

Rediscovering the Probation Service

Hannah has worked for the probation service for the last 15 years, qualifying as a Probation officer in 2011 before moving into her current role as a Practice Tutor Assessor.

Hannah left the service in 2015 when the first split happened and saw this as an opportunity to go and train to be an English teacher. Moving back to probation from teaching added a new appreciation for people trying to make positive changes in their lives.

Having rediscovered her passion for probation work, Hannah shares some of her insights upon returning to the probation service.

Why did you choose to work in the Probation Service and what made you return?

After studying criminology and sociology at university, I found elements of my course were very much geared towards probation. After pursuing various jobs, I realised that I wanted to use the qualifications I had to help make positive changes in people's lives. Whilst I did leave the service in 2015 following the first split to pursue a teaching career, I quickly realised that People on Probation were far less frightening than teenagers.

Also, the work-life balance was better working for probation including flexible working so I could spend more time with my two children. I also felt safer working in probation as staff were protected and supported and there were far more opportunities for development.





Were there any changes you noticed when returning to the Probation Officer role?

I think it was about 3 hours after I walked through the door, it felt like I'd never been away! At the point in which I left; all paper files were being scanned onto the system and by the time I came back that process had been completed. Everything was now electronic, there were open office spaces and booths which replaced interview rooms within (now legacy) CRC buildings and new operational and management systems in place. Things are changing continually and it can take some time to adjust.

What opportunities have you had since joining the Probation Service?

I first started off as a programmes tutor and from there I went on to work as a Court Duty Officer and then a Probation Service Officer in a field team. From there I was able to move into the Probation Qualification Frame, which is the equivalent of PQiP now. Due to my degree I was able to fast track it and did so in a short space of time. I then qualified as a Probation Officer and eventually moved into the role as a Practice Tutor Assessor. In the role that I'm in at the moment, there are plenty of opportunities to move into more high-level assessor roles and Senior Probation Officer roles to continue developing.

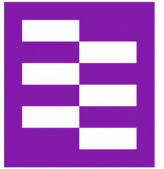
What's a typical day in your role?

In my role as a Practice Tutor Assessor, I spend my day dialing in on teams, observing people sessions with their PoPs and conducting interviews with people. I also spend a lot of time writing up and submitting evidence, managing and supporting difficulties with learners as well as offering training development for learners.

What are some of the key benefits to working in the Probation Service?

There are always opportunities to learn and develop your skills. Probation work covers such a wide remit of skills and so you've got the opportunity to move between roles to develop a whole different set of skills. I've done various different jobs that have allowed me to build up an idea of the Criminal Justice System, how it works as a whole and what that means for people in it.





What skills are needed to ensure you are successful in this role?

Being able to display empathy, understanding, patience and care. Now that I've been in this role for a couple of years, although I'm busy, people will ask me questions about how to do certain things and it's always important that you give people that time because everyone is on their own journey.

One of the reasons why Probation is a place that I have come back to is because of the support around me and the way the team interacts with one another. I've never experienced a team that hasn't been supportive - we all acknowledge how difficult the role can be at times and are there for one another.

