Accredited Persons —
A Cost Effective **Solution**

John Jones from the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies (ICJS) at The University of Portsmouth and Ian Kirke, Managing Director of Training For Success, outline the benefits of using blended learning, discuss how this approach can be developed to deliver the Accredited Persons Scheme and examine how the accreditation of training can be used to further professionalise those working in the police, criminal justice and security business sectors.

Some aspects of the Police Reform Act (2002) and in particular the provision of new powers under the Accredited Persons Scheme may not have received the level of response anticipated by government and policy makers. However, now that Skills for Security has assumed responsibility for progressing the training and qualifications aspect of the Scheme, it is probable that we will see a more concerted push towards implementation. Extending the provision of public services to a wider pool of service providers has been at the heart of the current government's policy for a number of years. The Health and Education sectors quickly embraced opportunities to extend service provision to a wider range of professionals and the Accredited Persons Scheme now further extends this approach to the police service.

The Scheme is likely to provide a number of benefits to communities, those responsible for delivering policing services and government. At the heart of this Scheme is the provision of powers, traditionally the preserve of police officers, to a wider pool of security professionals, practitioners and individuals concerned with community safety. The intention is to allow Accredited Persons to address some lower level anti-social behaviours and community safety issues such as graffiti, dropping litter and consumption of alcohol in designated public places. The ultimate intention overall, is one of reducing not only such incidents but the fear of crime generally.

Given that the Scheme is here to stay and the likelihood that a number of security companies might want their staff to become

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…minimising corporate threats

accredited under the Scheme, identifying the most cost effective and efficient means of training staff is critical. For many of the larger companies, workplace abstraction is a significant and costly issue; for others the traditional classroom environment and the ubiquitous PowerPoint presentation is simply not the most effective means of learning.

Having consulted extensively with the security industry and with other organisations that have sought to implement innovative learning and development strategies, Training For Success is delighted to have the opportunity to launch a blended learning solution to the Accredited Persons Scheme. Blended learning provides an ideal opportunity to reduce workplace abstraction, reduce the overall cost of training and provide an environment in which those seeking accreditation can learn effectively at their own pace. This approach also allows learners to receive feedback on their progress and have a constant source of reference materials that can be referred to at any stage after completion of the course. The Training For Success approach includes the use of specially designed distance learning materials, a resource pack on a CD-Rom and the provision of skills based training in a traditional classroom environment. We are also of the view that a blended learning solution could be developed for the existing Level 2 SIA compliant Security Guarding Qualification and that in time this could be delivered in conjunction with the Accredited Person's Scheme objectives to provide a comprehensive Level 2 qualification. At the time of writing, Training For Success is currently in discussions with some of the awarding bodies to progress this initiative.

But what is blended learning, and does it work?

Blended learning has been defined as "the combination of different training "media":

technologies, activities and types of events to create an optimum training program for a specific audience. Blended learning programs use many different forms of e-learning, perhaps complemented with instructor-led training and other live formats." [1]

The experience of thousands of Criminal Justice, Police and Security Professionals studying with the ICJS at the University of Portsmouth is that distance learning, supported by e-learning provides a useful means of balancing the demands of full time work and the opportunity to study part time at a suitable and sustainable pace. For example the BSc (Hons) in Risk and Security Management is delivered by distance learning and also provides the opportunity to award academic credits for the completion of professional training. The ICJS has previously accredited a profit protection training programme delivered by Training For Success and it is their intention to seek further accreditation of the blended learning solution at a later stage. This would seek to provide a pathway for further qualifications and developmental opportunities that are aimed at further professionalising the security industry.

In summary, a blended learning approach can provide a cost effective and efficient means of ensuring that accredited persons will develop the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills so that they can play an important part in creating safer communities and reducing the fear of crime.

If you would like further information about the Accredited Persons Scheme please visit www.tfsuccess.com or call 0870 114 9999.

[1] Bershin, J. (2004). The blended book of learning. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.