia@laurusdevelopment.co.uk)

## Frequently asked questions



### **Who is the qualification for?**

The knowledge and skills covered are those of a responsible officer working at the current PSO grade. The knowledge unit, the emphasis on strong and engaging relationships and the enhanced nature of risk-informed practice represent the up-skilling of this group of staff and are positioned at level 4. The remainder of the units are at level 3.

It is important to understand that qualification levels do not equate to pay bands.

The qualification does not include optional specialist units although there are signposts to the learning and skills required by those working with young offenders for example. It addresses the core tasks required of a flexible and dynamic workforce.

Responsible Officers may be employed by partner organisations or by Community Rehabilitation Companies.

Further qualifications are under development addressing the knowledge and skills of responsible officers at level 5 and of Community Payback supervisors at level 3. Attention is also being given to the qualification needs of the VCSE sector. Please contact Julia Summerfield, Chief Operating Officer at LAURUS Development if you would like to be involved in any of these consultations:

[julia@laurusdevelopment.co.uk](mailto:julia@laurusdevelopment.co.uk)

### **Is the qualification mandatory for all new staff?**

Whilst qualification is not mandated for staff in the CRCs, there are good business reasons to ensure a qualified workforce. Qualification

- \* provides evidence that staff are suitably knowledgeable and skilled to perform their role
- \* validates a job well done and increases motivation and pride in the work
- \* increases the confidence of all stakeholders in the efficacy of rehabilitation solutions

It is critical to select a qualification route that covers core functions, concentrating on knowledge and skills that are aligned with new approaches to rehabilitation and is appropriately sized to manage both commitment and cost.

### **How will the qualification look different from the current PQF?**

It is different in both its format and content, refocusing core probation skills on aspects of delivery signposted by new and innovative operating models. These include greater community based work; a shift in emphasis to partnering locally based services in the supply chain and attention to the new constituency of offenders to be released from custody under supervision/licence. It also recognises the enhancement of skills in assessing/managing risk and engaging perpetrators of domestic abuse, for example.

The new qualification is simply written and includes notes to guide assessment. The qualification handbook references the attitudes and behaviours expected of staff in an explicit manner.

### **Will staff that have the level 3 Diploma in Probation Practice be required to undertake this new qualification?**

No, there is no such requirement. New providers will make this decision. The level 3 Diploma in Probation Practice is a respected qualification and remains valid. However, the new qualification has refocused core probation skills to better match new operating environments.

### **How long does the qualification take?**

A new recruit, working full time, may typically expect to achieve the qualification within 10 months. Our experience would suggest incorporating learning and qualification with HR processes for induction through to confirmation in post and appraisal. For example:

Month 1: Corporate induction and job orientation

Month 2-4: completion of the role specific learning programme

Month 2-6: consolidation of learning into practice, organisational performance appraisal (maybe at the end of a formal probationary period), confirmation of preparedness to submit to formal practice assessment

Month 6-10: formal assessment of the practice units leading to full qualification

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### **How will knowledge and practice for this qualification be assessed?**

LAURUS offers a fresh approach to assessment that enhances the developmental experience for the learner whilst being cost effective for the organisation. We understand that practitioners need to spend their time working with service users to reduce reoffending and so we are mindful that assessments should be conducted with the minimum disruption to operations.

LAURUS offers a programme of learning, accredited by Skills for Justice Awards, the learning outcomes of which align with the knowledge based unit in the qualification. It addresses areas that a practitioner needs to know and understand. This learning is assessed and quality assured by LAURUS trainers. It is subject to external quality assurance by Skills for Justice Awards.

Using this approach, competent learners will already have 12 credits of the qualification before they undertake assessment of their practice. This is a significant change to current PQF arrangements which do not formally assess the level 3 learning programme. The assessment framework manages much more holistically the progress towards qualified practitioner and reduces the subsequent volume of assessment in the workplace. A variety of methods are used to test the knowledge that underpins good practice. For example, online assessments, assignments/case studies and workbooks are all incorporated into the accredited learning programme.

Assessment of practice is further streamlined by

- \* confirmation from the employer that a learner is ready for assessment. This will usually be done by the line manager who can confirm that a learner is performing in accordance with role expectations
- \* the provision, by LAURUS, of assessment tools that enable the learner to prepare fully for assessment and guide the assessor. This promotes the generation of high quality evidence in an efficient manner
- \* the use of an electronic portfolio allowing online access and supporting cost effective assessment.

Practice assessment will be conducted in the workplace with the assessor observing the learner, discussing their work with them and talking to others who have an opinion about their practice (e.g. a line manager, a co-worker, a service-user). They will also examine records and other work products.

### **What does the role specific learning programme look like?**

LAURUS Development has designed an accredited learning programme to accompany this new qualification. Full details of the LAURUS Accredited Learning Programme in Community Rehabilitation (Level 4) are also available.

### **What is the amount of time staff will need to take out of their 37 hour week to undertake practice assessment?**

Practice assessment will be provided by assessors who will support learners. Time out of the 37 hour week will be balanced over a 3-4 month period and will include time for assessment planning, professional discussion and feedback. Each learner will need 3 days, on average, to prepare and participate in assessment. Observations of work with service users will need to be planned to include the necessary permissions of the individual under supervision.

The proviso for this calculation is that learners are confirmed by their employer as 'assessment ready'. With all good intentions, there will be learners who do not meet the level of competence described by the standard. In these cases, remedial development work will be identified and communicated to the employer.

Costs and assessment hours are based on the assumption of a competent individual correctly confirmed as assessment ready by their supervisor.

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### **Is this qualification suitable for Community Payback (CP) Supervisors?**

No. CP supervisors, in our view, require a tailored learning and qualification programme of their own. It is a role that has never existed comfortably within what is provided for 'responsible officers'. It is therefore subject to further development in the provision of an overall suite of qualifications. Whilst the emphasis on engagement and building trusting relationships fits absolutely with all roles that deliver contact with individuals, the processes and role responsibilities differ. It makes very good sense to establish a progression route for CP supervisors, many of whom develop their careers in the direction of the responsible officer.

### **What does the qualification look like? What modules does it contain?**

The qualification has a knowledge unit covering that which all learners need to know and understand to deliver community rehabilitation and assessed practice units. The unit titles and associated learning outcomes are:

#### **Understanding rehabilitation in the community**

1. understand the legislative and organisational policy context of community rehabilitation work
2. understand how to engage communities, neighbourhoods and families in supporting community rehabilitation
3. understand how to develop trusting relationships with individuals and motivate lives free from crime
4. understand how to manage group work activity
5. understand domestic abuse in the context of rehabilitation
6. understand how to support women in the criminal justice system
7. understand the impact of substance misuse on the risk of reoffending
8. understand the impact of mental health on the risk of reoffending

### **Engage individuals in their rehabilitation journey**

1. be able to engage and motivate individuals in their rehabilitation journey
2. be able to guide individuals' rehabilitation journey and their desistance from offending
3. be able to drive the progress of individuals' rehabilitation plans
4. be able to work with individuals in developing community connections to support desistance from offending

### **Provide continuity of services for individuals from custody into the community**

1. be able to assess individuals' circumstances in line with organisational procedures
2. be able to manage individuals' resettlement needs in line with organisational procedures
3. be able to support the involvement of families in the resettlement plan

### **Assess and manage risk of harm**

1. understand principles of risk assessment, risk factors and protective factors
2. understand risk assessment in relation to public protection and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
3. be able to manage risk of harm
4. be able to manage escalating risk of harm

### **Work with partners to promote community rehabilitation**

1. understand how to work with partners to promote community rehabilitation
2. be able to work with partners to promote community rehabilitation
3. be able to manage risk with partners in promoting community rehabilitation