



Code of Ethics

Revised December 2020



Introduction

The Probation Institute is the Professional Body and Centre of Excellence for probation, rehabilitation and resettlement practice, applying rigorous standards to professional development and the assessment of research and best practice. The Institute provides professional leadership for probation and rehabilitation workers, and all those who deliver services that protect the public and rehabilitate offenders. It acts to link probation and rehabilitation professionals across the public, voluntary, community and private sectors.

Membership is open to all individual practitioners concerned with the rehabilitation of offenders.

Membership is inclusive to all staff, regardless of grade, employer or job role. The Institute also actively invites work in partnership with employers in the sector and other organisations or stakeholders in the criminal justice arena.

This Code of Ethics states the core values and ethical principles that every member of the Probation Institute accepts as part of their membership and which underpin the profession. They support the Institute's objective of ensuring the highest possible professional standards in service delivery and conduct

The Code of Ethics applies to all members of the Probation Institute. In different ways, their work applies professional knowledge, values and skills to working in the community with people with the aim of rehabilitating them and protecting the victims and potential future victims. Through this work probation, rehabilitation and resettlement practitioners, managers and leaders make a significant contribution to public safety.

"Probation agencies shall aim to reduce reoffending by establishing positive relationships with offenders in order to supervise (including control where necessary), guide and assist them and to promote their successful social inclusion. Probation thus contributes to community safety and the fair administration of justice."

Council of Europe Probation Rule 1

Members of the Institute are encouraged to use the Code of Ethics to promote ethical practice in their place of work.

Educators can use the code to help students to understand what is meant by ethical practice and being a registered professional.

Employers should support staff in upholding and implementing the Code of Ethics.

Core Values and Ethical Principles

1. We believe in the ability of people who have offended to change for the better and become responsible members of society.

Associated principles:

- Desistance from offending is a process that may take time, requiring a level of patience, tenacity, care and proactive engagement on the part of practitioners and service users.

2. We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of the individual.

Associated principles:

- Interventions must show due regard to the dignity, health, safety and well-being of service users, and to the contribution that individuals can make to their own rehabilitation.

3. We are committed to promoting social justice and social inclusion.

Associated principles:

- People who have offended should receive fair, impartial and just treatment throughout all phases of the system.
- Practitioners, managers and leaders should take a proactive approach to challenging discrimination and inappropriate behaviour.
- Diversity and difference is viewed with positive regard.
- Service users should be encouraged to have a voice in the planning, implementation and review of services and policies.

4. We believe in the worth of supervision in the community as a sentence of the court, based on establishing positive relationships with service users, to promote their rehabilitation.

Associated principles:

- Effective supervision relies on setting an environment in which sensitive issues can be explored whilst maintaining appropriate role boundaries.
- The needs of service users are often appropriately met through multi agency work in the community.
- Custodial sentences may sometimes be unavoidable, but typically they disrupt influences and opportunities that lead to desistance. Community sentences are more effective in this respect. Community sentences are more effective in supporting rehabilitation than short custodial sentences.

5. Full consideration should be given to the rights and needs of victims when planning how a service user's sentence will be managed.

Associated principles:

- Responses to the needs of service users must take account of any ongoing assessed level of risk of causing harm to other people.
- Restorative approaches seek both to prevent harm and conflict and repair harm where it has occurred.
- Recognition that all activities affect others and, as people are responsible for their choices and actions, they can be held accountable for them.
- Restorative interventions must safeguard against the secondary or repeat victimisation of victims.

6. We are committed to supporting strong partnerships across the fields of practice, learning, skills and research.

Associated principles:

- Partnerships are encouraged to provide the services that are within their areas of expertise and accountability.
- Partnerships are encouraged which help to ensure that service users have access to services to support desistance.
- The skills, expertise and contribution of colleagues across agencies are respected and valued
- Effective communication is valued and maintained.
- Knowledge and information are shared to reduce risk.

7. We recognise the importance of training and learning for identified levels of competence and of continuing professional development.

Associated principles:

- Initial qualifying and continuing training must be of a length and quality appropriate to the level and complexity of the work to be undertaken.
- Continuous Professional Development is a shared responsibility for practitioners and employers.
- Individual workers are accountable for the quality of their work and for maintaining and improving their professional practice, the employer also has a responsibility to enable this.
- Sharing learning and skills with others engaged in probation, rehabilitation and resettlement will improve outcomes.

8. We are committed to the development and dissemination of knowledge, through research, to inform probation policy and practice.

Associated principles:

- Methods of working with service users should take account of their personal characteristics, their different risks and needs and their social contexts.
- The quality of different interventions should be judged on the basis of evaluation, research and best possible evidence that can be widely disseminated and scrutinised.
- Supporting, contributing to research and disseminating research are essential for the development of good practice.

9. We are committed to acting with professional integrity

Associated principles:

- The values and principles of the profession are upheld and all work will be conducted in a reliable, honest and trustworthy manner.
- Appropriate boundaries must be established and maintained in relationships with service users and colleagues.
- Judgements should be based on balanced and considered reasoning. Practitioners and managers should maintain awareness of the impact of their own values, prejudices and on their practice and on other people.
- Practitioners and managers should account for and justify their judgements and actions to service users, to employers and to the general public.
- Behaviour which is unacceptable must be reported through appropriate channels.
- Record keeping must be accurate and professional.
- Data must be protected in accordance with legislation.
- The use of professional supervision to support practice is actively encouraged.