

VQ Level 4 in Community Rehabilitation – CASE STUDY

Transforming Rehabilitation prompted a review of learning, development and qualification to consider how changing requirements are reflected in new working environments. Skills for Justice Awards and LAURUS Development collaborated to analyse and evaluate existing provision against future vision. The gaps identified formed the basis of consultation to design a qualification that addresses the needs of responsible officers at PSO level in the Community Rehabilitation Companies.

The challenge was to accurately describe the knowledge and skills required by this job role and to create a qualification that is in tune with both employers' and learners' perceptions of the demands of their role. It came as no surprise that upskilling in the areas of assessment and management of risk, and in particular the area of domestic abuse, was indicated.

The resulting *SFJA Level 4 Certificate in Community Rehabilitation* recognises not only the competent professional performance of staff but also employer commitment to learning and qualification. It supports the practical application of knowledge thereby integrating what you need to know with what you need to do.

Higher Education Institutions delivering the degree component of the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) have welcomed the content and learning outcomes of this vocational qualification and accept a direct correlation with their own academic programmes at Level 4.

This is significant in terms of career progression for individuals who may not be able to evidence attainment in higher education. It widens access to those who have worked hard to develop their career and who are well-placed to demonstrate the value of experience. Importantly, for those with lived experience, it removes the 'glass ceiling' created by traditional entry requirements.

Recognition of prior learning will continue to be a valued principle in the anticipated apprenticeships (currently in development). The *SFJA Certificate in Community Rehabilitation* opens up opportunity as described by Abbi:

'As a young teenager I was fostered and in local authority care. Aspiration was not part of my world until my keyworker suggested that I would be a good mentor to other young people. I was excited by the idea of giving something back. I had a lot of support to move into this work and get my GCSEs in English and Maths and as a young adult found out that I had a form of dyslexia.

I was lucky enough to be successful in getting a job in probation and I loved the way that I could help people make a difference in their lives. I thought that being a probation officer was a step too far and that university wasn't for me as I wasn't confident in my written work. I thought that I had reached the best that I could be. I did the VQ4 [Level 4 Certificate in Community Rehabilitation] which taught me a lot about my job and helped me believe that I was a good professional. My line manager suggested that I look at the PQiP but I was unsure. My assessor told me that I could use my VQ4 certificate to count for the first year of a degree. So I decided to go for it. My experience helped me tackle university assignments - I had lots of examples to show that I know the theory in my practice. I am now in my final year. It's hard but I have lots of support and my university tutor has been great in helping me. I know that I can do a good job.'