Custodial Care NVQ Levels 2 & 3

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<th>Date of Initial Issue</th>
<th>05/09/07</th>
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<td>Issue No.</td>
<td>275</td>
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<td>PSI Amendments should be read in conjunction with this PSO</td>
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<th>Date of Further Amendments</th>
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This PSO is issued to reflect HMPS commitment to Professionalising the Prison Service. It outlines how achievement of the Custodial Care NVQ (CCNVQ) at level 2 and level 3 will be used to measure staff competence against the recognised National Occupational Standard and confirms that new officers and transferred staff must achieve the CCNVQ qualification to complete their first year and have their status as a Prison Officer confirmed.

### DESIRED OUTCOME

The PSO will provide a clear understanding of the impact and importance of the CCNVQ at level 2 and level 3 to establishments and their staff.

### MANDATORY ACTIONS

All Prison Officers undertaking the POELT course after 1st September 2007 must achieve the NVQ in Custodial Care at level 3 within their first year. Failure by a candidate to achieve the required level of competence by the end of their first year (and any permitted extension period) will trigger the unsatisfactory performance management process outlined in PSO 8450.

### RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There should be no immediate resource implications of this policy above and beyond the normal levels of support provided to Probationary Prison Officers by their establishment (i.e. KPT training time, normal Probationer support, SPDR process).

Resource implications will only arise if a candidate is unsuccessful at the end of the probationary year. The PSO will outline the avenues of support available to candidates who are at risk of not reaching the required level of competence for continued employment within the Prison Service.

### IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

17th September 2007

Robin Wilkinson  
H.R. Director

Further advice or information on this PSO or the systems contained within it can be sought from: Michael Harrison Tel: 01788 804089
SECTION 1 – Custodial Care NVQ Level 3.

1.1 The Custodial Care NVQ (CCNVQ) Level 3 identifies the National Occupational Standards required to operate at prison officer level. All the underpinning knowledge and understanding required to achieve the qualification is delivered through the POELT course. Candidates undertaking the NVQ will be assessed on whether they are able to carry out their normal day to day duties to the minimum standard required as identified by the Sector Skills Council for the Justice Sector.

1.2 The Custodial Care NVQ level 3 will provide a number of benefits to establishments:

- Help to equip staff with the skills to operate more flexibly, and drive up the quality of service delivery.
- Establish an ethos of self-improvement and life long learning which will aid the Prison Service’s ability to compete, and establish a reputation as a centre of excellence in the open market.
- Improve the ability of the Prison Service to appeal to the labour market as an employer of choice, attracting high calibre candidates who have the opportunity for clear, structured progression, with the CCNVQ as the starting point.
- Ensure that staff have the skills and competence to perform the tasks required of them.
- Provide an opportunity to target training to support operational delivery in a much more coherent and accurate fashion.

SECTION 2 – Implications for those beginning the POELT course after 1st September 2007.

2.1 This section identifies responsibilities placed on new prison officers beginning their POELT training after 1st September 2007 and sets out the consequences of non compliance with the PSO.

2.2 From 1st September 2007 all new recruits and converted staff beginning their POELT course must complete the CCNVQ at level 3 by the end of their first year. Statutory rights remain unaffected and exceptions are outlined in Section 14. PSO 8450 describes the necessary staff performance management process.

SECTION 3 – Staff who should be encouraged to undertake the CCNVQ at level 3.

3.1 The qualification is compulsory for individuals (see paragraph 3.3 for exceptions) beginning their POELT training after 1st September 2007. It is not expected that operational support grades or non-operational staff should undertake the CCNVQ at Level 3.

3.2 There is no requirement for prison officers seeking promotion to senior officer to achieve the CCNVQ. It should be noted, however, that prison officers seeking promotion should be encouraged by their line managers to achieve this qualification as it provides evidence of their competence.

3.3 Those members of staff on the IDS programme will not be required to achieve the CCNVQ
SECTION 4 – Custodial Care NVQ Level 2

4.1 The Custodial Care NVQ at level 2 covers the National Occupational Standards required for operational support grades. There is no mandatory requirement for operational support grades to undertake this qualification. It is highly recommended that staff considering undertaking the level 2 qualification should contact the relevant regional manager for further information, advice and guidance.

4.2 Although this qualification is not mandatory, those members of staff who are considering converting to become prison officers should be encouraged by their line managers to undertake the Custodial Care NVQ at level 2 first.

4.3 Some of the evidence gathered for the level 2 qualification can be used to support evidence of competence at level 3. This should reduce the time taken to achieve the level 3 qualification once an individual has commenced training to become a prison officer.

4.4 Although there is no mandatory requirement for operational support grades to achieve the Custodial Care NVQ at level 2 similar benefits to those of the Level 3 can be realised:

   • Staff are equipped with the skills to operate more flexibly and therefore better able to enhance the quality of service delivery.
   • An ethos of self-improvement and life long learning is established which will aid the Prison Service’s ability to compete and establish a reputation as a centre of excellence in the open market.
   • Improvement in the ability of the Prison Service to appeal to the labour market as an employer of choice and attract high calibre candidates who have the opportunity for clear structured progression with the CCNVQ at level 2 as the starting point.
   • Operational support grades have the necessary skills and competences to perform the tasks required of them.
   • The CCNVQ at level 2 provides an opportunity to target training to support operational delivery in a much more coherent and accurate fashion.

SECTION 5 – Structure of the Custodial Care NVQ at Level 2.

5.1 **Mandatory units must be completed by the candidate:**

   • Promote equality and value diversity
   • Minimise and deal with disruptive and obstructive behaviour
   • Contribute to the quality of team working
   • Ensure your own actions reduce risks to health and safety.

5.2 In addition to the 4 mandatory units, **candidates must complete 4 optional units from a list of 18** These include:

   • Maintain security and exit points
   • Search individuals, premises and surrounding areas
   • Contribute to the security of the custodial environment
   • Assist in the control of incidents and emergencies
   • Contribute to planning the installation and decommissioning of electronic monitoring equipment
   • Identify electronic monitoring incidents and emergencies
   • Drive vehicles to carry out custodial duties
   • Install and decommission electronic monitoring equipment
   • Help people to comply with electronic monitoring requirements
   • Follow up electronic monitoring incidents in the field
Provide effective customer service  
Research, prepare and present information from a variety of sources.  
Enter and find data using a computer  
Search vehicles  
Contribute to the adjudication process  
Maintain security using screening equipment  
Contribute to preparing and implementing voice verification monitoring  
Establish and maintain voice verification monitoring in the field.

5.3 Each unit is broken down further to identify the specific competence requirements linked to the unit title. For a full description of each unit please refer to the Learning and Development (formerly known as TDG) website, HMPS website or contact the relevant NVQ champion or regional manager.

5.4 Each establishment will have their own preference in regard to which optional units are appropriate to their individual needs. Candidates will need to discuss which optional units to undertake with their assessor.

SECTION 6 – Structure of the Custodial Care NVQ at Level 3.

6.1. There are 5 mandatory units which candidates must complete. These are:

- Promote equality and value diversity  
- Maintain security and order in the custodial environment  
- Contribute to the prevention and management of inappropriate behaviour  
- Maintain and develop your own knowledge, skills, and competence  
- Ensure your own actions reduce risks to health and safety

6.2 In addition to the 5 mandatory units, candidates must complete 5 optional units from a possible 41. These include:

- Maintain restrictions on individuals’ liberty whilst promoting and protecting their rights  
- Maintain security at entry and exit points  
- Drive vehicles to carry out custodial duties  
- Enter and find data using a computer  
- Receive and discharge individuals and property into and out of the custodial environment  
- Search individuals, accommodation and areas  
- Search vehicles  
- Contribute to the control of incidents and emergencies  
- Control and restrain individuals  
- Contribute to the adjudication process  
- Maintain security whilst escorting individuals to courts and other environments  
- Contribute to planning and reviewing how to meet individuals’ needs and rights in the custodial environment  
- Encourage individuals to look after their own health and hygiene  
- Support individuals experiencing difficulties  
- Contribute to the protection of individuals from abuse  
- Support individuals where abuse has been disclosed  
- Help individuals in custody to maintain and develop relationships  
- Assess individuals’ offending behaviour and plan provision  
- Help individuals address their offending behaviour  
- Prepare, implement and evaluate group activities  
- Test for substance misuse
Support individuals who are substance users
Enable individuals to find out about and use services and facilities
Assist in the transfer of individuals between agencies and services
Prepare individuals for resettlement in the community
Develop and sustain effective working relationships with staff from other agencies
Provide and obtain information at courts and formal hearings
Support the efficient use of resources
Manage information for action
Maintain security using screening equipment
Develop control for people who are at risk to themselves or others
Reinforce positive behavioural goals during relationships with individuals
Prepare and provide agreed individual development activities for individuals
Assist parents in custody to develop their parenting skills
Develop and maintain effective relationships with the families of individuals held in custody
Monitor and maintain the health and well-being and safety of dogs
Maintain and develop the performance of dogs
Contribute to the security of the custodial environment using a dog
Prepare for, and carry out, searches using a dog
Contribute to plans for the release and resettlement of offenders.

6.3 Each unit is broken down further to identify the specific competence requirements linked to the unit title. For a full description of each unit please refer to the Learning and Development website, HMPS Website or contact the relevant NVQ champion or regional manager.

6.4 Each establishment will have their own preference in regard to which optional units are appropriate to their individual needs. Candidates will need to discuss which optional units to undertake with their assessor.

SECTION 7 – Support for candidates completing the Custodial Care NVQ at level 2 and 3.

7.1 This section identifies the support infrastructure available for all candidates undertaking the CCNVQ at level 2 and level 3.

- Each candidate will be allocated an assessor, who will be responsible for supporting the candidate through the assessment process. The assessor will agree an Individual Assessment Plan with the candidate, based on the individual needs of the candidate.
- Each establishment must provide a named member of staff at SMT level to act as the “NVQ Champion”, (see section 10). This individual will disseminate any information distributed from Learning and Development regarding the Custodial Care NVQ. Any action plan put in place for a candidate by an assessor must be copied to the NVQ champion; further information regarding action plans is available in section 14.
- Each establishment is allocated a regional manager. This member of staff is responsible for a number of prisons within a specific area (see appendix one). Contact details are supplied in appendix one, and are also available on the Learning and Development Website. The regional manager will work closely with the NVQ champion, assessor and candidate to help support the “learning experience”.
- The candidate’s line manager is a vital element in the achievement of the Custodial Care NVQ (see Section 11). Line managers must allow the candidate to be observed by their assessor on a regular basis.
- Line managers may well be asked to provide additional evidence of competency in the form of witness testimony. Advice and guidance for this is available via the assessor, regional manager and NVQ champion.
SECTION 8 – Responsibilities of the candidate

8.1 This section identifies the responsibilities of candidates in the achievement of CCNVQ levels 2 and 3. It should be noted that the candidate responsibilities remain the same for both levels. However, the consequences of non-achievement for new prison officers are different (see Section 12).

- Candidates should ensure that they inform their line manager of any planned assessment meetings or observations with their assessor as soon as possible.
- Candidates should ensure that they inform their assessor if they are unable to attend any assessment meeting or observation as soon as possible.
- It would be beneficial for candidates to know the identity of their establishment’s NVQ champion and regional manager. This information is available via Learning and Development website.
- Candidates should ensure that their line manager is kept informed of their progress.
- Candidates should contact the NVQ champion or regional manager as soon as possible if they have any concerns regarding the assessment process.
- Candidates must communicate any action plans to their line manager and NVQ champion.
- Any candidates who feel they may not complete the qualification within 12 months should notify their line manager and NVQ champion as soon as possible so additional support can be provided.
- From 1st September 2007 all new prison officers must (except in certain exceptional circumstances, shown at section 14) complete the Custodial Care NVQ at level 3 within 12 months of starting their POELT course.
- Candidates seeking an extension must apply at least 40 days before the end of the 12 month period. If the candidate is unable submit an application for an extension, the application can be submitted on their behalf by an appropriate individual. Extensions will only be granted if supported by the Governing Governor, regional manager and NVQ champion; section 14 provides further guidance.
- Application forms are available from regional managers and the establishment’s NVQ champion.

SECTION 9 – Individual Establishment Responsibilities

9.1 This section identifies the responsibilities that rest with individual establishments. The CCNVQ should be seen as a mechanism to support new members of staff and ensure that individuals are able to carry out their every day duties competently. Individual establishments must therefore develop a supportive environment for their candidates. It should be noted that the opportunity cost of replacing staff is far higher than supporting staff through to achievement.

9.2 All establishments must appoint a NVQ champion to act as a liaison point between the establishment and the regional manager appointed by Learning and Development. The NVQ champion must be a member of the SMT. Section 10 outlines the responsibilities of the NVQ champion.

9.3 Assessors must be able to gain access to their candidates in order to observe and make assessments.

9.4 Establishments must notify regional managers of any concerns over a candidate’s progress as soon as possible.
9.5 Establishments must notify regional managers of any concerns over the assessment process, including individual assessors.

9.6 Establishments must notify regional managers of any candidate who has not achieved the CCNVQ within 12 months of commencing their POELT course.

9.7 Establishments must support an application for extension by a candidate if the establishment believes that the candidate will achieve within the extended timeframe. Establishments can apply to extend the period twice, up to a maximum of 6 months in total. Exceptions to this rule are outlined in Section 14.

9.8 Establishments must allow the candidate access to tasks which form part of the CCNVQ. This will allow the assessor an opportunity to observe the candidate undertaking these tasks in a competent manner.

9.9 Candidates who do not achieve the CCNVQ level 3 within 12 months of commencing the POELT course or after an agreed extended period of time due to special circumstances outlined in Section 14 will fall under the arrangements outlined in PSO 8450.

SECTION 10 – NVQ Champion Responsibilities

10.1 This section identifies the responsibilities of the NVQ champion. The nominated individual should be the establishment’s HR Business Partner. In circumstances where this is not possible the nominated individual must be a member of the establishment’s Senior Management Team.

10.2 The NVQ champion must act as the liaison point between the establishment and the regional manager appointed by Learning and Development. Whilst not responsible for the assessment or delivery of the CCNVQ programme, their role is to promote the CCNVQ programme and have day to day oversight of the CCNVQ candidates.

10.3 The NVQ champion must notify the regional manager of any concerns over a candidate’s progress as soon as possible. This will allow remedial action to be taken by the assessor and candidate.

10.4 The NVQ champion must notify regional managers of any concerns over the assessment process including individual assessors.

10.5 The NVQ champion must notify the regional manager of any candidate who is at risk of not achieving the CCNVQ level 3 within 12 months. This must be done early enough to allow a meaningful action plan to be put in place for the candidate by the assessor.

SECTION 11 – Responsibilities of the candidate’s line manager

11.1 The candidate’s line manager is a key part in the tri-partite relationship between assessor – candidate and establishment and is therefore a vital element in the achievement of the Custodial Care NVQ. This section will outline the key responsibilities. Additional support is available for line managers, and any individual requiring clarification or additional support should contact the regional manager for their Area.

11.2 Line managers must, when requested by the candidate or assessor, provide additional evidence of competency in the form of a brief witness testimony. Advice and guidance for this is available via the assessor, regional manager and NVQ champion.
11.3 The line manager must be kept up to date on the candidate’s progress by the assessor and communicate to the NVQ champion if they believe the candidate is not making sufficient progress to achieve the CCNVQ within 12 months.

11.4 The line manager must support the candidate in the achievement of any action plan produced by the assessor on behalf of a candidate and offer general support and feedback on performance.

11.5 The line manager must allow the candidate access to tasks which form part of the CCNVQ. This will allow the assessor an opportunity to observe the candidate undertaking these tasks in a competent manner.

SECTION 12 – Responsibilities of the Governing Governor

12.1 The Governing Governor must appoint a NVQ champion who must be a member of the establishment’s Senior Management Team. It is felt that the most appropriate member of staff will be the HR Business Partner. The overall responsibility for the delivery of the NVQ programme rests with the Governing Governor.

12.2 The Governing Governor must ensure that any new recruit is managed through the unsatisfactory performance process outlined in PSO 8450 if they do not achieve the CCNVQ level 3 within 12 months of commencing the POELT course or after the extended period of time, which is a maximum of an additional 6 months.

12.3 The Governing Governor must ensure that any converted member of staff who does not achieve the CCNVQ level 3 within 12 months of commencing the POELT course or after the extended period of time, which is a maximum of an additional 6 months, is managed in line with PSO 8450 and where possible is returned to their original grade.

12.4 Any application for an extension to the period must be counter-signed by the Governing Governor. The Governing Governor can decide not to extend if they feel this would be contrary to the interests of the service, in which case PSO 8450 will apply.

12.5 The Governing Governor must allow the candidate to be observed and assessed by the assessor on a regular basis.

SECTION 13 – Successful completion of the Custodial Care NVQ at levels 2 and 3

13.1 Once the candidate has completed the qualification, the assessor will notify the regional manager and NVQ champion. A certificate will be posted to the candidate’s establishment.

13.2 It should be noted that completion of the CCNVQ level 3 is only one element of the first year. Continued employment as a prison officer is reliant on the recommendations of the Governing Governor in line with PSO 8450.

SECTION 14 – Unsuccessful completion of the Custodial Care NVQ level 3

14.1 This section refers to those candidates who must achieve the CCNVQ at level 3 as part of their first year.

14.2 As identified in SECTION 7, those candidates who are at risk of not achieving the required level of competence by the end of their first year will have been identified as early as possible by the assessor during that year. An appropriate action plan will have been produced by the assessor and communicated to the candidate, candidate’s line manager and the establishment’s NVQ champion.
14.3 The action plan which is produced by the assessor in negotiation with the candidate and line manager outlines the assessment programme over a given period of time. For those candidates at risk of not achieving the award it is designed to put the candidate back on track.

14.4 Failure by a candidate to achieve the required level of competence to complete the CCNVQ at level 3 within 12 months of commencing the POELT course will mean the unsatisfactory performance process outlined in PSO 8450 will be triggered.

14.5 For those members of staff where it is felt that external factors such as illness, family bereavement, operational contingencies, etc have meant that they have been unable to complete the award within 12 months an initial extension period of 3 months is available followed by a final extension of 3 months if needed. The programme must not be extended over a total of 6 months in compliance with PSO 8450. However if the member of staff is unable to complete the award within their initial 12 months due to absences for Maternity Leave or sickness qualifying for Sick Leave Excusal (as per PSO 8403 chapter 5) they will be granted an extension equal to the length of those absences.

14.6 If a candidate does not achieve due to failure on the part of the Training Provider, for example the assessor consistently failing to meet the candidate, or failure to produce an action plan an initial extension of 3 months will be available followed by a final extension of 3 months if required. If the Training Provider is unable to meet their obligations towards the candidate during the extension period the regional manager will take over the assessment of the candidate.

14.7 The initial extension period must be applied for by either the candidate or an appropriate person on their behalf at least 40 days before the end of the 12 month period. Application forms for the extension period are available from the NVQ champion or appropriate regional manager.

14.8 Applications for both the initial and final extension periods must be countersigned by the Governing Governor, NVQ champion, and regional manager.

14.9 A number of examples of when it is appropriate to allow an extension have been given, see 14.5 and 14.6. These are not prescriptive, and the candidate should be allowed to extend if there is a reasonable expectation that achievement is possible within the extended timeframe.

14.10 Candidates should be managed under PSO 8450 if the NVQ level 3 is not achieved within the probation period. Converted staff should not have their position as a prison officer confirmed and be returned to their original grade if possible.