

## **Training and development**

Offender Managers (OMs) are very good at identifying alcohol issues, however lack of training at all levels can cause difficulties with workers feeling unskilled in what is sometimes seen as a specialist role. The Institute for Criminal Policy Research (ICPR) research concluded that 'there is considerable scope for improving the scale and quality of training being offered to OMs to better equip them to more effectively deliver brief interventions to alcohol misusing offenders'.

Basic training for all staff working with alcohol misusing offenders should allow them to:-

- develop motivational skills (motivational interviewing)
- put in place techniques for working with offenders with different needs
- develop an understanding of the nature of addiction
- understand procedures for assessment and referral of offenders into treatment

This could be achieved through specific alcohol awareness training run in-house; shadowing a provider or going on job secondment; having specialist workers providing the training; or on a multi-agency basis as part of strategic workforce planning.

A programme of training could be incorporated into existing arrangements; for example, Essex Probation Area has renegotiated contracts with its alcohol treatment requirement (ATR) providers to ensure they are actively involved in training probation staff in the delivery of brief interventions. This is likely to be particularly important where there may be delays in accessing alcohol treatment or accredited programmes.

### **Staff training, DANOS competences and qualifications**

Staff who are working with alcohol misusing offenders should be competent in line with the Drugs and Alcohol National Occupational Standards (DANOS) or working towards competency. DANOS has been developed for those working with drug and alcohol users and sets out the range of knowledge and skills to which staff in the drugs and alcohol field should be working.

Adherence to DANOS will ensure:

- Development of appropriate job descriptions and person specifications
- Recruitment of staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and experience
- Appropriate induction and training

All staff who during the course of their core duties are likely to need to deliver Tier 1 interventions as described in *Models of care for alcohol misusers*

(MoCAM) should have or be working towards the associated DANOS competences<sup>1</sup>. As a minimum, staff need to be able to:-

- Identify a problem with alcohol misuse
- Offer basic advice on low risk drinking levels
- Challenge offenders about the impact that drinking has on aspects of their lives
- Use an alcohol screening tool e.g. AUDIT
- Know how to refer an individual with a problem for more detailed assessment

Areas/trusts should be increasing their capacity to deliver extended brief interventions (Tier 2 of MoCAM) in-house, although the number and grade of staff who need to be competent to this level is a matter for areas/trusts to decide based upon an assessment of offender need and any other arrangements that they may have in place with other agencies to deliver Tier 2 work etc.

Wherever possible, training should be linked to DANOS. As part of NOMS Alcohol Best Practice Projects initiative, Avon & Somerset Probation Area (ASPA) developed 1 (for Tier 1 interventions), 3 (for those delivering Tier 2 interventions) and 5 day (this was considered too long and has since been conflated into the original 3 day package) bespoke training packages linked to DANOS competences to enable probation staff to gain the basic knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to undertake initial screening, provide simple and extended brief interventions to those who need them and refer offenders for specialist assessment, where appropriate. Powerpoint slides, student and trainer manuals from the ASPA project are available on EPIC for other areas/trusts to download and use<sup>2</sup>.

For professional development and quality assurance purposes, staff could be asked to demonstrate that they have the necessary DANOS competences by working towards achieving a recognised qualification or award. This would be based upon an assessment by a registered assessor of a portfolio of evidence put together by the participants; require a commitment of 3-4 hours per month for 12 months and would need to be built in to each staff member's Learning and Development plan.

NOMS gave further funding to ASPA in 07-08 to provide the opportunity for a number of staff who attended the Tier 2 training to gain an NVQ in Working with Substance Misuse (award and certificates), as recommended by Skills for Health. Qualifications in Working with Substance Misuse are on the Qualifications and Credit Framework and therefore nationally recognised and prove competence against National Occupational Standards (NOS) relevant to Substance Misuse workers including DANOS, Youth Justice, Health and

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<sup>1</sup> The new qualification framework is updating the PSO units (work by consortia on DANOS/PSO units).

<sup>2</sup> [http://npsintranet.probation.gsi.gov.uk/index/service\\_delivery/interventions/drugs\\_\\_alcohol/alcohol\\_best\\_practice\\_projects.htm](http://npsintranet.probation.gsi.gov.uk/index/service_delivery/interventions/drugs__alcohol/alcohol_best_practice_projects.htm)

Social Care and Community Justice. The achievement of qualifications which have been derived from DANOS and other NOS relevant to substance misuse workers is supported by NOMS and therefore this 'pilot' project will provide experience from both the assessors and the students about how this approach could be implemented more widely across probation.

It is important to note that, whilst DANOS will relate to many aspects of the role undertaken by those working with substance misusing offenders, staff should also be competent in line with Criminal Justice Occupational awards or equivalent (CQSW, DipSW).

More generally, NOMS is planning to commission a piece of work to develop the skills of probation managers in their negotiations with PCTs and Joint Commissioning Groups. The first stage will need to be a review of the current level of staff competence.

### **Alcohol Learning Centre**

Whilst Identification and Brief Advice (IBA) is not esoteric or complex, research has showed that practitioners are often reluctant to discuss alcohol with individuals because they are not clear how to broach the subject.

Partner organisations across criminal justice, health and social care are being encouraged to make strides in implementing 'High Impact Changes' to impact on the rate of alcohol related harms. This includes:

'Developing Identification and Brief Advice (IBA) in criminal justice by persuading the Crime Reduction Partnerships of the importance of IBA to delivering crime reduction and savings across the public sector'

The Department of Health has developed an on-line resource, the Alcohol Learning Centre (ALC)<sup>3</sup> to support organisations taking action to reduce alcohol related harms. The ALC is a one-stop-shop which collates, co-ordinates and disseminates learning and promising practice from across the NHS and the Third Sector. It contains alcohol specific policy documents, guidance and tools and provides training resources to support frontline practitioners in delivering IBA.

The Alcohol Learning Centre (ALC) is part of the Alcohol Improvement Programme. It is the repository of policy and promising practice identified through:

- Screening and Intervention Programme for Sensible Drinking (SIPS)<sup>4</sup>
- Hub of Commissioned Alcohol Projects and Policies (HubCAPP) – a database of local implementation strategies and initiatives<sup>5</sup>

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3 <http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk>

4 <http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/Topics/Browse/BriefAdvice/SIPS/>

5 <http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/Topics/Browse/LocalInitiatives/>

- the e-learning module to train health and social care professionals to deliver Identification and Brief Advice (IBA)<sup>6</sup> (This module will be modified later in 09/10 for Offender Managers).

An Offender Health section has recently been added to the website<sup>7</sup>.

### **The Alcohol Education and Research Council (AERC) Alcohol Academy**

The AERC Alcohol Academy<sup>8</sup> is a new Community Interest Company (CIC, or 'social enterprise'<sup>9</sup>) that has been set up, and is hosted, by Ranzetta Consulting<sup>10</sup>, with a grant from the Alcohol Education and Research Council (AERC).

The aim of the Academy is to promote excellence in local alcohol harm reduction by training and supporting local alcohol coordinators and strategic leads for alcohol. The intention is to provide a very targeted service to the people – the local alcohol coordinators – who have to translate policy and guidance into effective action on the ground.

There may also be a role for the Academy in training ACOs how to influence local strategic partnerships and commissioners so that offenders' needs are better met (alcohol coordinators have to be good at influencing other people's agendas so this is an area of expertise the Academy could offer).

Under the NOMS Alcohol Best Practice Projects Initiative, the Academy is also working with London Probation Area to deliver training to Offender Managers (OMs) to familiarise them with the *NOMS Alcohol Information Pack* and this Guidance; and develop OMs' skills in working with and engaging offenders who misuse alcohol (a joint project with West Midlands Probation Area).

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6 <http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/eLearning/>

7 <http://www.alcohollearningcentre.org.uk/Topics/Browse/OffenderHealth/>

8 [www.alcoholacademy.net](http://www.alcoholacademy.net)

9 Social enterprises are businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community it serves.

10 Ranzetta Consulting specialise in local alcohol strategy development, and have delivered consultancy and research since 2001.