

# insideeducation

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**Prisoners  
Education Trust**

*Unlocking potential for crime-free lives*

## Fly-away success

Hard work is not enough. Learning matters too says Nina Champion who visited Lindholme



**Nina Champion**  
Learning Matters Project Manager  
Prisoners Education Trust

Arriving at HMP Lindholme, a male category C training prison, you can immediately see it was formerly a Royal Air Force base. Air traffic control towers overlook the 260 acre site including huge aircraft hangars, a road called Vulcan Way and a wing named Spitfire. In many ways the personal journeys of the men learning here can be as challenging as pilots. A pilot risks coming across enemy planes trying to bring theirs down. Pilots also come across bad weather where the elements are against them; strong winds causing a pilot to fly off course or take an early landing, without having reached their final destination. For many in prison, learning can sometimes feel a bit like this.

Taking the first step to fly your own 'airplane of learning' requires bravery, especially if previous experiences of learning at school were negative. Education and training can lead you towards a better future; however the skies can feel like they are full of risks. Other prisoners may discourage you, you may get transferred between prisons, there may be a waiting list for the workshop you want, you may struggle to complete assignments when dealing with other personal issues or lack a quiet place to study. Then there is the danger of doing all that work, but not getting a job at the end of it. However a pilot who isn't willing to take a risk and set off on the journey will never have any chance of reaching their destination. The same goes for a prisoner who isn't willing to take a risk and sign up to a course, workshop or project.

At HMP Lindholme, the culture and ethos of the staff and the current learning & skills provider, The Manchester College, together with good facilities, help prepare prisoners to avoid enemy planes and bad weather to succeed in getting to their final destinations. Unsurprisingly, most hope to get a good job after release to allow them to earn money to support themselves and their families. On a recent visit to HMP Lindholme I saw some key aspects of the vision and strategy of the prison that helps prisoners there to become fly-away successes and should be common practice in other prisons.

### Offer a variety of opportunities to learn and work at the same time

Prisoners at HMP Lindholme have a large



variety of learning options. There seems to be something to interest everyone from coffee to construction, catering to car valeting. First stop on my tour of HMP Lindholme was the hospitality suite, where prisoners were training as 'baristas' .. not to be confused with 'barristers' – lawyers who wear wigs! These men were able to whip up milky lattes, frothy cappuccinos and steaming hot chocolate topped with cream and marshmallows as good as any high street coffee shop, where they hope to work after release.

A walk around the various former aircraft hangars revealed further opportunities provided by East Riding College (which works in partnership with The Manchester College) including carpentry, bricklaying, plastering, painting & decorating and maintenance operations. The construction skills hangar is massive and even contains a full size bungalow built by prisoners who did the bricklaying, made the doors, fitted the windows, tiled the roof and plastered the walls. The Manchester College also gives learners the competitive edge needed to succeed in the industry by

teaching them eco-construction skills such as fitting solar panels (or 'photovoltaic panels' if you're being posh!) and water harvesting.

Other hangars contain motor vehicle mechanics, waste management, cleaning services, car valeting and welding workshops. The hairdressing classroom was in need of a bit of decoration to make it feel more like a real salon, but fifteen prisoners at a time can study up to a level three NVQ. A proud hairdressing tutor told me that one prisoner she taught recently is now working at a top high street salon with excellent earning potential.

### Provide business planning advice

Prisoners at HMP Lindholme can also take part in programmes run by Business Link to help them design a realistic business plan to enable them to use their new found skills to make a living after release, for example as a brickie or mobile hairdresser. Setting up a business can be a very useful for option for prisoners, given the discrimination some face from employers for having a criminal record.

### Work with local employers

The policy in HMP Lindholme is to ensure that the level and type of qualification is what local employers want. This is done by providing level three qualifications where possible. HMP Lindholme and The Manchester College build good relations with local and national employers.

On my visit a prisoner brought out a plate of delicious Danish pastries, hot out of the oven of the commercial bakery in which eighteen prisoners work hard to supply bread and other baked goods to the whole prison. Prisoners in the bakery can achieve up to a level three NVQ. As many local colleges only provide level two qualifications, this helps to make these learners more employable. The prison has built up a good relationship with one local businessman, John Foster, who has already employed twelve prisoners (See p. 3).

As well as the Bakery, there are extensive other facilities for Catering and Hospitality training at Lindholme with an impressive Bistro used by staff and a superb Hospitality Suite which is used by outside organisations and which provides a full commercial-standard conference facility. Again, accreditation here goes all the way to NVQ3! And what's really impressive here is that talking of NVQ3 is not something that the occasional prisoner can aspire to - it's a standard that all prisoners are encouraged and enabled to work to. This place is like a breath of fresh air.

### Resettlement starts at induction

Prisoners at HMP Lindholme are able to progress to level three as the prison's ethos is that 'resettlement begins at induction'. The prospectus of workshops and learning activities is placed in the reception area when prisoners first arrive, and they can watch a DVD of the opportunities available. By the time they come to be assessed, many prisoners already have an idea what training they want to do. They are asked by the Careers Information and Advice Service (CIAS) what their aspirations are and are given advice on the sequencing of courses to ensure they do the right course at the right time. What this means is that there is no time wasted and gives everyone the chance to use their entire time in the prison for progression.

Impressively, 92% of Lindholme prisoners are doing some sort of education or work-based training. Indeed walking around all the workshops, it almost feels like a further education college, which happens to have a prison wall around it. I believe every prison should feel like that. Apparently there were no such comparable facilities at HMP

Lindholme eight years ago and it was the vision, passion and hard work of the education, learning and skills and resettlement staff that ensured such facilities exist today. Lindholme's partnership with The Manchester College is a perfect example of the success, indeed synergy, that comes from effective partnership working between the prison and providers.

### Investment matters

Good quality provision such as I found at HMP Lindholme requires investment. Although currently unused, there's a fantastic rail track installation in the prison which was designed for up to 48 learners at any time. This had previously been used for a European Social Fund financed ten week course called 'Permanent Way Maintenance' delivered by Manchester College's partner organisation 'Track Work'.

As a result of the project, eighty ex-prisoners found employment and, due to effective support through the gate support, all stayed in employment for at least 18 months after release and were often well paid. Unfortunately this project is expensive to run and the provision stopped when the ESF funding ceased - but there's good news on the horizon for the prisoners at HMP Lindholme - the SFA has now agreed to fund this project again between from November 2011.

### Use the virtual campus

It was impressive to see the virtual campus (VC) being used at HMP Lindholme for both e-learning and resettlement purposes. For example prisoners using the VC could search 75,000 live vacancies advertised by Job Centre Plus which they can apply for using the VC's secure relay messaging system. The staff described the impact of the virtual campus as potentially 'revolutionary'. It will also help those doing distance learning courses as there are plans to open up the virtual campus room to use at evenings and weekends.

### Listen to learners

The Head of Learning and Skills at HMP Lindholme is keen to listen to the comments, suggestions and feedback of the prisoners regarding training and education issues in order to improve the service the prison offers. There are regular forums and the prison then publishes a document entitled 'you say, we did' after each one.

### Involve the family

HMP Lindholme receives Family Learning Impact Funding which they use to organise family literacy projects. Prisoners also have the

opportunity to record a story onto a CD for their children with the Storybook Dads project. The Head of Learning and Skills has seen the value of family learning, especially in motivating fathers to learn to read. They can do this through literacy classes, toe by toe, ESOL or a reading group - indeed if a prisoner has missed out on literacy or numeracy the first time round, he can do it at Lindholme either stand-alone or alongside any of the training opportunities.

### Keep pushing the boundaries

There are exciting plans in the pipeline for a call centre training facility to be developed at HMP Lindholme where prisoners can earn a decent wage to save or send to their families by working 6-8 hour days and also have a portion of the income sent out to charities working with victims.

### Conclusion

The Government talks about wanting prisons to be places of 'hard work and industry'. All the prisoners I met in the training workshops, resettlement classes and art studio at HMP Lindholme were hardworking and industrious - but they were also learning. There is much less value in work schemes that do not also teach skills and provide access to qualifications. If hard work is seen just as an additional punishment, it will not achieve the 'rehabilitation revolution' that the Government wants. Prisoners need to be encouraged to increase their employability - and that means relevant skills and learning as well as work experience. Hard work alone is not enough. Learning matters too.

I would prefer the Government to have an ambition that all prisons become places of 'learning and training', so that they feel like colleges that happen to have prison walls around them. With the good practice described above providing the recommended structures and ethos, prisons can ensure learners are supported through their journeys to reach their destinations - which benefits all of us in society.

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## Getting my life back on track

Last year when I was at HMP/YOI Portland, I got the opportunity to do a City & Guilds Level 2 NVQ in Railway Engineering Permanent Way Renewals. I had done a few courses in jail before, but nothing like this. I saw it as something that I could actually gain a career in after leaving prison. To get on the course I had to go through an interview process and pass a medical because there were only twelve places on the course.

The first week was all classroom-based and we learned about manual handling and health and safety. We had to pass tests on all the subjects. For the following few weeks, we were outside on the railway track, learning about all the components of the railway, track geometry and maintenance of the track.

We were then split into two teams and told we had to take the 60 metre track apart. It was hard graft, a lot of heavy lifting with sometimes both teams coming together just to lift one piece of rail. After we had removed the track, we then had to dig up and move all the ballast (crushed rock). There were tonnes and tonnes of it, so this took nearly two weeks! Every day we would be digging and as soon as I got back to my cell I would be

fast asleep within seconds. We finally got down to the concrete, only to be told that we had to lay the track again with no help from the instructors!

We had learned a lot during the course and we were all confident we could do it easily, so over the next few weeks we built the track piece by piece. It wasn't as easy as we thought. We came across a lot of problems with the track geometry, but as a team we worked together using the skills we had learned.

On completing the course I gained fifteen different qualifications. It has definitely left me proud of myself for making use of the time spent inside. I was kicked out of school at a young age, and didn't gain many qualifications, but coming to prison I have used this as a second chance for an education.

I can now leave prison and gain employment with these railway qualifications with a starting salary of £25k, so it has changed my life for the better. This is something that I can actually make a career out of and work my way up in the rail industry. My future now looks a lot brighter.

Barnaby (HMP Brixton)

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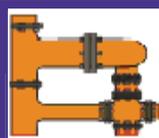
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# 'Nice to give someone a helping hand'

The government has called for 'real work' in prisons, but to be successful this needs employers willing to get involved with training and employment. John Foster of Foster Bakeries in Doncaster and Dennis Phillips from Timpson tell Nina Champion why they train and employ prisoners in their businesses.



saw the manager there, who is now retired, he was very well recognised in the bakery industry, and he was giving the guys better training than in most bakery colleges. I saw the quality of the work, the respect I was shown and so I got involved.

#### How many prisoners / ex-prisoners have you employed?

I've employed twelve men altogether. Most learn the skills in the bakery at HMP Lindholme then are transferred to Moorlands open prison at the end of their sentence and then get ROTL to come and do paid work for me. Then they can come to work for me after release too.

#### How do you decide who to employ?

I'd say the key thing is the bakery manager's recommendation. The references have always been truthful and honest. The bakery manager told me that if they thought they were going to let me down then they wouldn't put them forward. It's the prisons reputation on the line. I also do interviews. I look for qualifications and experience, but I also think 'does this person have the ability to put the qualifications and experience together to deliver the goods and go straight, are they going to be right with people, are they honest, open and positive?' That's what I'm looking for.

#### Are there any downsides?

The only downsides come when some of them get released and get freedom and then some collapse, don't turn up for work. That's the moment they've let themselves down. I had one lad work for me while he was at HMP Moorlands, he was brilliant. I'd lined up more training for him once he was released and I could even see him becoming director of the business in the future, he was that good. Unfortunately after two weeks of being released, he started going absent, coming up with all sorts of excuses and eventually he handed his notice in. Not long after he was back inside prison. It was such a waste – he was a brilliant baker.

#### Any success stories?

Yes some of them have been very good. Unfortunately for me many of them want to move back closer to their families after they have been released, but a few have stayed. Those who move away have now got jobs as bakers in their home towns and have been helped by the reference I can give them. They have stayed loyal to their employers, stayed in work, gone back to their families and have turned their lives around using the skills they learnt in prison. Even if they don't stay to work for me, I still see it as a good outcome and we keep in touch.

#### What do you gain from working with prisoners and ex-prisoners?

It's nice to have given someone a helping hand. It has a feel good factor. They are okay most of the time, I have been let down by some guys, but I have also seen some stars

and that's what it's all about.

I'm looking for a guy that just loves working in the bakery, who gets a sense of satisfaction from it, someone who has found something they enjoy and can get paid to do what they love. I am one myself – I absolutely love it. Being a baker is what I was designed for. A lot of guys in prison have not had the chance to find out what they are designed for, maybe that's why they haven't been able to hold down a job or have taken the path they have. I have seen three or four like that who have worked for me and that's what I live for.

I have asked some of the ex-prisoners why they did the stuff they did. Often they tell me it was to get money. I ask them why they wanted money. They said to buy stuff. I asked them why they wanted to buy stuff, they said to make them happy. But I think if you can find something you enjoy and are good at and be paid for it then that is happiness. If you like doing it, then it's not a job. It's hard work, but you get a sense of satisfaction and if you really enjoy something, chances are you will get really good at it and rise to the top and it won't feel like working at all. I was a 'bad'un' at school, but once I worked in a bakery I loved it.

If you get a chance in prison to try new things and learn new skills, you then get the chance to realise what you love and can be good at. I want to pass on what I have learnt to the prisoners who come to work for me and I hope one day they will also be able to pass on what they have learnt to others who need a second chance too.

and her willingness to offer her many attributes to the business. I was happy to offer Sarah a paid position on ROTL and the rest was easy. She fitted in well from day one and gained all the skill requirements within the stipulated time.



Sarah says "It was a life changing opportunity and a fantastic journey. I thought that no company would give me a chance. I got from day one fantastic support. Most importantly

I was not judged on where I had come from. Now my life is back on track". Sarah was released in March 2011 and was offered work with Timpsons. Within three months Sarah was promoted to Branch Manager. I was as proud as punch that Sarah was nominated for the 2011 New Starter of the Year. Sarah won the award, received a trophy and £500. What a fantastic achievement.

I also work with 'Business in the Community', a not for profit organisation with a membership of 850 companies. Through this organisation I support and encourage other companies to recruit prisoners and ex-prisoners. I hope I can find success stories like Sarah for their businesses too.

## Dennis Phillips from Timpson

You may have seen Timpson on the High Street – we do shoe repairs, engraving, watch and jewellery repairs, photo processing and dry cleaning. The Timpson Foundation was set up in 2002. Now we work with sixty five prisons within the UK and have Timpson Training Academies in HMP Liverpool, HMP Wandsworth and HMP Forest Bank. We also have a Max Spielmann Training Academy in HMP Newhall.

In the Timpson Academies we have currently have fifty prisoners in training. If they are suitable, there may be the opportunity for paid employment after release. We also have 93 people working for Timpsons from various prisons within the UK.

I adopt a very simplistic recruitment process. My only judgement is that if the colleague is good for the business, it is as simple as that! We are looking for superstars with fantastic personalities, such as Sarah.

In September 2010 I had the pleasure of meeting Sarah while she was serving a prison sentence in HMP Askham Grange. I was impressed with Sarah's fantastic personality



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# What use are arts projects in prison?

The term 'The Arts' is something of a catch-all phrase which covers everything from opera and ballet to improvisational theatre. It has been systematically scapegoated and demonised by the gutter press and the more philistine-minded members of society, particularly when the term is used in conjunction with the word 'prison'.

Even as a convicted prisoner, I still find that 'The Arts' are sneered at within the hierarchy of the penal system. In the minds of many staff members and prison officers, 'Arts' can only mean a group of grown men standing around pretending to be trees.

Maybe in some cases this is true - but not at HMP Ranby. The emerging Arts Academy here provides courses addressing many different aspects of the Arts, from theatre to the written word.

The arts can play an impressively positive role within the penal system. With investment and encouragement, such programmes can bring great changes to the lives of a great many convicted prisoners. I have observed that a one week theatre course will do more to provide a convicted prisoner with important skills that will help him in the outside world than he will learn from twelve months of counting plastic spoons into bags in a workshop.

The Arts are an important factor in the rehabilitation of the convicted prisoner, and it is about time the prison establishment realised this and gave those working in this field the help and recognition they deserve.

Jamie Clayden - HMP Ranby



## Planting seeds

Pimlico Opera has run 20 projects in prisons, each lasting 6-8 weeks, which culminate in public performances in which inmates share the stage with professionals. One of the participants (Nicolle) explains what taking part taught her.

Nicolle is 31, and spent four years in prison, on an IPP sentence. Now clean from drugs and released on license, she is living in a rehab hostel for a few months while she rebuilds her life and looks for work. 'I'm starting to get my life together', she said, 'I want paid work. I want to do things differently now. I like getting up early and knowing I'm doing something productive with my time'.

Whilst inside prison, she took as many courses as she could, including a distance learning course in counselling, funded by Prisoners Education Trust, and also trained as a listener. One of the most powerful learning experiences for Nicolle was the RAPT programme; 'RAPT saved my life' she said.

Nicolle found out inside prison how to cope with setbacks. At one point, her parole hearing was delayed. But although she was disappointed at first, the extra time meant she could take part in a Pimlico Opera show in her prison. 'It was high powered stuff' described Nicolle and it certainly sounds it...twenty inmates acting, singing and dancing alongside professionals, including a former Home &

Away actor, in a 300 foot marquee, with a twenty piece live orchestra, original 1920's costumes in front of sell out crowds - this was no school play.

Although throughout her sentence Nicolle had done many programmes in which she could 'work on herself', she describes the Pimlico Opera as the 'cherry on the cake'. She explains 'when you feel crap about yourself, especially if you are an addict, all you want to do is feed yourself with drugs or shoplift to fill the void. When you don't like the person you see in the mirror, you isolate yourself, get depressed, take medication'.

Without self esteem she says 'there is no way forward, you stay stuck'. For Nicolle the Pimlico Opera has 'planted a seed' and she now hopes to nurture her talents and she intends to do some work for Pimlico Opera next year. But Nicolle doesn't just want to use the experience to benefit herself. She is volunteering with young people who are at risk of offending and has plans for running drama workshops so they too can experience the 'natural high' of performing and build their confidence and self esteem.

## Acting to prevent crime



Phillip Clarke



me. I always loved drama so I started going to drama workshops at Only Connect and from there gained a major part in one of the performances 'Any Which Way', which was an amazing experience. I then took part in several other plays and now I am working as a Youth Worker and performing and doing drama workshops around schools in London.

My next step is to do some more acting courses so that I can continue to pursue my acting career and continue to work with young people in the community. It takes an ex offender to help prevent crime and this is what OC is all about, in the front line of crime prevention.

I started at Only Connect around 2008. At first I was quite dubious about getting involved, but they have supported me and hundreds of others just like me to get back into work or involved in doing courses. They are a supportive network when you feel excluded from the rest of the world because you have broken the law and been convicted of it.

Only Connect in many ways has helped to save my life, to build my self worth, confidence and esteem to normality.

Whilst I was in prison I didn't take part in any learning courses as I was not really there long enough for it to count. I was being shipped off to different prisons so I never really took the opportunity to take anything on. Once I'd left, I felt like I needed to change and was struggling to find something that interested

### About OC

OC is a creative arts company and private members' club for prisoners, ex-offenders and young people at risk of crime.

### Our vision

We see reformed ex-offenders using their experiences of crime and punishment to help the next generation avoid the mistakes they made - giving young people a better future, redeeming their own lost years, and making London safer for everyone.

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## Good Vibrations

Good Vibrations is a charity that helps prisoners, secure hospital patients, ex-prisoners and others in the community develop crucial life and work skills, through participating in intensive Gamelan (Indonesian bronze percussion) courses

**Kirsty's (ex-prisoner, not her real name) story:** I saw a leaflet advertising Good Vibrations on the notice board on the wing. (I'd never been in prison before and was terrified to say the least). The course sounded different and interesting so I signed up to do it. The course was 5 days long and was run by John who helped us understand what Gamelan was all about. Everybody got an opportunity to play all of the instruments which was great! We improvised with each other and discovered what sounded good by playing and listening and doing exercises like working in pairs. John also taught us a traditional piece of Gamelan music which we performed for an audience on the last day.



Gamelan music is so relaxing to listen to and sounds fine even if you go wrong. Nobody judged anyone and the whole group was really encouraging. By the end of the course we realised that it wasn't just about the music, it was about listening and communicating with each other as well. I learnt that even in the most difficult of environments it's possible to make friends and find a common ground. When I got home, I knew that I wanted to learn more about music so I applied to University and was accepted on a music course. I have now graduated with a 2:1 degree. Good Vibrations gave me the courage and inspiration to want to learn more and pursue something I've always been interested in but never thought I could do.

**Tereva O'Dell's Story:** Through doing projects with Geese Theatre Company, TiPP (Theatre

in Prisons and Probation) and Good Vibrations I developed a passion for performing arts.

Good Vibrations bring about twenty instruments to play including gongs and xylophones. Prison can be a very testosterone fuelled place with everyone wanting to shout louder than the next person and trying to be 'the big I am'. But when creating music, it was amazing to see how some peoples attitudes completely changed as they listened to each other and worked together as a team.



I'm now living in a probation hostel having recently been released. Once my signing requirements are made more flexible in a few weeks time, I will be going to speak to Geese Theatre to see what advice they can give me. I'd like to study either music or drama at college. When I was in prison I got no advice on how to go about this and I think that there needs to be more guidance and support for prisoners who discover they have a talent or passion for something like performing arts in prison. They need to make a list to give to prisoners when they leave prison of organisations they can contact. I would also like to see those projects more widely available to young people in the community to prevent them going into crime in the first place and also in hostels like I'm in.

My advice to prisoners reading this article would be to get involved in projects like Geese Theatre, TiPP and Good Vibrations and don't be afraid to make a fool of yourself!



## It's a stitch up

'Fine Cell Work is a social enterprise that trains prisoners in paid, skilled, creative needlework undertaken in the long hours spent in their cells to foster hope, discipline and self-esteem'

**F**ine Cell Work'. When I first heard the name, it conjured up in my mind something very grand and I wondered if it was something I would be capable of. I decided that I should find out. I really wanted something to do in the lockup hours. My enquiry was soon answered and I met the tapestry orderly. I was given a small piece of tapestry canvas and a few mixed colours of wool and was shown the tent stitch. Time went fast and we all had to leave, taking with us our various pieces of needlework to work on in our cells.

After a week I went back to the group to show the stitching I had done. All of us there looked at each others' progress; some were more experienced than I was. Someone pointed out that I had a few stitches missing in my work, I thought 'what a cocky blighter' but I looked at my work again and he was right. I needed to be more careful. Criticism is not always easy to take, but with craft work it is there in front of you and with honesty it becomes acceptable.

It is good to meet with others who are doing tapestry and compare notes. It is also good to

have something other than prison affairs to talk about. I have found that when prison life is stressful if I sit down and do some tapestry it has a calming affect on me.

I did not know when I first asked to do tapestry that I would be paid for my efforts, which is a real bonus. I have been lucky that some people that have bought my work from 'Fine Cell Work' have written to me and thanked me, telling me of the pleasure it is giving them. I gain comfort knowing that something I have done is a benefit to others. My proudest moment with Fine Cell Work was making two cushion fronts for the Dover Castle project. I hope to one day see them in situ. I was also proud to gain a Bronze Koestler award for a cushion cover I designed and made called 'Illusions'.

I know that life after prison will not be easy. To be able to fill my hands and my mind with something I have learned in prison will give me a certain amount of continuity. I hope now in the community that I live in, they may see a useful side to me.

Richard - HMP Whatton

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# Learning is the way to go

So, you're inside for a stretch, whether short, long or very long, you might as well use your time as constructively as possible. Getting involved in learning is one of the best ways to do this



**Pat Jones**  
Director of the Prisoners  
Education Trust

**T**here is a range of learning options available, however unfortunately not all opportunities are available in every prison. It is best to ask in your education department what there is available where you are.

## Where to start?

You should have received information about what's available in your prison during induction when you arrived. Each prison has advice and guidance staff, often known as CIAS (Careers Advice and Guidance Service), who are responsible for assessing learning needs and advising on courses and employment.

The best place to start is the courses provided by the prison education department. If you have not already reached level 2 in literacy and numeracy, it makes sense to take these classes. Most prisons will also provide IT courses and employability skills. Find out what other courses are offered – each prison has its own curriculum.

## Vocational skills and qualifications

Many prisons offer vocational qualifications in catering, laundry, cleaning, horticulture and waste management, linked to prison jobs. There are often gym related qualifications available and workshops teaching painting, decorating and construction skills. Women's prisons sometimes have hairdressing and other beauty therapy qualifications. Find out which vocational skills and qualifications are available in your prison.

## Distance learning

If you have already reached level 2 before coming to prison, or you've completed several level 2 qualifications inside prison, and want to carry on at higher levels, consider whether distance learning is the right next step.

Course materials and project work are sent in by post to you. Some courses include CDs or DVDs, or other relevant materials, subject to prison approval. You do the work in your own time, at your own pace and send assignments to an external tutor for marking. Your tutor sends feedback by post. If you are studying with the Open University, you may have telephone calls or meetings with your tutor.

One of the biggest advantages of distance learning is that there are courses available in hundreds of subjects – so you can learn about subjects you're most interested in. Courses people in prison have recently followed



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include plumbing theory, horticulture, book-keeping, restaurant management, interior design, Spanish and health & fitness management. The CIAS advisers and the prison library should have information about some of the courses available.

You can also study at a range of levels, up to university degree and even postgraduate level. The higher level the course, the more expensive it is, but the impact on your life is also greater.

## Advice about courses and employment

Prisoners Education Trust can provide leaflets about distance learning courses in popular areas of study. The leaflets, called Career Briefings, also provide information about employment in these areas. The study areas covered include counselling and social care, horticulture, book-keeping, catering, beauty, business, hospitality, plumbing, working with animals, events and sport and fitness. To ask for a copy, write to: **Freepost RSSZ-UZZA-XAEZ, Prisoners Education Trust, Wandle House, Riverside Drive, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4BU.**

## Prison rules

The Prison Service has a set of rules about applying for distance learning, set out on Prison Service Instruction 2010/33. A copy of this PSI should be in your prison library.

## Finding funding

There are a range of charities that work to help prisoners and ex-prisoners, and many of these will make grants to pay for courses. You can find out about these charities in the Prisoner Funder Directory. For each funder, it explains what they will fund and how to apply.

Ten copies of the 2011/12 Directory were sent in October to every prison in the UK, with a request that copies are kept in the Education Department, the Library and the Visitor's Centre, and by CIAS staff and the chaplains. The Directory is also available online, so you can ask family or friends to search for information if you can't find a copy. [www.hardman-trust.org.uk](http://www.hardman-trust.org.uk) The Prisoner Funder Directory Project is hosted by the Hardman Trust, sponsored by The Bromley Trust and published by the PFD Project Management Group.

## Prisoners Education Trust

Prisoners Education Trust (PET) is one of the biggest charities helping prisoners with education. Last year, the Trust funded distance learning courses for over 2,000 prisoners. Around 850 of these were Open University courses, funded by the Government Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

## How do I apply to PET?

Usually applicants should have completed either level 2 literacy or level 2 numeracy, or an equivalent, depending on the course they're applying for. This is important because it shows us you'll cope with the reading and writing which are essential to any distance learning. But exceptions can be made.

You must have enough time to finish the course before you are released. We usually expect applicants to have at least six months. Unfortunately, we can't fund people on remand.

The Trust considers applications once a month, so apply when you have all the information you need. You need to find out who has the PET forms – it may be the CIAS or Education staff. If you cannot find out, ask the Head of Learning and Skills.

Whether you fill in the application form yourself, or work alongside an adviser or staff member who helps, make sure you give all the details asked for on the forms. This must include full details of your previous educational qualifications. Many applicants leave out some details, which means the forms are sent back to the prison and the process is very slow. Each application must have a recommendation from a prison staff member, and must be approved and signed by a Governor's representative.

You must also write a letter, aiming at around a page in length, preferably in your own handwriting, to say why you want to do the course, what your experience of education in your life so far has been and what plans you have for your future.

## Is there a limit on the size of grant?

PET rarely awards a grant of more than £500 at a time. If the course costs more, help is available from other charitable trusts, and you

## Get out of jail and into a job

### Are you a highly motivated individual with desire for a "new start" on release?

As a leading UK media company, we'll offer you cutting edge internet marketing and business training whilst employed with us in prison, that could lead to well paid career opportunities after release.

From our media centre in HMP Wolds you'll take responsibility for communicating with clients every day and managing their internet business.

What are you waiting for ... apply! Over 10 inmates now work for **SUMMIT** following release.

**To apply you need:** Cat C (Wolds),  
At least 18 months left to serve before Cat D,  
Good literacy and numeracy,  
Basic computer skills, Clean MDT,  
Total commitment.  
[www.summit.co.uk](http://www.summit.co.uk)



**Request an application pack:**  
Charlotte Broughton-May, Summit Media Ltd,  
HMP Wolds, Brough, East Yorkshire, HU15 2JZ

would need to apply to several trusts and see if you can out together a funding package. For PET grants, the prison is asked to contribute 10% of the course fees. You can also make a personal contribution, which may increase your chances of getting funding.

## Who makes the decisions?

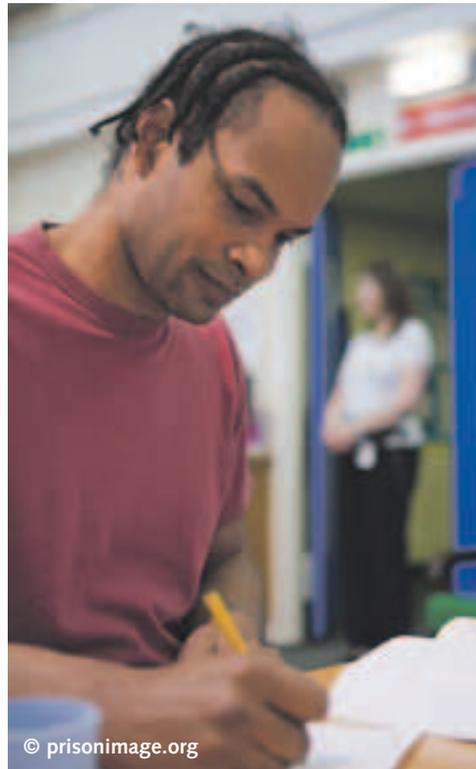
Your forms are checked first by our administrative team, and then reviewed by a senior staff member. Each month, a panel of staff and trustees meets to decide on grants for that month. Our trustees are independent and expert, and very committed to helping people in prison, if you can show that you want to use learning to change yourself and your life.

We're interested in your potential, and your future, not your past. We are also interested in hearing what you're passionate about – what you really want to do with your life, when you get out. Most prisoners will need to earn a living – either getting a job or through self-employment. So we're also interested in helping you get the skills, knowledge and qualifications you need. We believe strongly that everyone deserves a chance, and whenever possible, a second chance.

## What happens next?

The Trust informs each prison by post, within two weeks of the decision. A letter to each applicant will be included. We will also ask you to fill in and send back a baseline form – this is really important as we can only get the funds to make grants by showing evidence of what difference education makes.

Then we purchase the course, and it will be sent to you through the Education Department. This pack is yours to keep, even if you are transferred. Sometimes the prison buys the course, and we pay the grant to the prison.



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## Why are some applications refused?

Most refusals are simply because we cannot fund as many applications as we get. We let you know if there's another reason in the letter we send. Sometimes we don't think the

course is appropriate and may suggest an alternative. We also have to check offence categories for some courses. If you get turned down, you can try again. There is no restriction on the number of times you can apply.

## Is there any follow up?

We will write to you again around the time your course finishes, to ask about your progress and results, and then again after about a year. We will invite you to keep in touch with us – we can offer continuing advice and support.

## The Hardman Trust

The Hardman Trust helps prisoners in the later stages of long sentences who have made strong efforts towards their rehabilitation. Usually this means Cat D prisoners who are lifers or on IPP sentences or serving more than ten years, or women on sentences of seven years or more, and within three years of release. There are two grants rounds each year and applications need to be received by either February or August. **For more information, write to the Secretary, the Hardman Trust, PO Box 108, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1YN.**

## The Longford Trust

The Longford Trust offers scholarships for prisoners and ex-prisoners aiming to study at degree level. Those awarded scholarships are also offered a mentor who will support them and the Trust tries to support its scholars for up to three years, while they complete a degree. Applicants are normally expected to apply for student loans, as university course costs will increase substantially from September 2012 onwards, and the scholarships can assist with living costs. There is one round of scholarships each year, and applications need to be received by June. **For further information, write to the Director, Longford Trust, PO Box 64302, London, NW6 9JP.**

## The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army provide grants of £100 for educational courses for prisoners. As most courses cost more than this, they hold grants open for three months while applicants secure the rest of the funds needed. **For more information, write to the Prison Ministries Officer, The Salvation Army, Social Services Department, 101 Newington Causeway, London, SE1 6BN.**

## If at first you don't succeed...

These charities, and others in the Prisoner Funder Directory, can only help a limited number of prisoners. So don't be disheartened if you don't succeed – try others, or try again.

You may also be able to get help from other sources. Think about whether there are any local churches or faith communities, or local charities that you've ever been connected with, or that your family could contact. Think about whether any previous employers might help. For anyone who has served in one of the Armed Services, there are several charities that will help. There are many people around who believe in the value of education and want to see people given a second chance.

# A Brighter Future thanks to the OU

Prison may seem like a daunting experience to many, but it does not always have to be this way. A few years ago when I first found myself in custody unexpectedly I made the conscious decision to spend my time wisely by enhancing my knowledge and skills. With the help of the Prisoners Education Trust I enrolled onto a distance learning 'openings' course with the Open University.

This was my first step towards studying for a BA Honours degree. Studying from prison was not easy. Some of the challenges included limited academic tutorial support (especially if residing in a remote part of the country), no internet facilities, restricted computer access, inadequate resources to course materials and constant disruptions to the core day, which seriously hindered the ability to complete assignments and study effectively. Nonetheless, I overcame the challenges to graduate with a BA Honours degree from the Open University.

It was a very proud moment to walk across the stage recently to receive my degree at the graduation ceremony for all OU graduates from across the country. It was such an honour and a moment to truly cherish.

Achieving my degree while in custody was the best thing I could have ever done with my time. It opened up a whole new world of opportunities taking me to new heights that I never dreamed possible. Education has been the central key to my positive progression and successful integration back into society.

Although studying from custody was difficult at times and sometimes it was challenging to focus due to the daily stress of prison life, an education is the best gift you can give yourself during your sentence. Higher education has allowed that negative void in my life to be turned into a positive.

I am now studying towards my MA at one of the UK's top leading universities and I currently work for one the countries largest broadcasting providers. None of this would have been attainable without a higher education.

A mind is a terrible thing to waste. Don't waste your mind while in prison. Go out there and grab that knowledge. It's your key to a brighter future!!!

Denise (Prisoner, not her real name)

An advertisement for the Open University. It features a large blue quote icon on the left with the text "Discover a whole new world". Below this is the text "And get the chance to change yours". A list of bullet points describes the benefits of the Open University's "Openings" courses. In the center, a man is sitting on a large blue question mark. To the right, there are icons for a bicycle, a compass, and a head with gears. The Open University logo is in the top right corner. At the bottom, it says "INSPIRING LEARNING".

**Discover a whole new world**

**And get the chance to change yours**

- Are you looking for a short, introductory course that will help you re-engage with learning?
- Our Openings courses will help you to build confidence and study skills
- You will receive one-to-one support from your own personal tutor
- You do not need to have any entry requirements and you won't need to sit an exam
- You can choose from a range of subjects including the arts, management, maths, psychology, law and the environment.

**For further information on Open University Openings courses, including how you can study them through the Virtual campus, please contact your education tutor.**

INSPIRING LEARNING

The Open University is incorporated by Royal Charter (RC 000391), an exempt charity in England and Wales and a charity registered in Scotland (SC 038302).

# My Rehabilitation Revolution

Too often in prison I have witnessed a myriad of possibilities stunted by someone's lack of basic academia. To whose gain is it to let them languish in a workshop with not the skills to fill out a job application upon release? No-ones!

Success cannot be made with the current ingredients, as there is no refuge from the featureless inertia that prisoners are consigned to. To really help someone, the powers should adopt a 'cruel to be kind' attitude. Show them the other half of the world they are missing out on and you will see real gratification-not resentment.

There is an ignorance on entering prison to even the limited opportunities on offer. More emphasis should be given to what prisoners can, and want to achieve. If a real end result is presented, with the promise of some kind of future, a willingness to excel would follow.

Give prisoners not only the tools to build the platform from which to launch a productive life, but afford the opportunity for them to do so. When a person has nothing-they have nothing to lose. And that caters for half your crime right there!

Here is my rehabilitation revolution:

- 1) Capture a persons needs as early as the courts. If a defendant is facing prison for a second time test him on his abilities and needs.
- 2) Designate different prisons for variable working skills, cognitive and manual, then send them on accordingly.
- 3) Set the least sentence imposed at magistrate's court at ten months so a defendant could at least attain intermediate training in his proffered skill.
- 4) Those who cannot read or write should be made to learn. Take the choice from them and give the discipline and direction that's been neglected.
- 5) Give more incentives to outside contractors to then take them on as an apprentice when released.
- 6) If the person offends again, send them back to prison for a longer term to complete their training with the security of employment straight away.
- 7) Turn Britain's jails into colleges if you will. Not for criminality, as they are now, but of achievement and prosperity, with the ex-prisoner paying the fees for their tuition.
- 8) How does anyone transpose past addictions when maintained throughout their whole sentence on a methadone or subutex script? A moderate detox followed by compulsive

bouts of physical education would revitalise both body and mind, instilling a more positive drive. Have specific prisons solely for this purpose before swift allocation to another prison where they can focus properly on their work without the hindrance of being zoned out.

9) Reward those who detox with unbounded access to the gym to enhance their positive sense of well being.

10) There should also be prisons reserved for the non-conformists so as to avoid cross contaminating those committed to change.

Although ultimately, rehabilitation is not something given by others-but something taken by the individual. It is inside every one of us. But for hope-there must be a future. Is this rehabilitation revolution so beyond the realms of possibility?

Terry Fossett - HMP Highpoint

**Do you agree? Is it possible? What would be in your rehabilitation revolution? Write to the Prisoners Education Trust and let us know your thoughts and suggestions.**

## What would you change?

The Prisoners Education Trust has recently re-launched a project called 'Learning Matters' which aims to raise awareness of the importance of education in prison. It is vital the public and politicians hear prisoners' opinions about why learning matters and what can be done to make learning in prisons more effective at transforming lives and reducing re-offending.

We asked some prisoners what they would change if they were in charge of prisoner education:

*'If I were in charge of prisoner education I would do a survey with the prisoners to identify what they really want to study and why, in order to provide a service that is absolutely necessary. Furthermore, I would speak to potential employers who might be interested in employing ex-offenders based on their experiences and character. This opportunity will encourage some prisoners to learn and will give some kind of hope to start a new life after their release. With all due respect I cannot go into too much detail as I honestly feel that I am wasting my time, because we can come up with the best suggestions or ideas and nothing will be done. This fact is based on my experience in this prison and outside. Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.'*

*Adekunle Odunewu (HMP Wormwood Scrubs)*

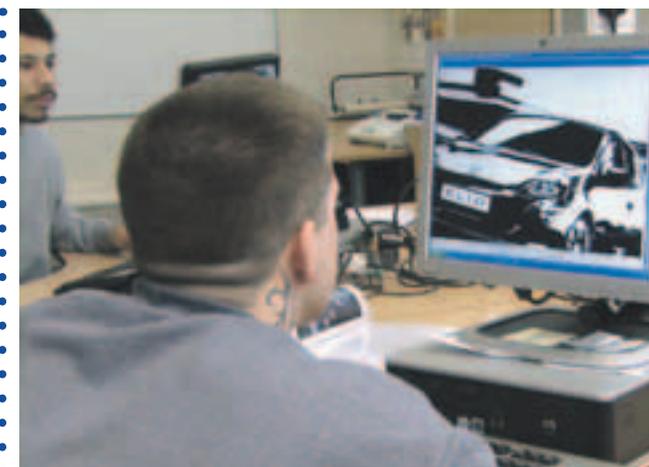
I am sure that Adekunle's frustration at trying to change the system is widespread amongst prisoners. That is why the Learning Matters project exists to help policy makers hear the voices of prisoners loud and clear when making decisions.

We are happy to say that a survey of prisoners is attached to this education supplement - please fill it in and help others to do so. The findings will be made into a report which we will show to policy makers. The Learning Matters project also sends out regular e-news bulletins to 2500 policy makers, academics, practitioners and supporters. These include articles by prisoners. So if you want your voice heard, please write to us and it might get published directly to the 'inbox' of many influential people!

Adekunle makes a very good point about employers. What do you think about the government's proposal for 'working prisons'? Have you got a story about learning in prison, good or bad? Do you want to change something about prison education? **Then write and tell us about it at: Freepost, RSSZ-UZZA-XAEZ, Prisoners Education Trust, Learning Matters Project, Ground Floor, Wandle House, Riverside Drive, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4BU.**

We look forward to hearing from you!

**Nina Champion - Learning Matters Project Manager, Prisoners Education Trust**



## Prison Education: 'could do better'

Unfortunately I have spent most of the last ten years in different prisons around the country and have seen a great deal of change in the way educational and vocational learning is carried out in various institutions.

Most education in the prison system is carried out by college franchises whose sole interest is to get 'bums on seats' and as many people through basic education exams in various subjects. This completely alienates education as a tool of rehabilitation and calming.

I believe my feelings are coloured by the lack of opportunities for prisoners who are more educated, compared to prisoners in need of a basic education.

The provision for Arts activities has slowly deteriorated as the college franchises can't see a profit in it and the government wants them to develop more basic skills courses. What everyone seems to overlook is the therapeutic qualities of the arts in turning round peoples lives. Drama is virtually non-existent in most of the prison service that I have seen. But wherever I have seen it used, it always has a powerful therapeutic effect.

Music is used to great effect in some prisons, but is unfortunately underused in others. Prison performances are great for morale and really build people's self-confidence, but music in prison is constantly underfunded.

Art is a tremendous confidence and communication enhancer. The therapeutic effect of art can not be underestimated but it is gradually being starved of funding by the colleges with art departments being asked to run on next to nothing. If it wasn't for the work of the Koestler Trust that gives prison art a national profile, then I believe it would be slowly forgotten about and disappear.

There are a few graphic design projects in prisons which offer great training and a possible career for prisoners, yet the prison I'm at has stopped it, despite being the most popular course in education. This is amazingly short-sighted in my opinion, as prisons could show prisoners how to start a business, design products and then market them.

The prisons should also be getting over their psychotic fear of the internet as it can be so controlled now that they should be teaching prisoners how to use the net and training prisoners how to develop websites and software.

I have found good vocational courses virtually non-existent in A and B prisons with the notable exception of Mosaics courses at HMP Wood Hill. It is better in C cat prisons, but they should be run to higher levels and in more subjects. Prisons should also invite companies to come into prisons and offer advanced jobs and training. Prisoners could then support their families and get specialist skills that could guarantee them a future.

The prison education system could definitely do better.

**Jonathan Miller - HMP Bullingdon**

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