

Post-qualifying Training in the PBNI

Noreen O Neill*

Summary: The continued professional development of staff is essential in order to maintain a highly skilled workforce that is well trained and able to practise in an environment that demands high levels of competence from Probation staff. There have been a number of changes in recent years in social work education and training which have been designed to improve social work practice and management at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These changes come at an opportune time in that, as a consequence of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 and the Sentencing Framework Implementation process, the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) has recruited a number of social work qualified staff who now have the opportunity to engage in the new post-qualifying framework. There are also opportunities for established Probation staff at practitioner and manager levels. While social work is not the identified qualification for Probation Officers in England and Wales, it remains the core qualification for Probation Officers in Northern Ireland. In this paper the author highlights the importance of continued professional development for social work qualified staff within PBNI.

Keywords: Post-qualifying framework, Northern Ireland Social Care Council, Northern Ireland Post Qualifying Education and Training Partnership, modules, requirements, accreditation.