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# LEADERSHIP IN PRISON EDUCATION:

Meeting the challenges of the  
new system

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## **Dame Ruth Silver**

I am delighted that the Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL) has been able to support this important project on the leadership of education in prisons. It is a critical topic, yet it is one that policy-makers often neglect, and that politicians are often reluctant to champion.

With a new government in place and recent reforms to the prison system appearing to give governors greater autonomy in how they choose to allocate their resources, it is an opportune time to review the leadership of prison education, and to consider how best to maximise its potential contribution: to the lives of prisoners and the prison community, to wider society and to the demands of social justice. It is also a moment to review the role of further education colleges in the education of prisoners and to think about how we can best support prisoners in building better futures for themselves on release.

Education is often key in giving prisoners a greater sense of purpose and self-worth, strengthening their links with their families and communities, connecting them to the world of work and giving them hope that they can make something more of themselves; that change is indeed possible. In many, many cases, poor literacy and numeracy skills represent a huge practical barrier to reengaging either with education or with employment. Fostering these connections to the outside world can be critical in supporting prisoners in reintegrating successfully into society and leaving their past actions behind them.

It is clear both that partnership is critical in delivering effective prison education and that there are substantial opportunities in the current set up to allow this. This demands a shift in thinking, both about prisons and about education. We need to see prisons not solely as places of punishment, but also as places of rehabilitation and second chances, with politicians doing more to make this view compelling to the public. And we need to think of education as a right that transcends the prison walls, and to recognise prisoners as a population of people who have in very many cases been failed by the initial education system and whose possibilities for re-engagement have been slight. As Tom Schuller notes in his introduction to this report, for too long prison education has been left out of our thinking about further education – the poor relation in the family of provision.

I hope this report will prompt a change, stimulating dialogue between the prison and education communities, encouraging governors and other prison leaders to put education at the heart of their institutions, and demonstrating to the leaders of colleges and independent training providers the important role they could play in this area.

It is a stimulating and comprehensive report, with very clear messages, which I trust will receive a serious hearing. With the UK's prisons straining at the seams, and much policy debate stuck in the draconian past, it is surely time to position learning and opportunity more centrally within our prison cultures, and to recognise the transformative potential of prison education and its role in building bridges between prisons and the communities that surround them.

*Dame Ruth Silver is President of the Further Education Trust for Leadership*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prison education is a neglected area, in society generally and within post-secondary education. Yet we have a large – and growing – prison population, whose educational needs are as great as any. For them as individuals, and for the wider society, education can play a crucial part in enabling their rehabilitation and subsequent reintegration. Leaders – both in FE and in prisons – have a vital role in strengthening this.

This report is published at a critical point in prison education, as major changes to the system have recently come into play, and their effects are starting to be felt. The research on which this paper is based was commissioned by the Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) to explore the nature of leadership in prison education. The research aims to identify how leaders can develop a whole-prison education culture, which would engage learners, and all staff working in the prison to support the delivery and development of education across the prison community.

Interviews were carried out in 10 prisons, selected to cover a range of geographical areas, prison functions and education providers.

The research questions were:

1. What is the specific nature of the leadership challenge for HMPPS leaders and Prison Education Framework (PEF) providers in managing and delivering the new education contracts to achieve the Ministry of Justice's wider definition of education?

2. What training and support might best address the identified challenges?
3. Is there existing work between prisons and FE institutions and are there examples of best practice in prison/FE partnerships?
4. What are the different structures 'lot' and 'group' in which education leaders in the Prison Service work? What are the specific challenges of these?

## Key conclusions

Funding for prison education has not increased since 2013. The PEF appears to have led to decreased resource in many areas. Arrangements for managing finances under the PEF contract are creating some challenges. The Treasury and Ministry of Justice review of education provision is urgently needed.

Leadership is underdeveloped in prison education. While there are some good opportunities for very senior leaders, generally training and support starts too late in career, when people already have significant responsibility. Succession planning is under-developed.

Governor autonomy remains more rhetoric than reality. The vision set out in the Coates<sup>1</sup> report has not been realised and the centralised control processes limit Governors' influence over education in their prisons.

Governors have generally had the most training and development opportunities, although these have not been consistent. Heads of Reducing Reoffending have sometimes initiated their own training but there are no standardised programmes, which is a concern, particularly considering the importance of the role in many prisons.

Governors were able to describe leadership qualities: they spoke about vision, visibility and integrity. Heads of Reducing

Reoffending and Heads of Learning and Skills (HoLSs)/Learning and Skills Managers (LSMs) were more focused on practical aspects of the roles and management rather than leadership. Education Managers were most likely to use 'creative' words in describing leadership but were very focused on the practicalities of day-to-day resource management.

While the new arrangements for prison education have the potential for leaders to develop a whole-prison education culture there needs to be significant investment in development opportunities for staff before this opportunity is realised.

Joint working is fundamental to effective education delivery in prisons. Few prisons appear to have a coherent coordinated strategic approach to allocation and activities. Sequencing is a complex challenge and, in many prisons, the competing demands on prisoners' time get in the way of delivering education. Prison officers do not always understand the importance of education, and workshop instructors and education departments are not always as integrated as they need to be.

Prison education leaders are keen to learn, keen to engage with organisations outside prison and, most specifically, with further education colleges. The lack of input and communication from further education colleges is a massive missed opportunity, not only for prison education staff, but also for learners. Prison staff need support to develop these links effectively.

There is a willingness within the prison system and a foundation to build on. However, there is a need for investment and resources to support effective professional development and to establish the conditions that allow for learning and culture change. The pressure of time spent on management, monitoring and reporting risks detracts from time and resources that are needed to support a whole-prison education culture.

<sup>1</sup> Coates, S. 2016. *Unlocking Potential: A review of education in prison*. Ministry of Justice.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## **Tom Schuller, Chair of the PLA**

Prison education is one of the greyest areas of the post-school education sector. 'Greyest' does not mean that it lacks colour; there is a profusion of innovative and inspirational work going on. But the learning that goes on in prison hardly figures in any map of educational provision, and receives little or no attention from policymakers or analysts. Understanding of this part of the field is generally limited to a few and it gets little recognition. This is in spite of the fact that the prison population is large, and one for which our school system has mostly failed to deliver any significant benefits, and so arguably has a strong claim on public attention.

People reading this report will be aware of the general profile of the prison population: 54% have reading skills at the level expected of an 11-year-old, and numeracy skills are even worse. Many have failed in education, or been failed by it so far. For many, educational failure and underachievement have had an impact. Others, by contrast, are quite highly educated, and, for some, their qualifications are not recognised, for example because they lack English language skills. The media occasionally include encouraging reports of individuals who have turned their lives around while in prison by taking advantage of the educational opportunities offered. But overall awareness of what is offered, and of the challenges involved in delivering these opportunities, is low.

Against this background, there are two factors which give this report particular salience for Further Education Trust for

Leadership (FETL) followers. First, the specific role of further education in prison is something which urgently needs discussion. FE colleges should be playing a major part in catering for the learning needs of those with experience of prison – both during their time in prison and when they come out. Colleges cover a very wide range of provision, from basic skills to higher education; their student population is very diverse; and they are more locally oriented than most universities. And yet, for the most part – leaving aside a handful of national providers – the FE sector now figures very little in this area. So it is extremely welcome that FETL has invested in the work leading up to this report.

Second, there is now a particular opening for leadership on the topic. As a result of a recent policy change, prison Governors now have a greater degree of autonomy in how they deploy their budget across different activities. Governors who truly believe in the power and efficacy of education have opportunities to leverage change and can make effective resource decisions to support this belief. The introduction of the new system is not without its problems, as the report shows. But the changes mean that Governors now have much more scope to select and promote educational programmes that suit the needs of their own prison. This is an important opportunity for leaders to make clear their priorities.

The leaders on which this report mainly focuses are those working in prisons and on the prison payroll: Governors themselves, but also those in senior positions with educational responsibilities. The report invites leaders in colleges to reflect on what contribution they could be making to prison education. At present, the financial and bureaucratic constraints on colleges are so great that fresh initiatives involving prison education are hard to envisage, let alone implement. And yet there are two reasons why college leaders should take an interest. For some communities, prisons are a significant part of the landscape, and a college which seeks to provide for the whole community should take this into account. Second, prisoners often face major difficulties on their release in integrating back into social and

economic life. Colleges can play a major part in enabling such integration to happen successfully. They can do this by equipping prison leavers to acquire skills and qualifications (perhaps building on what they have been learning in prison); and by enabling them to learn alongside other members of the communities, finding their way back into a network of social relationships.

It is often said that you can judge a society by the way it treats those who transgress, i.e. by its prisons. It would be stretching things to say that you can judge an education system by the way it deals with prison learning, but there is a grain of truth there. If we are serious about offering learning opportunities to all – even more, if we are serious about offering learning opportunities at times and in contexts when people are most disposed to learn – then prison education has to be a clearly recognised part of the system. That in turn is an essential condition for effective justice and efficient rehabilitation.

There is a two-way leadership interest in prison education, engaging both prison and college leaders. One major goal for this report is to provide a platform enabling better dialogue and discussion between these two sets of leaders. In turn, this will enable us to have a more coherent picture of prison education: where its strengths are, and where there are particular gaps that need filling. Leaders can only operate effectively if they have sound information and good analysis to hand.

## Purpose of the research

Published in 2016, the Coates review<sup>2</sup> of education in prison identified that the Prison Service needs a whole-organisation approach to education and to workforce development. Professional development for all staff, including Governors and their senior leadership teams, teachers, prison officers, instructors and peer mentors, is crucial in creating reform and improving the quality of education.

<sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf)

At the 2018 Prisoner Learning Alliance<sup>3</sup> conference, members were asked what areas of work they wanted the alliance to focus on over the next two years. One of the key areas was training and leadership. Members told the PLA that they wanted the alliance to have continued input into Governor support and training, to disseminate training materials and guidance and to support Governors and senior staff in developing leadership and commissioning skills. The Prisoner Learning Alliance set up a task-and-finish group to guide this work.

Although prison education is part of the adult and further education sector, it is rarely included in research that covers leadership in this sector. Similarly, in criminology and social policy, there is a substantial and growing amount of research on the role of the prison governor in prison. However, this rarely mentions their impact or influence on education and as an education leader. This area is of urgent need for research.

2019 was a significant year for prison education, with the largest changes to the commissioning, funding and monitoring for many years. This has created many new challenges for prison education leaders, which are explored in detail in this report. It therefore is an appropriate time to explore the changing nature of prison education and the impact this has on leadership and creating a learning culture in prisons. This is against a wider background of change in post-school education, with the Augar review of funding<sup>4</sup> still to be properly debated and a general election that produced significant political commitments to better fund the further education sector.

<sup>3</sup> The Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) is convened by the Prisoners' Education Trust and has the aim of improving prison education. It has around 115 members, all with expertise in prison education. Some members are organisations, such as the four providers of the PEF contracts, professional organisations, training organisations and voluntary sector organisations that provide training and education to prisons. Individuals, including teachers, academics, Governors and people with lived experience of prison are also members.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-18-review-of-education-and-funding-independent-panel-report>

This research aims to identify how leaders can develop the kind of whole-prison education culture referred to by Dame Sally Coates, which would engage learners and all staff working in the prison to support the delivery and development of education across the prison community.

At the same time, the report has implications for college leaders, for whom education for prisoners and former prisoners could be a significant part of their commitment to adult learning. The overall aims are to:

- a) help the prison community and the wider education community to gain a greater understanding of current leadership challenges at a time of significant system change;
- b) identify the steps needed to support prison staff and providers in developing a learning culture within the establishments;
- c) lay the basis for stronger partnerships between prison education and the further education sector.

## The approach

The research questions were:

1. What is the specific nature of the leadership challenge for HMPPS leader, and PEF providers in managing and delivering the new education contracts to achieve the Ministry of Justice's wider definition of education?
2. What training and support might best address the identified challenges?
3. Is there existing work between prisons and FE institutions and are there examples of best practice in prison/FE partnerships?
4. What are the different structures 'lot' and 'group' in which education leaders in the Prison Service are working? What are the specific challenges of these?



The PLA believes that by providing prison education leaders with adequate support and resources to develop leadership skills and qualities, outcomes for prisoner learners will ultimately be improved. This would contribute to increased engagement across the prison, higher likelihood of progression to employment and further education on release and a reduction in reoffending, with the associated wider social benefits.

In addition to desk research, interviews were carried out in 10 prisons. These were selected to cover a range of prison functions and geographical areas and to include all the PEF providers. A combination of prisons that had changed PEF provider and retained the same provider were selected. Access to these prisons was facilitated through national and regional HMPPS education staff.

A total of 52 people participated in the interviews. Data was gathered through 13 telephone interviews, 32 face-to-face interviews and one group interview with seven participants. See Appendix 1.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF PRISON EDUCATION

Education delivery in prison does not get the attention or the resources needed. Education can be central to rehabilitation but successive reports and inquiries have found that there is a lack of focus on these areas. Policy announcements have focused on safety in prisons. It is certainly the case that continued and increasing overcrowding, swingeing cuts in resources and severe understaffing have served to make many prisons risky places with increasing rates of violence. However, focusing on safety without providing the rehabilitative and purposeful activity measures that support wellbeing and impact on safety is short-sighted.

In its report on the prison population,<sup>5</sup> the Justice Select Committee recommended that the Ministry of Justice needed a dual approach to safety and decency as well as rehabilitation, and that only this will have an impact on reducing reoffending. Engagement with education can significantly reduce reoffending. The proven one-year reoffending rate is 34% for prisoner learners, compared to 43% for those who don't engage in any form of learning.<sup>6</sup> There are not enough purposeful activity places in prisons and the prisons inspectorate often find a shortfall, leaving prisoners with nothing to do.<sup>7</sup>

5 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmjust/483/report-overview.html>

6 Ministry of Justice and Department for Education. 2017. *Exploring the outcomes of prisoner learners: analysis of linked offender records from the Police National Computer and Individualised Learner Records*. London, Ministry of Justice

7 [https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/07/6.5563\\_HMI-Prisons-AR\\_2018-19\\_WEB\\_FINAL\\_040719.pdf](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprison/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/07/6.5563_HMI-Prisons-AR_2018-19_WEB_FINAL_040719.pdf)

The educational background of people entering prison is also a concern. Prison education staff assess the literacy and numeracy levels of people entering prison. The most recent figures show that over half (54%) were assessed as having literacy skills expected of an 11 year old. This compares to 15% of the general adult population. Numeracy skills were even lower. Around two fifths of prisoners engage in education at Level 2 (i.e. up to a pass at GCSE), but there is very little education at Level 3 available. There has been a decline in the number of people in prison participating in education and the numbers achieving qualifications in many areas has declined.<sup>8</sup>

In 2016, responsibility for prison education transferred from the Department of Education to the Ministry of Justice. In May 2016, Dame Sally Coates published her influential review, *Unlocking Potential*,<sup>9</sup> which set out a holistic vision for prison education and advocated a greater role for governors, including autonomy, budgets and accountability. Following publication of the report, the government accepted the main recommendations in principle.

The Prison Safety and Reform White Paper, published in November 2016, drew heavily on the Coates report. It set out plans for hugely significant changes to the way prison education was funded and governed. It proposed greater autonomy for governors, including the ability to design their regime to meet the need of their population and target work in prisons. It also proposed a new commissioning system and performance arrangements for Governors. Alongside increases in prison officer numbers, it proposed developing a capability strategy to support governors and senior managers to take on new responsibilities, including a bespoke prison leadership programme.

Although the White Paper fell because of the election of June 2017, some of the reforms it advocated were partially implemented. A new commissioning process for education

was developed as part of the prison reform programme. These reforms included prisons in England (education in Wales is devolved). A small number of contracted out prisons with an ongoing education contract in place were also excluded from the new commissioning arrangements.

Governors identified the education provision they required and prisons were divided into 'lots' (see Chapter 3), groups of prisons, usually by geographical area. The Prison Education Framework (PEF) contracts were awarded to deliver core education provision. The four incumbent education providers for the OLASS contracts successfully bid to run the education prisons (Milton Keynes College, Novus, PeoplePlus and Weston College). A Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) was also introduced for governors to commission smaller bespoke education services, i.e. those which do not fall within the PEF.

In May 2018, the Ministry of Justice published its Education and Employment Strategy, which brought together existing policy pledges but did not initiate anything new relating to education. Plans outlined in the strategy included putting Governors in full control of the education provided in their prisons so they can tailor it to their specific prison populations and for the local jobs market; looking at how in-cell technology could support prisoner learning; expanding the use of workplace release on temporary licence (ROTL) to get prisoners who have earned it, and who have been properly risk-assessed, into workplaces; and creating the New Futures Network to persuade employers to take on ex-prisoners, and create opportunities for existing prisoners.

Alongside the PEF contracts that came into force in April 2019, the Ministry of Justice published the Prison Education and Libraries Framework. This brought together some positive developments including ensuring mandatory learning difficulties and disabilities (LD/D) screening for new prisoners and a shared exam board and curriculum in key subjects to ensure continuity of learning as prisoners moved between establishments. The full detail of Governors' responsibilities for education can be found in Appendix 3.

<sup>8</sup> Table 10.1 and 10.2, Skills Funding Agency (2018) Further education and skills: November 2018, London:

<sup>9</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524013/education-review-report.pdf)

In the wider further education sector, Ofsted found a marked increase in the number of FE colleges judged good or outstanding at inspection over the last year. However, this contrasts sharply with prison education. Over the last year, Ofsted inspections found that 70% of English prisons were found to be less than good in their overall effectiveness of providing education, skills and work. They judged no prison as outstanding. Ofsted's annual report stated that urgent action was needed to ensure that prison, and specifically, under-performing ones were helped to improve. Ofsted have said that where they find education provisions is unacceptable, there are typically five key elements behind this:

- Learners' access to learning activities is limited, as staff shortages cause units to be locked down and education classes to be cancelled.
- There are not enough full-time education, skills and work activity places to meet the needs of the prison population, particularly in overcrowded prisons.
- Senior managers fail to develop and put in place reliable and effective measures to monitor and improve the quality of lessons and activities.
- The range of education, work and vocational training is not broad enough to prepare prisoners well for life after prison.
- Prisoners engaged in work activities do not have a clear understanding of what they had achieved, including personal and social skills, because instructors do not identify or record the skills they develop; this means that prisoners have little useful information to take with them when transferring to another prison or when being released.

These findings from Ofsted demonstrate that when education is not integrated into the rest of the prison delivery, when there is too little partnership or coordination between education

and operational teams in prisons, and where there is too little leadership in this area, education, and therefore prison learners suffer. As of December 2019, nine inspection reports have been published of prisons with PEF contracts. Of these, three were 'inadequate' in the leadership and management of learning and skills and work and four were 'requires improvement'. Only one was 'good' and one 'outstanding'.

### 3. THE CHANGING SYSTEM OF EDUCATION DELIVERY IN PRISON

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This chapter outlines the structures for supporting education delivery in prisons. It describes the relationships between regional and local education teams and gives examples of the different arrangements.

#### Key findings

- Responsibility for prison education has been shifted around departments several times in recent years. It was transferred from the Department for Education to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in 2016. There is now no departmental link between prison education and the rest of the education sector.
- The new PEF contracts have meant that complex regional structures have been put in place. These do not always align with existing prison management structures.
- There are a number of key individuals with influence or input into the management of the PEF contracts and accountability is unclear.
- Establishment staff are currently receiving significant support from regional Heads of Learning and Skills (HoLSs).
- Prison education funding has not increased since 2013.
- Resources are extremely tight for prison education and the PEF appears to have decreased on the ground resource in many areas.
- Arrangements for managing finances under the PEF contract are creating some challenges.
- The Treasury and MoJ review of education provision is urgently needed.

## Regional staffing structures

Alongside PEF contracts, new regional staffing structures came into force. As part of the research, interviews were held with a number of senior contract managers and learning and skills lot leads (also described as regional HoLSs). Staff were asked to describe the governance arrangements for monitoring education above prison establishment level. They described a number of different arrangements for managing the delivery of education. There is a degree of complexity and the lot areas do not always align with prison group director areas (the administrative and management line for prison Governors).

## Creating the lots for the PEF contract

During the process of drawing up the contract specifications in the different groups (lots), governors were asked what education provision they required for their prisons. Decisions were based on the funding available and how much support prisons needed to be able to provide and develop education and monitor contracts. Some lots are trying to be strategic and coordinate education delivering in line with a prisoner's journey, i.e. someone could move from a remand, to a training prison to an open prison.

It is hoped that this new model will offer senior staff in the prison more support through a specialised team with expertise in, for example, quality assurance health checks, English and maths embedding for vocational training and potentially greater flexibility.

## Oversight of the contract

The Ministry of Justice has stated that the contracts will be managed through a hybrid contract management model, i.e. both at prison and lot level, with the support of a central team. The national contract management team manages the relationship with the provider at a national level.

The PEF contracts are 'Gold' level government contacts (the levels are based on the contracts complexity and risk), and the contracts are signed with MoJ. The interviews highlighted that the

relationship between prison staff, and MoJ commissioning team, and, who has responsibility for changes in the contract is unclear to many staff.

There are a number of regional roles that have some oversight or authority over the contract.

**Senior Contract Managers** are responsible for robust management of the contract review process, including financial and performance monitoring. Their role is to monitor compliance. In autumn 2019, 12 new contract manager posts were recruited. Each post holder will be responsible for between one and three lot-level contracts and each lot includes between four and ten establishments.

**Regional Lot Leads** – some areas, such as the long-term and high-security estate, decided to fund a regional or lot lead to support the development and delivery of education across a group of prisons. The responsibilities of regional leads include strategic management of curriculum, strategic management of needs analysis, developing learning and skills policy and strategy, dealing with Governors and senior members of staff.

The **Lot Learning and Skills Manager (LSM)** does not line manage the establishment HoLS in their area but is seen as providing direction, and a link to HMPPS. In the interviews, some staff suggested that it would make more sense to be line-managed by the areas/lots HoLS, especially as this would give a route to progression. Many interviewees pointed out that for a non-operational HoLS/LSM (i.e. one who has not undergone governor training) there are unlikely to be many progression and promotion routes within a prison.

**Prison Group Directors (PGDs)** – each Governor is line managed by a PGD, who oversees a number of prisons and reports to HMPPS senior team.

It is worth noting that, alongside the HMPPS staff roles and structures, all **PEF providers** have a structure for overseeing

the delivery of their service in the prisons in which they work. It is difficult to see how the idea of Governor autonomy and leadership of prison education operates in any straightforward way within this complex assurance and monitoring structure.

## The work of regional and establishment HoLSs

Both senior contract managers and regional HoLSs believed that there was a significant difference between the role of regional and prison-based HoLSs. Regional Band 9 HoLSs are responsible for the strategic management of the group, and managing learning and skills in an area. Some regional leads are responsible for strategic management of curriculum, strategic management of needs analysis, developing learning and skills policy and strategy, dealing with governors and senior members of staff.

The majority of HoLSs/LSMs working in a prison are 'more granular', i.e. more focused on the day-to-day operational delivery. They will be quality-assuring individual learning plans (ILPs), trained to act as the Ofsted nominee (main contact for the Ofsted inspector during inspection), regularly checking the data that the provider gives them and checking progress against the annual delivery plan. They will have responsibility of the data management of learning and skills in the education block.

Our interviews demonstrated that many HoLSs were reliant on regional advice and structures for support with managing their contract and contractual relationships and the strategic direction of learning and skills. Interview responses demonstrated that the lot structure potentially offers the opportunity for learning between establishments. However, for some of the lot structures, it could be difficult to allocate or share resources across lots and group structures. This is particularly the case where a prison has joined a lot for the contract but is not part of the prison group director structure.

Examples of different structures:

**The lot for the PEF contract is the same as for the prison group** (e.g. Lot 2, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk). The five prisons that make up Lot 2 are managed by one prison group director. This means that the prison group director can convene meetings with the governors and the provider and the management and oversight structures are aligned.

### The women's estate

All governors managing women's prisons report to the Women's Prison Group director. For the PEF contract, there are different arrangements in the north and south of the country. Lot 16 consists of the four women's prisons in the north of the country; women's prisons in the south are part of their local/geographic lot. The prison group director covering Kent, Surrey and Sussex could expect to have some input in the PEF contract covering prisons they have responsibility for, but the contract also covers three women's prisons that they do not oversee.

In **the long-term and high-security estate** lot the response to managing the new contractual arrangements was to strengthen the region/lot with a Band 9 and cluster leads.

**Contracted-out prisons** – traditionally, education in contracted out prisons has not been part of the national contracts delivering education in publically run prisons. However, in some contracted-out prisons, where the education contract was up for renewal, the prison became part of the local lot and has the same PEF provider as other establishments in the area.

## Regional roles

Those in a regional learning and skills role recognised that they needed to engender confidence in people and acknowledged that their role was about persuasion and support to the learning and skills managers and to the Governors. They acknowledged that many HoLSs were new in post and did not have sufficient expertise. The senior contract managers acknowledged that there was an emphasis, for themselves, on new contract-management skills in relation to learning about certain aspects of the contract, e.g. gold contract;<sup>10</sup> contract change process. In addition, they identified a need for Governors, Heads of Reducing Reoffending and Heads of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers to upskill in contract management

## Funding and resources

As with FE generally, HMPPS has experienced significant cuts to its budget in recent years. From 2010–11 to 2014–15 its budget reduced by around 20%. Although there have been some slight increases since then, these have been almost entirely cancelled out by the effects of inflation. Significant staffing shortages have undermined rehabilitation activities, including access to education.

There were four iterations of the previous education contracts Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) and the last contract was due to finish in 2017. However, it was extended twice to allow for plans to devolve the commissioning of education provision to governors, slipping from April 2017 to April 2019.

The funding and policy responsibilities for prison education have moved from the Home Office to the Department for Education and then to the Skills Funding Agency (part of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) and then to the Ministry of Justice.

<sup>10</sup> Where the contract or variation has a risk/complexity profile that would classify it as a 'gold' contract

Education funding has stayed at the same level for the last five years (approx. £129 million), and has been guaranteed at the current level for the life of the PEF contract, 2019–2023. Funding was allocated to the Department for Education as ring-fenced provision by HM Treasury in the Spending Review of 2015, and was transferred to Ministry of Justice via machinery-of-government changes in 2016–17. The Treasury has asked the Ministry of Justice to review spending on education services at the end of 2019–20, following a new assessment of the services provided under the PEF and DPS. It is important that the December 2019 election and the forming of the new government do not derail these plans to review the contracts.

Devolution of education budgets to the lots was subject to a revised funding formula which takes into account the number, type and needs of different prison populations. Respondents indicated that they had concerns that there needed to be sufficient resources across the prison system to support education and not just with the PEF contracted provision. For some respondents, the amount available under the new funding formula was a reduction:

For us in the north, we have had to lose a lot of money. Our focus hasn't been so much on the new method of delivery, it is far more focused on how we're going to try to get anywhere near a decent education provision with so much less resources. (Governor)

Money is incredibly tight we have to manage the finances (Governor)

There were notable differences in the establishments of the impact of the changes on the budget available. While one prison reported that they had been able to accommodate all their provision in the PEF contract enabling more funds for the DPS, three prisons reported that they had less funding than previously and one prison reported that it had been able to accommodate all its provision in the PEF contract and this enabled it to have a greater DPS fund.

Some respondents were pleased that their views were the subject of research because they wanted to make the case for much-needed additional resources:

I really hope people are listening. We need to be as mindful about managing and putting the resources into the education structure as much as we are in the prison side of delivery because the prisoner side of the delivery is much larger but we don't give it the same resources – if you are working on a wing as a cleaner, are you a cleaner or are you getting a qualification in cleaning? (HoLS)

We all have to rush around and try and do things within the resources we have and not to the quality that we want and sometimes it makes us risk averse and an example is we won't go into the DPS as it is easier to go into the PEF as it is a trusted colleague as such. (Governor)

A number of respondents told us about practices they had developed to work with fewer resources. Some education teams utilise prisoners' skills to support educational delivery as classroom assistants or peer mentors. In one example, a prisoner with the required teaching ESOL<sup>11</sup> skills worked with a tutor to support other prisoners to attend education and gain English functional skills qualifications.

The key challenge of reduced funding resource was the impact on the number of staff. This is exacerbated by vacancies in post and difficulties recruiting, which increase pressure on already over-stretched teams. A number of responses highlighted that staffing was a very substantial area of pressure. This also has an impact on communication between prison departments as staff found it difficult to find time to meet with colleagues when their workload was high.

For one prison, the constant monitoring of the finances was a stress that was not there before. The staff member reported that

previously they understood the number of learners they had and the allocated spends. The new system required two different measures of reporting against spend. The first is the 'pot of money business planned over the 12 months' and then a 'measurement of how currently being paid which is a 1/12th payment every month'. The staff member was finding it extremely difficult to business plan and measure spending.

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<sup>11</sup> English for Speakers of Other Languages



## 4. LEADERSHIP IN PRISON EDUCATION

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This chapter describes staff roles and responsibilities and highlights some of the inconsistencies in the management of education delivery across the estate. It shows that there is scope for much greater interaction between prison education and further education, for example in the recruitment and professional training of prison staff and in greater exchange between leaders in both sectors.

### Key findings

- There are significant variations in the role (salary band, management responsibility and seniority in the wider prison) of Heads of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers.
- Governors have operational backgrounds, have participated in higher education and have received specific leadership and development opportunities, although these opportunities vary.
- There is no formal route of training and development for heads of reducing reoffending who generally 'learn on the job'
- Heads of Learning and Skills are more likely to have an education background if recently recruited. There is some evidence of professional development for this role but it is not universal.
- Education Managers have generally received training and their background and ongoing development confirms their professional standing.

- Responses overall demonstrated a mixed picture of development and training opportunities that supported prison education leaders.
- Governors were able to identify qualities of leadership and used words such as vision, visibility, resilience and risk-taking, while Heads of Reducing Reoffending were more likely to focus on communication and team-working.
- Heads of Learning and Skills and Learning and Skills Managers were focused on influencing and time management and education managers on partnership resource management and other, more visionary, qualities.
- Succession planning is necessary to ensure a good 'pipeline' of appropriately qualified and experienced governors.
- Respondents felt that hands-on and practical training with time away from establishments was the most effective way of delivering training.
- The changes under the prison reform programme have not delivered full governor autonomy over education.
- Centralised sign-off, regional contracts and financial restrictions all place limits on governor autonomy.
- Accountability measures for governors in relation to education remain unclear.

## Who are the leaders in prison education?

The following roles have responsibility for delivering, managing and monitoring education in individual prison establishments.

**Governing Governor:**<sup>12</sup> The role of the governing, or 'number one', Governor is to oversee and lead the whole establishment.

<sup>12</sup> One director in a contracted prison was interviewed and one deputy governor and their responses have been collated with the governor findings.

They are ultimately responsible for outcomes of any aspect of service delivery in the prison, particularly safety and security.

Following the prison education reforms, Governors were tasked with carrying out a needs analysis of their prisoner learners and identifying the most appropriate education provision. Following the implementation of the PEF contracts and DPS systems in April 2019, Governors will be expected to monitor the effectiveness of education delivery in their prisons.

**Head of Reducing Reoffending:** This is a senior management role within the prison, carried out by someone who is at Governor grade. They will have operational responsibilities in the prison, including covering the role of duty Governor (who takes overall control of the prison on a rota basis). The role may oversee education, offending behaviour programmes, activities allocation, workshops, gym provision, chaplaincy and family support. One Head of Reducing Reoffending (HoRR) described their role:

It is a big function; anything that is not security or residential! (HoRR)

The majority of Heads of Reducing Reoffending have line-management responsibility for Heads of Learning and Skills/ Learning and Skills Managers. They report to the Governor regarding the delivery of the PEF contract.

**Head of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers:**

This role is part of the prison management structure. They are the liaison between prison staff and the PEF provider team and work alongside the education manager to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of the learners. They may write contract specifications, commission services through the DPS, oversee the prison library and information, advice and guidance.

**Education Manager:** is employed by the PEF provider and works with the prison to agree the curriculum to meet the needs of the learners, working to deliver the PEF contract. They will have direct line management responsibility for education staff, including

curriculum managers, teachers/tutors and administrative staff.

### **Management structures and the Head of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Manager role**

The amount of funding prisons receive depends on their function and size. This means that the number of Governors and senior managers each establishment has, and their specific function, can vary between prisons. Alongside core functions (such as Head of Security), Governors can decide which staff are part of their senior management team. The research found a lack of consistency in the role of the Head of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Manager. Differences included:

- Different job titles: Head of Learning and Skills (HoLS), Head of Learning, Skills and Employment (HoLSE) and Learning and Skills Manager (LSM).
- Different salary bands: The research found that this role was paid at a range of salary bands, with the majority of HoLSs/LSMs on Band 6. There was one more senior Band 7, a governor grade who had operational duties. In two prisons, there were Band 8 HoLSs.
- Management responsibility: The majority of HoLS/LSMs interviewed were non-operational and did not directly manage staff. However, there was one HoLS who was operational, while another HoLS directly managed workshop staff.
- Senior management team: The majority of HoLSs/LSMs report directly to the head of reducing reoffending, a member of the senior management team. However, at least four of the HoLSs/LSMs interviewed were also members of the senior management team (SMT).

Interviewees working in this role noted that they had no automatic linear career structure and that the high turnover within SMTs can mean their line manager is frequently changing.

Not every establishment works the same. I don't line manage anybody. Others line manage the gym, activity hub

– there is no clear structure – which doesn't help. It could be a similar structure. (HoLS)

### **Educational and professional backgrounds and previous development opportunities**

#### **Governors**

Time in the Prison Service ranged from 9 years to 32 years. The majority had worked their way 'through the ranks' from Prison Officer to Senior Officer, Principal Officer, Operational Manager, Deputy Governor and then Governing Governor position; while two respondents had been through a graduate scheme and one an accelerated scheme. Three Governors were in their first 'in-charge' role while others had been Governor at a number of prisons. The length of time in the current prison varied from 'just taken up the position' to between 1–3 years.

The majority of Governors had obtained a degree prior to coming into post with one exception; one Governor described themselves as 'not the typical Governor' as they had left school at 16 and taken a vocational route. However, they had obtained a master's while in the Prison Service.

A few years ago, got my master's through the Cambridge criminology course. 'Boy done good' is how I describe myself. Academia at school was not for me – I was always a reader – I have real view on prison education. (Governor)

No Governors had a professional education background and only one person talked about this.

I joined the Prison Service and worked my way up with very little exposure to education until I was the head of reducing reoffending. (Governor)

Governors were also able to provide details of specific leadership training or other development activities. These included:

- Courses to become a governor, e.g. operational managers exam.
- Empowering Senior Leaders Programme (delivered by Roffey Park Institute).<sup>13</sup>
- Mentoring and coaching (internal).
- M.St in Criminology, Penology and Management (Cambridge University).<sup>14</sup>

Governors who had participated in the 'Empowering Senior Leaders Programme' spoke highly of the programme, which they had found valuable. The aspects that had supported their development included the peer support and learning aspect of the programme, sharing learning with other leaders from the Probation Service and applying theoretical learning to their current challenges.

One Governor commented:

It [the Empowering Senior Leaders Programme] was probably one of the more useful things that I have done. (Governor)

Two Governors had completed the M.St in Criminology, Penology and Management, resourced by the Prison Service. One Governor described the course as influential in their role:

Ultimately, the Cambridge criminology course master's was the big thing in shaping how I try to do things (Governor).

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.roffeypark.com/executive-education/training-courses-skills-development/senior-leadership-development-programme/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.crim.cam.ac.uk/mst-documents/penologyhandbook.pdf> ; <https://www.crim.cam.ac.uk/Courses/m-st-courses/m-st-penology>

## Heads of Reducing Reoffending

Time in the Prison Service ranged from 12 years to 30 years; the majority had worked their way through prison operational posts and worked in a variety of settings, e.g. custody, security, residential and programmes. Two people explained that they had engaged with an accelerated development programme and one person had an education background, rather than an operational background. The length of time in the role ranged from 'just about to start the position' to between eight months up to two years. Two out of nine of the Heads of Reducing Reoffending interviewed had previously been Heads of Learning and Skills. Of those who described their educational background, only one person indicated that they had a degree.

It was significant that Heads of Reducing Reoffending described very few examples of formal training and development being offered to support their role. Four reported that they had completed a Level 5 management qualification prior to the role. However, they did not feel that this was relevant to their current role. Generally, respondents stated that they had learned from the previous incumbent in the role, 'learned the ropes on the job' or sought their own learning opportunities. These included three who had sought out a mentor and others who had visited different establishments and been involved in shadowing.

When I got my Band 7 role, it was just before the prison managers training came in and I missed out on that. Looking back, the prison has been very good at Band 4 or 5 development opportunities. There are very little opportunities for an operational manager Band 7. (HoRR)

The only training and development I've had is what I have sorted out myself. I got myself my own mentor. (HoRR)

I was put into reducing reoffending and I was given a two-week handover from the previous incumbent who equally had no development. It is actually quite stressful especially when you are in a position that is quite stressful, in a role, in a prison, that is also quite stressful and you miss things that equally puts pressure on you. (HoRR)

### **Heads of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers**

Time in the Prison Service ranged from three months to 28 years. There was no typical route to the position with nearly half (five) of those interviewed coming from an operational background, with two having also had experience in teaching. Three had an education background although only one had prior experience of working in prison education. Three others had previously been in non-operational roles in the prison (administration and industries). The length of time in post ranged from five who were in post for less than six months and the remainder in post from 18 months to seven years.

The educational background varied from one person describing O-Level as their highest level to five others who had a degree and a teaching qualification. Of the five LSMs/HoLSs that had an educational background, four had been recruited in the last six months. This demonstrates that the new requirements to monitor the contract are potentially creating a change in selection criteria for this role.

Heads of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers showed some evidence of having received leadership skills development. Three had formally engaged with leadership opportunities (one in their previous organisation) and there was one example of shadowing and one person who had completed a Level 5 in Management and Leadership.

I have a level 5 in Management and Leadership that I have completed through the Prison Service delivered alongside probation staff ... really good mix of staff ... it was really worthwhile. I just got so much out of it. We went through the theory and it put things into perspective and gave me different situations to look at I could deal with different situations. I'm really proud of that qualification. (LSM)

Two people indicated that they had previously undertaken management training in the prison but this was prior to their role

as HoLS/LSM. Three people reported that they had never done any management or leadership training in the prison and the reason was this included that this was not offered to civilians and the training at Band 6 would not be relevant for the role.

No leadership training. Normally as a Band 6 you get line management training but I didn't do that because I'm not actually line managing. Instead I monitor outcomes. (LSEM)

Heads of Learning and Skills and Learning and Skills Managers identified the following activities as having supported their professional development:

- Networking with peers,
- Regional support (regional head of learning and skills),
- Inspiration from others,
- Previous cluster group meetings with outside speakers,
- Education and Training Foundation training and support,
- Accessing training provided by the education provider.

### **Education Manager (employed by the PEF providers)**

This group of interviewees were professionally experienced and had been working in prison education for between five and 23 years. The vast majority were educationalists, with a background in training and/or education and most had previously been teachers.

Their time in their current position ranged from one month to three years. Over half (five) were very new in post (April/May 2019) and had been recruited in line with the new education contracts. The majority had both a degree and a teaching qualification (seven respondents), and two people had been trained originally through youth work. Two Education Managers had obtained their qualifications while working. Most were involved in continuing professional development (CPD) activities and believed this was supporting their career development.

I am an A1<sup>15</sup> assessor V1<sup>16</sup> qualified and have a certificate in education and a degree in education and training. I did them all in work as I was progressing through my career (EM).

**Education Managers'** leadership and development opportunities are provided by their organisation (the four providers). Three Education Managers had completed leadership and management programmes leading to a qualification. Two had participated in short course delivered in-house. One explained that leadership training was available and they were expecting to start a programme in the near future.

There are a lot of internal opportunities right up to Level 7 if required on a needs basis relevant to the role. I have put forward a case to do this and why the business would benefit from me doing this training. (EM)

One Education Manager who had obtained a foundation degree in leadership and management prior to working in the prison explained that they accessed CPD from the Education and Training Foundation and felt that the training was there if it was needed.

I've always worked under supportive companies who if you have training need will support you in looking at it how you need to develop. (EM)

Activities that have supported Education Managers in their professional development included:

- Training on professional discussions assessment method designed to assess learning.
- Lesson observation training to be able to judge the quality of teaching and learning.

<sup>15</sup> A1 Assessor award was the qualification in the United Kingdom to become an National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) Assessor

<sup>16</sup> V1 award was the qualification for verifiers whose role is to quality assure the assessment process. Both qualifications have since been replaced by TAQA (Training Assessment and Quality Assurance). This is the name of the group of assessment qualifications, rather than a qualification on its own.

- Education and Training Foundation training.<sup>17</sup>
- Visits to other managers in their workplace.
- Team meetings that include a CPD theme focus.
- Mentoring.

Overall, Education Managers reported that they were supported in their professional development.

## Leadership qualities – what makes a good leader?

There are many different definitions of leadership qualities but the widely acknowledged qualities of a good leader include integrity, accountability, empathy, humility, resilience, vision, influence and positivity. As part of the research, interviewees were asked what they considered to be the qualities of an effective leader.

Governors were clear in their responses. For all Governors, the essential quality of leadership was having a strong strategic vision, being very clear about what they were trying to achieve, being able to communicate this and having the ability to 'take people with you'.

Having the courage of your convictions and being able to stand there and deliver that vision and own it and make it clear to the people what the outcomes you are looking for are. I do a monthly full staff briefing – I love standing in front of my staff and I get very energetic and I love talking to them about what we are going to do as a team. (Governor)

I have a vision, it is only 18 months long – everyone safe and everyone valued is our mantra. I believe in a rehabilitative strategy (too long a word) but what it means is that staff and prisoners talk to each other in a community and that is my vision and I continue to aim towards it. (Governor)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/offender-learning/>

More strategic – a strategic grip at national, lot and regional – not just education but everything about a prison. Need to be able to affect culture change at a time when resilience in the service is low – that makes people entrenched in their culture and change becomes quite threatening and need to be able to manage that (Governor).

Governors also identified the need to be able to listen, and to be visible around the prison with oversight of all areas of the prison.

Listening, encouraging people to share their ideas and contribute to the future of the organisation and developing it. And being clear having listened to people's ideas about a clear direction and vision and setting out values in terms of what is important to achieve mission. (Governor)

Every morning, I go out between 8–9am on a different route, different area and prisoners see me. I am out and about and staff see me and prisoners see me and respond to that. (Governor)

They like to feel a paternal relationship with the leader and that as a very close-knit group they like to be led to be told what to do and led from the front and I think they really value seeing you and being able to have access to you not seen you as this perfect figurehead but that someone is actually involved. (Governor)

The level of integrity is beyond reproach and set the standard, tone and pace and integrity. The leader is visible and transparent and cannot be seen to be wanting in integrity. (Governor)

And for some it was about taking risks, or being able to make mistakes and learn from them.

I will push boundaries if you like to try and make sure that we are delivering the right outcomes from the men. There is also a part of leadership where you have to be willing to take risks. I think the prison service has been guilty over a

number of years they have taken more and more control away from Governors. (Governor)

I have always accepted that I make mistakes and that's ok as long as I learn from them then that is ok and my team therefore if they make mistakes we look at what we could have picked up and learn from those. (Governor)

As a leader, I need to be able to seek innovation and improvements but have to be pragmatic. (Director)

Three Governors talked specifically about the need for resilience and one about the need for hope:

Absolute quality that is required is resilience – the number-one competence. you need absolute oodles of. If you don't have resilience you will struggle and we are seeing senior leaders' resilience tested throughout. The eyes of the world are on you, media and ministerial scrutiny and doing a very visible job and a lot of negative exposure. (Governor)

You have got to have hope and you have to believe in rehabilitation. That is what this current time requires. (Governor)

One Governor framed their response in reference to the model of situational leadership and in being able to adjust and successfully apply different strategies and different learning for the situation. This was the only response that identified a specific model of leadership.

The workforce has changed beyond all recognition in ten years. The expectations of ministers, the public, HMPPS has changed beyond all recognition. The expectations of the prisoners have changed. (Governor)

Governors also emphasised the need to be pragmatic, keep things simple, and be robust and have the confidence and skills to push back when things were not right. They also described stakeholder management and financial management as being essential skills

for governing. This ties in with the idea that along with the operational requirements of governing, they are also similar to chief executives, expected to bring together multiple agencies to work in partnership.

**Heads of Reducing Reoffending** were most likely to cite communication and the ability to understand other people's perspective as essential qualities of leadership. They also believed having a good team, with people they could trust to delegate responsibility to was essential.

Having honest and frank discussions of where we are at and supporting each other through any change and challenges. (HoRR).

When communicating with people they are going to have different perspectives and you need to be able to clarify what the goal is; for reducing reoffending that goal has got to be highlighted because within their own remit they will have a goal but that goal doesn't mean anything if it doesn't contribute to the overarching goal. (HoRR)

Have to work as a team when I first got here all team members are spread all over and I brought them all together. (HoRR)

Leadership is about believing in what you are doing and thinking about how you would take your team with you and the way that you behave is the expectation of them as well. So it is leading by example. (HoRR)

A number of responses highlighted that staffing was an area of pressure with reference to vacancies posts and also in finding time for meetings with the head of learning and skills.

Where the HoRR talked about having a goal or a vision it was in relation to reducing reoffending and a rehabilitative culture. Other leadership or personal qualities they identified included being approachable, having relational skills, being a good listener,

having integrity and being reflective. They also identified being knowledgeable/not being able to know everything, being creative about how you approach problems and issues.

**Heads of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers** also talked about leadership in relation to working collaboratively, having the confidence of the staff around them, being able to network and to influence others to get the job done.

Leadership comes down to getting team to perform a task or tasks effectively and in a manner that is conducive to morale. (LSM)

Only two HoLSs/LSMs discussed their role using language relating to strategy and vision – however, this was in relation to frustration about resources and operational constraints limiting their ability to maintain focus and leadership.

Leadership is about strategy and vision and I am good at that and the governor has faith in my suggestions. I take responsibility and it's the governor to me but I am not managed by governor managed by the HoRR. I sit on SMT and so does HoRR. The set-up is crazy. The remit is so big the HoRR can't get too involved and they are relying on me to manage it and I am getting my direction from somewhere else. (HoLS)

Being strategic and keeping your focus on the strategy. In this environment, leadership has disappeared – the focus is on management. For me the hardest thing is being just one person. I find that quite difficult coming from a focused leadership role to a contract management role. (HoLS)

Other Heads of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers didn't mention strategy or vision but spoke about being able to 'see the big picture' and being able to make the links with others. The ability to work with and influence others was a key quality required in the role.



In this role I don't have line management responsibility but I have to deal with staff line-managed by other people so I have to network and ensure I know the parameters. (HoLS)

The responses indicated that there is a pressure in the role that came from needing skills to influence without necessarily feeling that they had authority.

Its leadership of myself ... I know at times there are only certain decisions that only I can make. (HoLS)

LSM sits in a strange place – manage contracts and staff who don't work directly with you. Work with staff in same function but don't get what education is about and work with staff in workshops. It's about keeping the whole lot going. (LSM)

I chip away each little bit. The head of function has so much to cover and the priority is developing Industries because that keeps recurring with Ofsted inspections. Someone described the Head of Learning and Skills role as very lonely. (HoLSE)

The ability to make links with others, work with and influence others was a key quality required in the role. Two respondents highlighted the important role of liaising between the prison and the education department. One person attributed their success in this to having built up trust and having the support of the senior management team and for another the success was from being able to develop a discourse.

HOLSs/LSMs also talked about having enthusiasm and drive, inspiring others, enjoying what you do and being committed to the needs of the learners.

Giving support – mucking in – Wouldn't ask anybody to do anything I wouldn't do. If anyone phoned in sick I would cover for them in the classroom rather than have prisoners locked up and on the wing. I am a big believer in keeping people busy. Hopefully by tea time want to put their feet

up and the more active they are the more controlled the prison is. (LSM)

It was noticeable that responses from HoRRs and HoLSs/LSMs generally focused on the qualities relating to management responsibilities rather than leadership qualities. The difference between leaders and managers has been described in terms of leaders having people who follow them and managers having people who work for them. The focus on management demonstrated the tasks and activities that were occupying their time and the challenges they were currently dealing with.

Respondents also outlined the challenges of not having line-management responsibilities, the challenges of high workloads and time management. However, when leadership qualities were identified they focused on having a good knowledge of staff and what brings the best out of them.

There was a clear pragmatic approach – people spoke about working with the weaknesses, as well as the strengths, of the environment systems, and staffing.

Respondents also identified the skills needed for the role, including research and data analysis, setting up systems and contract management skills.

### **Education Managers (employed by providers)**

Education Managers also described leadership qualities as partnership working and communication. The response from one Education Manager summarised the importance of partnership working.

The responses also illustrated the changes that had occurred with the introduction of the new prison education contracts. A number of the Education Managers were new in post and were facing a number of challenges that included a change in curriculum, adapting to new management, including in some situations a new provider, but the same teaching staff and developing new relationships with prison staff.

The challenges inherent in this role were illustrated in comments from Education Managers, for example:

I have to make difficult decisions and the staff don't appreciate and like it.

I need to have good empathy but have to make difficult decisions.

I need to be able to communicate with sometimes conflicting views.

There has to be a good level of communication and I have to listen to staff

I'm making sure that my managers grow with the vision and are on that journey with me. It's been a challenge. There have been some difficult conversations with staff. It has been a shock to the system because the contract is very different to the OLASS contract. It has been a shock both to us and to the prison but fundamentally, for me, it's about making sure that I am open and transparent about what this contract means and where it fits with the learner as they are the centre of that. (EM)

The importance of leadership of the team was emphasised in relation to being able to support staff, which ultimately benefitted learners.

I have a really good team and I know what they are capable of and what support they need and it is my job to make sure that they get that support so they can do the best that they possibly can. Each one of our tutors will put the learner at the heart of what they do and my job to marry the learner's needs and the department needs with the funding and the whole strategy for where we are heading. (EM)

Resilience, empathy and listening to others were also identified as important, and education managers clearly recognised that

regime and resource constraints could mean making difficult and sometimes unpopular decisions. However, it was significant that education managers also mentioned more visionary qualities as important, such as being dynamic, innovative, risk taking and creativity.

## Developing leadership – recruitment

One Governor talked about recruiting the right skill set and the need to have a team that can operate together that is reflective of the community. Diversity was raised in the context of recruitment by two other Governors, who believed the organisation would benefit by opening up recruitment to attract a more diverse workforce. This is highly relevant to the relationship between further education and prison education.

I think we suffer as an organisation because we're not permeable at every level for recruitment. (Governor)

Within the context of this research this was considered relevant because:

No one with an education background could be a governor if they've not been through the officer route. Yet a Governor left and became a head of group of academy schools. (Governor)

Of the five LSMs/HoLSs that had an education background, four had been recruited in the last six months. This demonstrates that the new requirements to monitor the contract are creating a change in selection criteria for this role. One respondent made a strong case for bringing in staff with significant experience of the FE sector:

Above all, the Heads of Learning and Skills we recruit from are highly unlikely to have had any background in learning and skills and adult education whatsoever and then we expect them to manage education quality, and to do observations of teaching and learning, learning walks,

make them the Ofsted nominee — it really is utter madness and personally I would like to see a Band 8 in this position in charge of education in every single prison – probably recruited from the community – with a background in further education or something with proper professional development available to them. Then I think as a service we stand a chance of delivering decent quality education. (Governor)

Governor turnover is a huge problem in HMPPS. Across the estate, 52 establishments have had four or more governing Governors in nine years. This creates additional uncertainty and change in establishments and makes it difficult to sustain good operational practice. The churn in leadership and across learning and skills teams disrupts the relationships which create effective regimes with a focus on the importance of education. Without some stability in staffing, it is unlikely that any structure will work effectively. In addition, HMPPS does not give enough attention to succession planning and does not ensure an adequately skilled and trained pipeline of new leaders.

## Training, development and support

The government has stated that it is investing £1.5 million in learning and development initiatives for senior prison staff. HMPPS introduced a new senior leadership programme in September 2019. This aims to prepare 15 high-potential Deputy Governors, Senior Probation Officers and HQ-equivalent grades for the next level of senior leadership over an 18-week period. HMPPS is planning to pilot another programme, on performance leadership, in 2020, which will be available to all Deputy Governors, experienced Senior Probation Officers and Band 6 National Probation Service Leaders. They are also planning to develop a reflective leadership programme which should be available to all newly promoted governing Governors, Heads of Probation and HQ equivalents, offering development and support for the first 24 months in post.

Interviewees were asked what training and support they were currently receiving. HMPPS staff reported that they accessed four main areas of support.

1. Central support, including weekly telephone calls and advice from Contract Managers.
2. Support from Lot Leads.
3. Peer support, e.g. meeting with other LSMs/HoLSs.
4. Line management/Governor support.

The majority had received training for specific functions connected to the new systems – e.g. DPS and Curious. They were aware that there was general online training available. In addition, a number of staff mentioned training and development days and some had participated in team away days focused on education or whole-prison staff training days that included information on education.

Education Managers reported a similar level of support but also explained that they had received more training around developing specific skills, e.g. lesson observation training. A number of HMPPS staff reported that they had accessed training delivered by the provider.

Interviewees were asked 'What was the best way to gain new knowledge and develop skills?' The overwhelming response was that the delivery of training needed to be mixed-method. Staff gave the example of learning a new system through receiving information and instructions and then practising with follow-up support.

The new Curious system was a mixture of telephone conferences. We got used to working on it, there were passwords etc., and couple of big conferences and a follow up of support. Being given the information electronically to digest and going away talking to colleagues and also back up support – monthly check-ins. (EM)

It needs to be a variety of options to meet the needs of the prison. Webinar just provide updates. Physical training is best. (EM)

For many there was a need to be away from the workplace and not to rely on online learning.

There are lots of ways we can deliver training – we can do it emails, we can do it distance learning, you could do classroom within the prison, leaflet drops, there are endless ways of up-skilling individuals but having experienced lots of different ways of learning, the best way is when you are away from your prison. (HoRR)

Some staff felt that getting together across the region and having input from the contracts team would be helpful:

I think there should be a regional opportunity for staff to go to ... for a day or staff to come here. To sit in a classroom with someone from the contracts department and go through what we should be looking for, how we can invoke penalties, notice of improvement, etc. Because I am mindful with the big companies you have to be very careful because if they can see loophole they will exploit it. (HoRR)

The pressures of the workload can often impact on staff availability to undertake training. Two Education Managers explained that they had not taken up the offer of leadership training because the timing coincided with preparing for Ofsted inspection.

Some Governors and Heads of Reducing Reoffending had an appetite to develop skills and knowledge in education. However, for others, they felt that working with education specialists was necessary as they would not have time for the additional workload or associated training.

The Prison Service is so big and so ever-changing that to keep up with it you need to run at a 100 miles an hour constantly and there are only 24 hours in a day and you can never do

that. You really just need to take a snippet of what you need in order to deliver. Difficult to keep up with it and actually you just need someone to say this is what we want and it is not that easy. Lots of emails that come through, 100s of them and constantly – and somebody says have you read the email and no I have not I have been in meetings all day – so if someone just told me this what we're doing and how we're doing it that's what I need. (HoRR)

The new education arrangements clearly show that Governors need access to expert advice and information-sharing opportunities, as well as training. One suggestion from a Governor was this could be part of the work to prepare people to govern. For another, the Governor forums provided the best platform to discuss prison education.

There was an overall consensus that the delivery of training and development opportunities needed to be away from the prison and a mixed-method of delivery, involving follow-up support.

## **Prison education and Governor 'autonomy'**

Successive justice ministers have had a stated policy aim of empowering governors. The rationale behind this was to move from a highly centralised system and devolve authority to Governors. This agenda aligned with a policy agenda of removing mandatory Prison Service instructions and drafting Policy Frameworks with less mandatory action and more associated guidance. The policy aim, aligned with the prison reform agenda, has been that Governors should have more autonomy and have control over education budgets and delivery in their prisons. However, the changes to the education arrangements have not yet delivered this.

The Coates review envisaged Governors being highly involved in education delivery in their prisons, with autonomy in the provision of education, and being held to account for the educational progress of all prisoners. However, the reality is that on a day-to-day operational basis the management of education

has to be delegated to another member of staff. Governors do not have the time or capacity to oversee education delivery in detail.

The research found that the view of Governors was that the new arrangements were not yet empowering them to be able to have control. One of the reasons for this was that individual Governors are not able to use the PEF budget directly for their prison as they are working within the lot structure as part of a group of prisons. Some Governors felt that the contract had resulted in more bureaucracy and increased complexities, and in reality necessitated specialist support.

Governors broadly welcomed more autonomy around education provision and many are disappointed that the reforms in the 2016 White Paper and in Coates have not been fully implemented. Any empowerment needs aligned training and development and clear accountability structures. Governors cannot be innovative without adequate funding resources and independence.

The contractual levers Governors have are more limited than they expected. When the PEF contracts came in they were publicised as being under Governor control and there is a mechanism for reducing payment of the contract by 5% if performance is not satisfactory. However, crucially, this change has to be signed off centrally. In addition, a Governor's influence over and ability to vary their PEF contract may be reduced if the group director, regional HoLS or other governors have conflicting views of the providers' performance. The situation is also complicated by the regional arrangements for monitoring and managing prison education delivery. Governors commented:

We were heavily involved in what we wanted out of the new PEF... that whole process didn't work – what we asked for and what we've ended up with are very different things. (Governor)

What the majority of prisons have done to deliver the contracts is put a regional structure in to co-ordinate. That doesn't sound like people being empowered to deliver what

they want but instead putting our resources into additional posts to co-ordinate and make sure less autonomous and less empowered. (Governor)

In my mind and my vision if something was truly autonomous then it would be up to the Governor to appoint the Education provider that delivered best quality product for their prison and learners. I didn't have any discretion on that it was done to me and I had at the time an education provider and I was on a path and had a plan to make it better and they were replaced by a company that I had no say in. (Governor)

Only one Governor considered that they did have leverage:

The principles of PEF are better — the idea of me having greater control having a contract where we can penalise for non-delivery is good. (Governor)

The question of contractual leverage in terms of finances was also raised by a regional HoLS with the following example:

The Governor thought they could decide whether the college got the 5% that they could withheld but I have looked at the contract and it says validation. Governor validates it but there's a panel above it that will have responsibility to say whether the governor is being reasonable in what needs asking for and the reasons for not giving that. (HoLS)

Financial restrictions around where money can be spent, bureaucracy and being tied to regional contracts also undermine empowerment. Governors and HoLSs referred to the additional work involved as another reason why currently the new arrangements were not as empowering as they might be. While acknowledging that, in theory, there is a choice to have less in the PEF contract and more in the DPS, in practice this constitutes an increase in resources at the prison site and, as a result, prisons were being more risk averse and have not chosen a greater proportion of DPS provision.

## 5. LEADING A LEARNING CULTURE

Talk about autonomy and, yes, in theory have given us autonomy by we can choose to have less PEF and DPS and as a lot and individual prisons if get sign off. But what is not factored on is that you have put extra workload and tasks into the jail – for the HoLS, Education Manager, Governor, HoRR there is additional tasks. I have so much autonomy – not – I am overwhelmed with it. Resources are needed and particularly administrative resources as cannot cope with the amount of paperwork and going online and the training commitment and not able to do the day job as well. If all I was doing is education that it is fine but I am not and neither is the HoLS. (Governor)

Governor empowerment becomes a bit of a myth. As far as I am aware if it is coming off the DPS system you cannot spend 10 quid without it going through the whole procurement system. (Governor)

It has to be noted that accountability measures for Governors in relation to education have not yet been worked out. Regional structures are still being finalised. While this is a developing picture, the view of Governors was that the new arrangements were not yet empowering them to have control over education provision. Individual Governors are not able to use the PEF budget directly for their prison as they are working within the lot and the additional financial restrictions, bureaucracy and increased complexities, the specialist support needed to manage the contracts and the central and regional oversight of the contracts reduce Governor autonomy in these areas.

It is more realistic to describe the current situation as Governors having more opportunity to input and impact on education provision. They could be described as having collective responsibility, with Governors as part the mechanism that oversee education. If Governors were to have greater autonomy there would be much greater scope for local collaboration with FE colleges, and, as a result, higher levels of curriculum development and innovation.

This chapter focuses on leading a learning culture and partnership working.

### Key findings

- Education in prisons is not effective unless it is supported by all prison departments and efficient allocation processes.
- The Governor leads the culture and ethos in the prison – if they prioritise education, other staff follow their lead.
- Education becomes more of an operational priority when attendance is visibly monitored, and education staff are involved in senior staff meetings and briefings.
- Prison staff find it difficult to make links with local colleges partly because of time and partly because their education providers are often not local.
- Prison staff are keen to make these links in principle and feel that there would be a lot of benefit to them in doing this.
- Prison staff need to be supported to build these links at a senior leadership level, and also on the ground.

### Working in partnership

A learning culture describes organisational conventions, values and systems that support learning and encourage the development of knowledge and culture. In a prison that is focused on learning, opportunities for development are maximised for prisoners and staff. Prison education staff were asked how they

promoted a whole-prison learning culture and how they ensured that prisoners valued learning.

For some respondents, organisational learning and prisoner learning were interlinked:

Learning culture has two meanings in a prison. When I use the term I would use it more to talk about how the prison as a whole learns things and not just education but there is a link between the two. The wider learning culture I encourage everybody to share all of their experiences whether positive this worked well or didn't work well and if I do it again would do it differently. (Governor)

Many Governors talked about a Rehabilitative Culture<sup>18</sup> and considered it valuable to work at creating this:

We spend a lot of time focusing here on education here primarily around Rehabilitative Culture and providing the men with an environment which they feel safe to become rehabilitated. (Governor)

Education delivery in prisons is only effective when governors and other managers are skilled in partnership-working. There is a strong need for cooperation, communication and collaboration. Governors are also aware that they have to try and shape services and influence areas where they have more limited control. Governors are expected to set the vision for education provision in their prison. However, the education provider will have his or her own systems, policies, structures and principles that they bring with them. As DPS provision increases there may be a number of providers within a prison supporting education delivery, all with their own organisational norms.

Prison education staff were asked about partnership-working, both inside and outside the prison. Responses to the question about partnership work in each prison demonstrated the

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rehabilitative-culture-in-prisons> A rehabilitative prison culture supports hope, change, progression, and desistance. Desistance is how people with a previous pattern of offending abstain from crime.

complexity of prison structures, the large amount of prison teams supporting different functions and the significant number of external agencies providing services within prisons.

Supporting and coordinating partnerships, ensuring objectives for teams and agencies are not in conflict and that communication is enabled are key parts of leadership. This is true for many institutions, and certainly for FE colleges – for instance in meeting the challenge of demographic change.<sup>19</sup> Education leaders cited industries, residential, and external agencies (e.g. drug teams or health teams) as key partners with the prison. Discussions highlighted how easy it is for teams to work in silos, particularly when under resourced and under staffed. This can lead to departments not being able to see the wider purpose, or understand how the components of the system fit together.

Respondents identified some examples of practice that did not support partnership-working. These included:

- The prison regime conflicting with the education needs of prisoners. An example would be the need for the prison to achieve HMPPS targets of prisoners in work.
- Staff shortages, e.g. Offender Supervisors.
- Sequencing not being effective, e.g. Offender Supervisor not matching a prisoner after assessment to appropriate course places.
- A lack of understanding of the impact of not enabling prisoners to access education. For example, if a learner is disruptive in the education class then they may be moved to a different purposeful activity. The consequence might be that the prisoner does not achieve the learning they need, e.g. English and maths
- A pay policy that is disincentive to education, e.g. paid less to attend education than workshop.

<sup>19</sup> See Tom Schuller, *Leadership, Learning and Demographics: the changing shape of the lifecourse and its implications for education*, FETL, 2020.

This could have a detrimental impact on learners, for instance accessing courses or ROTL placements.

I think there is a gap in employability so getting the learners on from us onto a decent ROTL working place that compliments what they have done in education. This sits with the Learning and Skills Manager but it is in my best interest to make sure that that pathway is clear. I set up a lot of meetings last year with companies to make that happen. It is a joint target. I am curtailed a bit as I cannot decide how many ROTL placements or be involved in the process but I need their support to do the rest. (EM)

One Education Manager summarised the importance of partnership-working.

It is an open, honest, and negotiated partnership from the Governor down and yes we have difficult conversations; but we are a team. We do it very well here. We are a team and not in isolation. Partnership is the key to our success. (EM)

## Impact of the Governor

Overwhelmingly and unsurprisingly, responses from staff at all levels indicated that the behaviour and priorities of the Governor were key to developing a learning culture. Where Governors demonstrated strong leadership and vision, with an expectation that all staff adopt behaviours that support a learning culture there were noticeable differences.

There is quite a lot of historical stuff here and it's really difficult to change a culture. It takes a long, long time and we're getting there and the governor is really supportive. We had a workforce that was poorly, in that they're always off sick and 7 of them have been sacked and that sent the message — you get paid to do a Band 4 and deliver qualifications for the men and you are here for them and you're not here for yourself; other than you enjoy coming to work. (HoRR)

So I think we have noticed the difference and it is because we've got a culture of it anyway and it is because over the last few years we have been working (on this) and it just so happens that the contract and what was the whole purpose of trying to drive education as the centre of maybe what could change behaviour. I think it's all coming together and allowed us to legitimize better the hooking in of the of the operational and other partners round the table. (Governor)

For me it has, thinking about it, it has brought it together and I think the bonus here is the ground work and culture change that started a good few years ago. (Governor)

The research found the following examples of Governors showing their commitment to education:

- Celebrate success – publicise success stories, hosting awards and presenting certificates.
- Ensure the education environment is well presented and all equipment is working.
- Create an FE ethos in the education department.
- Facilitate a regime that gives easy access to learning.
- Education that meets the needs of the population; that is fun and engaging.

## Making education an operational priority

The research was interested in exploring how education could be better integrated into the rest of the prison, how education is understood and perceived by non-education staff and whether systems and policies supported the delivery of education.

Respondents outlined the ways that Governors could show that education is important – these included the Education Manager and the HoLS/LSM being present at the morning meeting<sup>20</sup> and attending senior management team meetings and Governors



asking about the numbers of people allocated to and attending education. One Governor commented:

I am quite clear on it and I think everybody in this group is quite clear what is required and probably do get a bit fed up with me mentioning it at every morning meeting — they know that if they come to the morning meetings they are going to get us to get asked that question and if they don't come to the morning meeting I'm going to be asking the question where are you? (Governor)

Every day at morning meeting get the names of how many people attended compared to allocation and reasons why did not go and reasons e.g. acceptable – dentist; unacceptable just did not want to go. That gets followed up with IEP warnings – to send a message when made a commitment it is important to go. (Governor)

Some respondents believed that education would have a better profile among other prison staff if it was part of an induction process for new staff, and there were efforts to ensure that staff understood the importance and impact of education for prison learners.

When staff are inducted in prison you never get inducted in education. This is something we do here — my colleagues in other prisons are the biggest majority of staff and are not part of the induction of staff. We are involved in induction of prisoners heavily but not staff. If we are going to put education at the heart of a rehabilitative culture and reducing reoffending then staff need to be more aware of it and they are not. (EM)

One Education Manager outlined what could make a difference:

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20 Daily operational meeting attended by senior staff to review any incidents or changes to regime.

Prison induction once a month and most departments across the prison have a slot. An hour to tell the new staff about that area of the business and education is missed off. It is vital for new staff if you are inducting 10 staff a month that's a lot of staff in the prison that could know about education. A huge missed opportunity. I noted at a previous prison and requested to be on the induction and we did two and then it was dropped. That tells me it's not a priority. (EM)

One staff member described an innovation in their prison that had supported progress:

I suggested we had a guide for IMBs (Independent board members) and tested it at ... and they loved it. At my suggestion we will write an equivalent for Governors. Six to eight pages aimed at new Governors. Everything you want to know and afraid to ask e.g. what questions should you be asking Head of Reducing Reoffending, Head of Learning and Skills; because whole-organisational change is not from one individual. (Senior Contract Manager)

## Attendance and engagement

There are numerous challenges in ensuring that prisoner learners can access education. Time out of cell remains problematic in many understaffed prisons, particularly local and Category C trainers. The impact of this is that there are not always enough officers to safely move prisoners around the establishment and people cannot always get to the activities they have been allocated. The latest annual report, from HMIP, detailed that in inspections over the last year nearly a quarter of men in prison had less than two hours out of their cells on a weekday.

Some senior staff described the ways they communicated about education, which helped to raise its profile in the establishment, and aimed to ensure that staff understood the importance of bringing prisoners to education.

It's about briefing staff. We have movement lists every morning to try and encourage that. We do directors meetings every month and will tag on information, e.g. about programmes and will do 15 minutes about why we do it and what we hope to achieve. (HoRR)

I have to set the tone. I've got to promote education. I've got to promote learning and I have to make sure it's on my priority. I do that in lots of different ways. Every morning at the morning meeting I want to know how many prisoners have turned up at activities — so whether that's education, workshops, programs, or anything else how many prisoners, how many vacancies there were, how many prisoners turned up and what the reasons for any shortfalls were. (Governor)

Attendance was highlighted as a significant issue and often a barrier to providing prison education. Partnership work and coordinated processes between teams in the prison could ensure that attendance was maximised.

We are in the process of setting up a panel to address all the appointments because 60% of the learners who don't turn up for education are not refusals but people that have been redirected to other appointments e.g. gym or health care or a short course on the wing. A lot should be put on a Friday afternoon when there is no education course in progress. (EM)

When I look at the biggest disturbance of why men are not turning up, to do activities, it is healthcare and healthcare related. I am saying to staff well we have a contract to meet (prison education framework); you need to understand and sign up and work to the allocation and work to the timetabling. (Governor)

We are trying now to get a super timetable for every activity that is going on in the prison, involving all people, to be able to see if there are better times to deliver

meds. We need to re-profile the whole day in order to accommodate the needs of Healthcare so it doesn't impact on education. (Governor)

In one prison, where a large number of prisoners were on prescription medication and it took a long time for prisoners to collect this, there was often late attendance at education. The prison changed the schedule so that education classes were held in the afternoon and medication rounds could take place in the morning. The change to the regime to learning in the afternoon resulted in attendance rate change from 58% to 92% on average.

In a prison where a restricted regime (limited time out of cell, usually due to staffing shortages), they ran a three-week timetable for different wings to enable attendance at classes.

All prisons have a large numbers of different teams and departments offering different interventions, programmes and courses. It is important, but very difficult to coordinate these effectively. Some prisons aim to sequence activities, so that prisoners are not allocated to more than one activity at a time and identified offending behaviour needs are met and worked on.

In terms of supporting residents it is part of reducing reoffending to make sure have or working towards Level 2 English and maths and as part of sequencing early on — building block before they move onto other things. Acknowledgement if some have learning difficulties won't reach it but fulfil potential and keep working. Others recognition might need to be a mixed method to maintain motivation – taking English and maths into the workshop and apply in workshop. Sequencing recognition of basic educational needs as enabling skills to enable to live in the prison and work out canteen and read all the notices. (Governor)

These examples explain how prisons are working to align education activities with the sentence plan and offender management work.

I think the PEF helped us. We were doing a lot of work about trying to sequence the footsteps of prisoners coming into the establishment and making sure that the sentence plan put the men where they are supposed to be or should be in terms of their development and reducing and managing their risks. The PEF has aligned with offender management in custody [OMIC] work with the introduction of key workers and has raised the profile of induction and allocation and the sequencing — it's brought the key workers in in a big way. (Governor)

We have created learning pathways aligning the prison activities to the education activities for a cohesive approach and that really makes a difference to the pathways identified to men. The Governor has set out very clearly that the men must have Level 1 in English and maths before they are allocated to work. That means it changes the view of the men because if they want to get to a better paid job in industry [for example] then they have to have gained that qualification. (HoLS)

## Creating a learning culture – working with prison officers and instructors

Many staff recognised that there could be disconnect between the priorities of residential staff (part of whose duties will be to escort prisoners across the establishment) and education or activities. Staff felt it would be helpful if some operational staff understood the importance and purpose of education more. One respondent explained this:

The officers and the operational staff don't quite understand the purpose of education, e.g. a prisoner might start a course get bored or fallout with the instructor or find it too difficult and the solution operationally would be to move them to a wing cleaner or something else. There is a massive disconnect between education and operational;

they don't understand the consequences of someone dropping off a course, or not finishing as there is a financial or emotional impact. I went to a meeting and explained the consequences. If that message can be passed across all staff it would make it easier. We have to work as a team and not two separate entities, which I think historically that's what's been happening. (HoLS)

I am trying to have meetings to try and get back to the basics and that is for really obvious reasons about having the right person on the right course at the right time but also because of financial reasons if a person starts a course and does not finish it; we need everyone [prisoners and officers] to understand that. (HoRR)

Here at this prison I would say there is a culture of learning and that is delivered through the pay policy which gives them informed choices. This prison has a good model. But in terms of the staff I don't think officers would know the purpose of why they were at education. They are there for the learning and to make progress. (EM)

Communication with different teams in the prison is essential – so, for instance, wing staff know when a prisoner has an exam.

We try to support by giving priority – this prison has had a restrictive regime for 18 months and on average two wings are shut morning and two in the afternoon – a long time. Had to learn how to prioritise getting things happen, e.g. if have an exam have to go regardless if there wing is locked down. Making sure education gives the names – everyone knows have to go to exams. Communicate so education and residency work together to minimise impact. (Governor)

One Governor commented:

I think we have some amazing outcomes and I think we probably need to do more to engage operational staff in all

of the stories. Because certainly the officer training doesn't mention education when I did it and training hasn't come on a great deal. (Governor)

Some staff also explained that the links between workshops and education needed to improve. While there is an expectation that workshop trainers will embed functional skills into their training sessions, this does not always happen. Transferable skills acquired in workshops are rarely identified and recorded. Staff recognised the need for industries staff to obtain qualifications in training and teaching, so that they could deliver more workshop learning, and be confident embedding maths or English within workshops. Two Education Managers provided an example of how they wanted to develop the work between education and industries and demonstrated the advantages of adopted a closer working relationship.

Education and industries are working together to develop 'careers in custody'. An example is a man who wants to be head chef –needs to know 'how do I get there and what is the journey'? More aspirational than 'I want to work in catering'. We want to develop a real job mirroring the outside job world. Another example in textiles industry work need to be able to identify roles for the line lead, supervisor, manager to be able to offer work situations 'I want to manage a line and be that job role so what skills do I need?' (EM)

Industries is an area that I want to strengthen and see how we can work together that benefit us all. Prisons have to hit a target for men into work – education have to hit a target. We need to work together to make sure that everybody gets what they need and men get their share of being able to access education and access Industries if that's what they want to do. (EM)

We work together in reducing reoffending. Have worked with the industries manager for many years and we share the same vision and work together closely. Over time, I

have built links with industries and the Education Manager e.g. learner voice, developing mentors in classroom, assistants in workshops. I promote there is no 'college' provider and no HMP – we are all one and we all work together. I have conversations with the hub manager who allocate people who talks to industries manager and we work through the Quality Improvement Group to the same thing –the relationships are exceptional. (LSM)

### **Leading education – increasing engagement**

Many prisoners have had previous negative experiences of education that mean they are less interested in pursuing formal education in prisons. For others, the quality or variety of education is too limited and others do not have the opportunity to attend because of regime restrictions and become increasingly disengaged.

It is impossible to overstate the negative impact of being unable to access activities in prisons. Staff stated that the impact of nonattendance at education was that prisoners were losing out. Many who could potentially benefit from education did not get the opportunity to attend. And, for others, their progress was slower than it should have been, or their achievement was lower than their potential, because they did not have enough time in education.

The previous Education Manager didn't get the support to fill vacancies. Too many of our learner's should have got qualifications and didn't get them because instead of sticking to the guided learning hours courses dragged on, there were issues getting verifiers to come in, and when they did they said the portfolios weren't good enough. (HoRR)

Some Governors commented that they would prefer that using the word education was dropped. They believed it had negative connotations for many prisoners, and also some staff and was a barrier to creating a learning culture. A number of Governors described practices they had trialled in order to increase

attendance at education. These included increasing the rate of pay for functional skills and developing systems where learners can access high-status jobs<sup>21</sup> in the prison through studying alongside this.

When I started there were staffing issues so couldn't unlock and 60% of the population are youth offenders and do want to be in the classroom, they want to be in workshop doing hands-on work or saying in bed. We had trouble getting them to education and then to do the work in education while they were there. I introduced a refusal process. The process was to change the cleaning work on the wings from a full-time job to part-time and men have to do half the time in the classroom doing English and maths Level 2. If they don't go to education they are not allowed to do the cleaning. This has been a good incentive. We have also introduced the new curriculum for example tiling things of use and more hands-on but still need to do the English and maths. (HoRR)

The amount of 'pay' prisoners get for attending education can be a disincentive, if it is lower than other activities available in the prison. Prisoners pay is very low, and those without family or friends to support them financially may not be able to. The PLA believes that education should be paid at least the same, than for their other activities. Paying more for education shows that this is what is valued, supports the status and profile of education in the prison, creates aspiration and also creates additional incentives for prisoners to attend classes. This view is reflected in the following quotes:

I have pushed for a pay policy like outside and to have job descriptions. There is a requirement before they can do other things they need to achieve literacy and numeracy. To ensure have correct efficiency in education the Governor and residential have been very supportive and the Governor

<sup>21</sup> Wing cleaning is a high status job in prison, partly because it often ensures access to daily phone calls and showers.

drives it. Activity hub will not allocate anyone out of education other than core issues, e.g. health or faith. (HoLS)

At my last prison, we worked very closely with the Head of Learning and Skills and the Head of Reducing Reoffending to get the pay structure so it benefited education as well. It was one of most highly paid things to do. (EM)

We are financially encouraging around the English and maths at Level 1 and making a financial incentive to do it. Most of the guys here have not bought into an education – incentivising it seems a little bit perverse but actually if it means it gets a qualification that gives them a platform to go back into society to get a job it's worth a couple of quid. (Governor)

For some staff, there was recognition that prisoners may have multiple and complex issues and that some of these may impact on the ability to engage in education. One member of staff explained:

In the Ofsted inspection there was a failure to appreciate for us to do the right thing by our women might involve dealing with their mental health before we deal with their functional skills or it might involve dealing with the health and behaviour needs alongside some education and activities. (Governor)

I don't think it's the stand out sole priority when you are dealing with very, very, damaged dysfunctional people in some cases as sometimes the greater needs is the mental health or something else. If you have got them for long enough you can do all of those things and there are some amazing examples where we have done that. There is a lady in the gardens who was self-harming appallingly, very disturbed and working with very attentive tutors and being supported she has managed to stabilize. (Governor)

Some staff felt that the distinction between education and learning meant that informal learning and support was not fully recognised, although it could be incredibly significant in supporting to turn their life around. Examples were given of behavioural management programme which had a positive impact on participants and involved a lot of learning but were not seen as education. One staff member reflected that it was about getting this message across:

I think part of it is that we need to articulate that really well which is a short but complicated little piece of work to be done. (Governor)

A number of staff described the challenges they had with trying to engage prisoners in education and the work they were doing to improve the situation:

Last month, 60% of receptions were not actually at level 1 either through their own self declaration or through the induction process where we have a skills test. My piece of work now with the education manager is ok then of those 60% how many of them are actually engaged in English and maths? Because I think we have a hidden population – it is probably the same in the whole prison estate – that we can identify and we can allocate and those that want to do – but what happens to those who don't want to? This is the piece of work that I'm really trying to look at – what percentage are we looking at is it 20% is it 30% of that 60% that are a hidden cluster that are actually not developing their skills. (HoLS)

Yes they can vote with their feet. If they don't attend after three sessions they are often reallocated to another activity – because otherwise if we allocate them day after day after day and they don't turn up that is an impact on attendance and funding in the classes.

For me and I've got some names of prisoners on my desk at the moment we've identified the first little cluster of people

who have voted with their feet – my next step is to go and speak to those individuals and ask what are your issues? Why do you not want to engage? What can we do to readdress these barriers? Why do you assess them straight away when they come in? We need to because it is part of the contract but if they are already turned off to education when they come in and then were giving them more of the same again 'we will test you'. (HoLS)

Staff also mentioned working to improve the variety and quality of the education offer. This included working with distance learning providers, such as the Open University and the Prisoners' Education Trust, and in-cell education provider Way to Learn.

My absolute goal is to make a difference so that people can make a different choice. I appreciate that not everybody is going to be at the right point in their time of life or their sentence to want to change but I want to give them the ability to make a different choice if they want to. Giving them access to academic skills through the Open University; I have just agreed to do a digital trial for them to have laptops to do OU in their rooms so that they can do a different type of learning. Prioritising that – giving people the opportunity and ability to make that choice is the direction for me to travel. (Governor)

Celebrating and recognising educational achievement can also increase engagement. Two Governors outlined their personal commitment to this:

We held a presentation and all learners who had succeeded in achieving a qualification – invited to a celebration – award ceremony – free visit for families – tea, coffee and cake. To celebrate their success and that has gone well. A lot have not had any levels of qualifications and not been recognised and this is a step in creating a positive learning culture and to encourage others to achieve a learning culture. (Governor)

It's about culture as well it's about accentuating the positives of learning. I take every opportunity to do that that I can. I encourage staff to celebrate success with learners rather than just give them a certificate let's make a bit of a presentation out of it. It is about making sure that the area where prisoner learning takes place is decent and clean and it's modern it's bright it's vibrant. It is making sure that the equipment works, if things are not working I will personally make sure that the facilities managers team are in there to make sure it is repaired and it's not left. I could go on for ever and a day. (Governor)

## 6. WORKING WITH FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

### Key findings

- Prison staff were keen to explore the possibility of working more with further education colleges
- Partnership work between prisons and FE colleges is woefully underdeveloped.

Governors were clear that support from other sectors would help to develop education provision in their prisons. A number of responses from governors showed there was an appetite for knowledge about best practice in education and training and an acknowledgement that there was information external to HMPPS that could be drawn on.

I would welcome the possibility of Governors having access to the training and development that college principals/head teachers have. If we could look at what training and development, they have and explore if there are aspects of that governors could link into for content and networking. (Governor)

I think Governor empowerment is a great idea but you have got to make it work and to make it work the Governor needs relatively easy access to expert and independent information ....Some Governors don't but I really have the appetite for empowerment; it's just about making it work. Whereas some will say 'I'm not an education specialist; I'm not interested please do it for me' and that is an attitude that is out there. (Governor)

However, there was only one example of partnership work with a further education provider. This was a prisoner on ROTL who was attending a local FE college to do a Level 3 vocational course. The Education Manager in this prison recognised a need to develop this area of work to enable more access to higher-level education courses in the community. Some open prisons, such as HMP Ford and HMP Standford Hill have developed their links with local colleges and attending courses is a key part of ROTL provision. This good practice needs to be disseminated and developed across the estate.

Two people commented that their PEF provider was an FE provider. However, although PEF providers may also run FE colleges, the contract areas are now so large that they do not always have local connections to colleges and placements. Respondents were open to having stronger links with colleges but did not have time to develop links, and some had found that previous attempts had been unsuccessful due to the time taken for security clearance. A number of people thought that the DPS could provide an opportunity to develop and strengthen partnerships.

One Governor recalled that the prison had previously worked with the local FE college:

There is the potential with the DPS for smaller organisations to have a foothold back in prisons as they previously did. There was a lot of small organisations funded by Governors and relationships existed – a lot of good stuff and some wasn't but it was very local – the last 15 years big players have dominated the market – this is a way to get the smaller players back in but we have lost ground as some have stopped doing the work – so not sure the market place of providers is so rich. (Governor)

One HoLS recently in post was enthusiastic about developing links

I'm looking forward to building relationships with a very good college that is only half a mile away down the road. Building links to outside agencies and breaking down barriers. Ask me in a year. I would look at DPS and also community cohesion strategies that they might have. Need to build community relationships. (HoLS)

Another suggestion for development opportunities included networking with leaders in FE colleges and shadowing.

I've never set foot in an FE college – I would love to – very constructive time – just doing a sort of guided visit, shadowing. I'm not a teacher and I'm never going to be a teacher – for me, it is awareness. Or there are probably some publications. (Governor)

One staff member described the significant benefit of having a staff member with further education experience.

She is an ex-education principal and brings a breadth of experience – to me and the team because of being outside of the box – not HMPPS – a real asset – she always pushes the boundaries not just on education but she think something's coming from a different perspective. Previously education just bumbled along. But it doesn't anymore — the Ofsted was good. (Governor)

And another reflected on the expertise that FE staff would bring to the prison:

I have never heard of RARPA.<sup>22</sup> That is one of the reasons it would be lovely to recruit capable FE people into our head of learning and skills because they would bring that knowledge with them. (Governor)

Respondents identified partnership work with other organisations, including universities and the voluntary sector. One HoLS

<sup>22</sup> RARPA (Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement) is used in provision in adult and community learning and for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.



described a course where prisoners learnt alongside university students. This offered a reciprocal relationship as the prison had access to higher-level learning for prisoners at no cost and the university students were able to experience studying in a prison.

Some of our lads did a social policy module – absolutely loved it. All did same module – students of the same age – looked at housing, benefits – all the 21-year-old university students had no experience of this and thought working with our lads gave a different perspective. It was fantastic – I can't tell you how good it was. (HoLS)

One prison was working with a local authority to share practice from the horticulture workshop to support local authority staff to develop knowledge. Another prison shared the success of having a member of Cells Pitch<sup>23</sup> work with the prison to deliver a Dragons Den event. This was very well received and provided an opportunity to develop ideas and to build on learning from the classroom. One education manager talked about developing apprenticeships:

There are linked groups where you get together with other providers to discuss other things. I attended the prisoner apprenticeship pathway report<sup>24</sup> – where they are looking at how to embed apprenticeships into prisons. (EM).

Governors and HoLSs regarded these partnerships with outside organisations coming into prison as a positive development. They valued the opportunity to bring resources and opportunities in to the prison for learners.

The absence of partnership working with local FE provision is a missed opportunity. Many universities are working in partnership with prison and delivering modules and other activities. However, work with further education colleges remains underdeveloped, even though this sector may be more likely to offer the

vocational and educational opportunities that prisoners and prison leavers need. The pressure of work for education teams and the providers being less local makes this partnership work less likely. However, not having these pathways, referral routes and opportunities for people in prison does limit their potential and their chance of successful resettlement.

23 <http://www.cellspitch.com/>

24 <https://www.aelp.org.uk/media/3139/pathway-report.pdf>

## 7. EDUCATION REFORMS – KEY CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

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This chapter illustrates the impact of the prison education reforms and describes the key changes and challenges for prison education leaders. The new arrangements have created additional responsibilities with knowledge and skills gaps and these are explained in detail.

### **Key findings**

- Prison education leaders need to develop their knowledge of best practice in education.
- Designing curriculums, assessing the quality of teaching and supporting prisoners with specific needs are key areas that need developing.
- There was some confusion about the contracts among some prison staff and not all contract terms were understood.
- The DPS was more complicated, more time-consuming and less intuitive than staff had expected.
- Staff identified their training needs as writing bids, understanding contracts, management information system support, and understanding data analysis and financial information.

Prison education staff were asked what their thoughts were on the changes to prison education for delivery within their establishments. For some people, the change and transaction had been a smooth process and it was 'business as usual'; they were clear about the task and requirements and there was an acknowledgment that while it had made some difference

the change had not had a big impact. For others, there was disappointment; the change had been unsettling and distressing creating feelings of uncertainty; and frustration in systems not being in place.

Where there was one voice, it was both from the Governors who expressed regret that the new arrangements had not been more radical (see chapter on Governor autonomy) and had not offered greater freedom, and from prison staff and providers who were concerned that any challenges they were facing should not impact negatively on the learners.

## Developing knowledge and skills in education delivery

The new arrangements have placed a new responsibility on prison staff for planning and delivering education. This research highlights that a number of prisons have recruited HoLSs/LSMs with an education background. However, a significant number of HoLSs/LSMs do not have a background in learning and skills and this presents an increased challenge under the new arrangements. Effective management of the contracts requires knowledge of education delivery. The specialist education areas identified were developing curricula, assessing quality of teaching and support for specific groups, such as under-25s or prisoners with learning disability/difficulties.

### Developing curricula

The PEF requires prison staff to develop curriculum specifications, where previously this work would have been undertaken by the contracted education provider. This development has created challenges and opportunities for both the prison staff and the education provider. Prison education staff can now influence the curriculum and add new courses to meet the needs of the prison population. Challenges have included the limitations of the IT provision in prison, little choice of provision once the mandatory core curriculum has been implemented and lack of specificity in the contract leading to variation in provision. Some contracted

providers have found there was little or no communication about curriculum planning, and as the curriculum changed, they have needed to recruit new staff to deliver the new requirements. However, they are delivering more accredited courses.

When the new contract came in it made it easier for me to say this is what we need. (HoRR)

We built into the PEF that the contractor would take the library but did not insist on a librarian. I think we should have been clearer e.g., you will employ a trained librarian instead, we have support workers. (HoLS)

Conducting an annual needs assessment is time consuming and can do a survey but what do you do with it and how do you analyse it. They did say this is what you should use but that was it and did not give the training on it. (HoLS)

Many prison staff were clear that they needed support around understanding the needs of their learner cohort, curriculum development and planning. This includes progression both in their own prison and on transfer.

### Assessing the quality of teaching

The new PEF contracts expect heads of learning and skills and learning and skills managers to assess the quality of teaching in their prisons.

All providers develop a teaching quality management plan (TQMP) to ensure ongoing professional development for their tutors. This should enable the HoLSs/LSMs to monitor and track performance and this information is part of the monitoring of the contract.

Assessing the quality of teaching can include looking at progression data, observing lessons and learning walks (shorter, informal observations, often focusing on particular areas and aimed at systemic improvements)

Observations – we are not trained on this – we had a day with our provider. HMPPS should take ownership and if

they want us to do it then we should have formal training and not rely on the supplier. In the TQMP we are asked to do a certain number of observations. (HoLS)

One Learning and Skills Manager with an education background considered that having this knowledge helps with discussions with the learning provider, HoRR and the governor.

We did learning walks and I did observations on my PGCE so I was starting off knowing what to look for. That definitely helps a lot. (LSM)

The need for training/development in education for the HoLS/LSM role was echoed by a number of other people, including governors, HORRs and the education managers.

I would like to see more upskilling of the learning and skills for example the embedding of English and maths is essential and all learning and skills managers should know. I wouldn't be able to do this job without a background in education I would be completely blind and wouldn't know where to start. (LSM)

I think we need to be careful on policy and protocol for teaching and learning observations. We are expecting non-qualified teachers to observe and grade providers. The providers are the experts and we need to quality assure their process but we don't need to do it ourselves. (HoLS)

### **Supporting specific groups of prisoners**

Prison staff also acknowledged the need for more knowledge about learning difficulties and disabilities (LD/D) and the most effective teaching and learning strategies for people with LD/D. Around a third of prisoners identify as having a LD/D and this can impact on their involvement in education in many ways, including low attention and reluctance to participate. Prison staff felt that they could tap into the expertise amongst health and education colleagues more effectively.

There certainly needs to be more knowledge around learning disability and what works and what's best for that cohort of prisoners; I don't think we need to reinvent the wheel. We have a unique cohort in prisons and we are still applying an old outdated model to something that has moved on significantly. (Governor)

We need to take a step back and say right we have got some real challenges here but we know what those challenges are; whether it's prisoners with LD/D or just prisoners whose attention span is half an hour to an hour and we need to be reflecting that. Some of our machinery is still clunky and doesn't really help with that. I do see some talk now and some positive signs around understanding, in LD in particular and what that challenge throws up; I just would not like to see it still to be talking about that in 5 to 10 years' time. (Governor)

We know that most of our prisoners come in with some kind of brain trauma injury. We know all of this how are we going to adjust and change to make our interventions most effective. (Governor)

Another Governor was concerned about having appropriate teaching methods and provision for young adults. The challenges for Governors of dealing with prisoners of widely varying age has been highlighted by the Transition to Adulthood Alliance. Their evidence demonstrates that transition to adulthood is a process, not an event, and young adults take a variable amount of time to develop their maturity. The evidence from neurology clearly states that the adult male brain does not reach full developmental maturity until at least the mid-20s. This is particularly relevant for criminal justice services, as some later developing functions in the brain (such as 'temperance') relate to factors such as impulse-control and forward planning, particularly in unexpected or pressurised situations. That demands more flexibility in the application of policy to ensure that difference is recognised and understood.

It's about the best type of teaching for this age group. I think we need to get a lot more savvy around bespoke training for different groups of prisoner bearing in mind their needs – the day of one-size-fits-all is long gone and don't think we're we are dynamic enough at the moment or informed enough at the moment to truly reflect what each prisoner needs. I feel that we are on the journey now but the pace is really, really slow if we could inject some pace and urgency into it that would be better for everyone. (Governor)

One head of reducing reoffending did want to gain more knowledge about the details of the funding allocation within the contract to be able to understand how they could ensure they were getting the best support for the learners. This was referred to particularly in relation to people with LD/Ds.

When we do a learning development or disability assessment what opportunities does that open? I've only just recently heard that from the age of four individuals can be assessed for a EHC or something and that's funding that can be released for that individual to support them. If I was to understand that and know who I can tap into to draw down that funding I can get all sorts of things in for the people that are in my care. (HoRR)

Certainly, for me, it's about the young adults (18 to 25) and I am evolving the curriculum. Not just the curriculum it's about the best type of teaching for this age group – the day of one-size-fits-all is long gone and I don't think we're we are dynamic enough at the moment or informed enough at the moment to truly reflect what each prisoner needs. (Governor)

## Developing skills in contract management and commissioning

Prison education staff were asked whether the new arrangements were putting greater emphasis on different knowledge, skills or

attributes than currently and if so what where they and whether staff have the right skills and experience. Prior to the PEF and DPS systems coming in governors were invited to national information events and regional training and provided with learning resources. There was also some training for other prison staff. This training included undertaking learner needs analyses, service specification writing and producing local curriculums. Ongoing support has been provided through the central contact management structure. However, many participants in the research felt that the preparation for the new contracts and their training had been inadequate.



Prison education staff were asked whether the new arrangements were putting greater emphasis on different knowledge, skills or attributes than currently. The word cloud illustrates the skills prison education staff felt they required.

The interviews were carried out shortly after the new funding and contracts had been implemented. Many prisons were still in the process of developing and finalising the arrangements and the changes had necessitated new governance processes. Generally, respondents were positive about the relationships between providers and prison staff. Interviewees understood that

it was 'early days' for the contracts. The majority of prisons had no staffing change at the local level e.g. Education Managers and teachers remained the same but the change was at the management/contractual level. Respondents highlighted that there were different ways of working from previous suppliers and that there was a need to develop working relationships with the new suppliers. A number of respondents emphasised that the performance of the education provider affects the purposeful activities outcome measured by HMIP and an open and transparent relationship was important.

The new contractual arrangements expect the Governor or Heads of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers in the prison to monitor the education provision and discuss any areas of concern with the providers on the ground. One challenge respondents identified was that HoLSs/LSMs may not have knowledge of education provision. This may make having challenging conversations more difficult. Some areas have responded by strengthen the lot/regional role while another prison appointed a HoLSs with an education background.

### **Negotiating contact terms**

One governor explained that the successful bid for their lot was not the prisons preferred supplier. They had been developing a strategy of change with their previous supplier and would need to review this work. Two further prisons reported that they had to negotiate with the provider about delivery, because the contract did not cover everything they had expected. In one case, this had resulted in a loss of education places and for the other the compromise was to deliver over fewer weeks. The impact of this had been that one prison delivered education over 40, 42 or 46 weeks rather than 52, as hoped. Others reporting cutting classes, for example:

The PEF contract came in with new provider over budget so had to do a lot of compromise to make what the provider was charging fit with what we had with the last provider; been happy to work with us to address it. (LSM)

It just seemed to be one change after another, after another. The important thing for me is that has led to a reduction in education places. We have lost between 15 and 20 some mornings gained a few some afternoons and lost a few in the afternoons. Ultimately that is the residents that will suffer as there are less opportunities for them now and our current curriculum is not what we put forward in our PEF document to be tendered for. I find the whole situation very confusing. (HoRR)

Some staff provided examples that highlighted that they were in the process of working through the changes in terms of the actual practicalities of the contract (e.g. the curriculum being delivered, the responsibilities for contract management and for changes required in the prison system) with the PEF providers.

Many respondents believed that the new contractual arrangements had the potential to create improvements in the allocation systems. The previous contract was paid on enrolment to the education department and on subsequent achievement. The new contract is paid on allocation to a specific course when the provider can then draw down the funding. If a prisoner withdraws from the course and goes into another course, the prison is charged again. This means a PEF provider could be charging the prison for two course spaces for the same prisoner. Our research found that this was beginning to have an impact on reception, assessment, registration and allocation practices. The need for an accurate assessment and an appropriate allocation were being given more priority.

We have had to rethink and try to get more accurate at induction...more assessments at induction, e.g. give them a free piece of writing that we would normally have done in class. We are getting better at doing induction and it is work in progress. (EM)

Some Heads of Reducing Reoffending were concerned about the inflexibility within the new contract and felt it was not suitable

for the complexity of a prison. Although there was recognition that attendance needed to improve in many prisons, some staff commented that it takes time to develop a work ethic around attendance.

### **Understanding the contract**

Some of the interviews demonstrated confusion about some of the details of the new contractual arrangements. For example, in two prisons, staff thought that following the allocation, the funding could not be changed while in another prison, the governor believed there was a cool-off period.

There is a need for understanding how the contract works as there are so many different facets – qualification, attendance, allocation, withdrawals ... can draw down 95% of funding on allocation but if a person doesn't turn up or is transferred then they allocate someone else. (Governor)

The allocation is a real issue as before we would substitute somebody else. Needs to be looked at, it is one of the biggest issues with the new contract. (Governor)

One Head of Reducing Reoffending wanted more detail about the contract – as they had not had sight of it:

I think in terms of what exactly the contract should deliver. I haven't actually seen the contract which doesn't help. You get snippets of what you think the contract is. To actually see it and get the gist of it I think it's really helpful and we do but it is the just the gist of it and sometimes you need to know exactly 'are they delivering on what they should or not?' (HoRR)

However, while the new contracts were unquestionably creating significant work and pressure for prison staff, many welcomed the new arrangements. Both prison staff and PEF providers believed that the new arrangements necessitated a closer working relationship across the prison and this could only help to support a Rehabilitative Culture. This was particularly relevant to induction, allocation and attendance. Many respondents were

concerned about their responsibilities and this was dominated by the necessary understanding of contract management. All respondents agreed that the new arrangements required new, and different knowledge and skills.

For Governors, the majority believed that they needed a broad understanding of contract management, with the HoLSs/LSMs having more specialist knowledge.

As a Governor, you should probably be able to work your way around the contracts. I think there is been enough for me to prepare me for taking this on. (Governor)

In contrast, one Governor did think there was a need to develop contract – management skills.

I think we have to be much more commercially aware. I think we have got to have more contract management skills and as a prison Governor that's not where we come from. (Governor)

Heads of Reducing Reoffending acknowledged that there was an increase in the skills needed for the HoLS/LSM role. Although, in theory, Heads of Reducing Reoffending wanted to be able to offer more support for education, for many time was prohibitive. In practice, as education was only part of their responsibilities their role was oversight.

To be honest because of the complexity of my job I am looking to my Head of Learning and Skills to be able to do a lot of it and I would imagine they would require additional training. (HoRR)

The response from one Head of Reducing Reoffending indicated the lack of support in the area for both them and the HoLS:

It's difficult because I have nothing to compare against and not managed HoLS and I got the job description out to understand but that is generic and every prison is different. It's been challenging and time consuming; it's part and

parcel of having a job. Systems change and we have to embrace it and do the best with what we've got. (HoRR)

In practice the day to day contract management requirements are with the HoLs/LSMs, who acknowledged the increased emphasis on skills and knowledge around contract management

HoRRs are operational managers who are not with you very long and are not very interested in education. Whilst writing the PEF the only conversation with HoRR was to tell me to get out and around the prison. No understanding and left to my own devices. L&S are a bit out of the loop. A lot of prison staff don't understand. (LSM)

Generally, Education Managers (employed by providers) felt confident in understanding specific contract requirements, but felt there was now increased emphasis within their role on balancing finances and quality.

We never lose sight of the learner being at the centre of everything. We've got a really good teaching team that puts the learners first; from a managers perspective we have had to slightly adjust our thinking in terms of financial planning. (EM)

### **Commissioning education services – the Dynamic Purchasing System**

The DPS is an electronic system for commissioning services. Prison staff can write commissions for a service they wish to purchase and the information will be sent to pre-approved organisations who have registered as available to provide these services. These providers can decide where to submit a bid. It was intended to provide a route for prisons to commission smaller and more bespoke education services.

Throughout 2018 and 2019, there were a number of engagement events for governors on the DPS system, and hand on training was targeted at heads of reducing reoffending and learning and skills managers. This activity was increased from summer 2019

to encourage use of the DPS. Much of the support for prison staff has been communications, toolkits and a helpline. Feedback from staff has been that face-to-face and practical training is more effective. HMPPS has developed a team of super users, HoLSs/LSMs who can cascade training and support colleagues in other establishments and a user helpline.

Responses to our interviews highlighted that the DPS was not as flexible or as easy as prison staff expected. Respondents reported that the system was cumbersome and took a long time to get a bid onto the system. The time taken included: getting a proposal approved at prison level, then at central level (commissioning team) and then being able to work the Bravo system to load the bid up. Time was then needed to monitor responses, interview and for new providers to gain security clearance, which could take up to six months.

It would be easier if I could just have an interview with a company and agreed that they could come and provide something because you've also got to get the clearance and it's not easy. (HoLSE)

Interviewees considered the DPS too limited to meet all the needs of the education provision. Two prisons explained that it was complex to commission sessional tutors to deliver short or one-off services, e.g. Yoga, writers in residence or theatre provision.

In addition, people reported that previously prisons had a 'learning and development' budget, which<sup>25</sup> gave them flexibility to purchase small items to support learning within the prison. With the introduction of the DPS, this funding source had been lost

There is no way to spend money on things we used to e.g. art materials. We have done Storybook Dads<sup>26</sup> for many years (parents in prison record bedtime stories for their children on CD or DVD) and we have used the Learning

<sup>25</sup> Budget provided by DfES allocated to prisons to pay for materials and qualifications

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.storybookdads.org.uk/>



and Development budget to buy the recorded book and given the book to the child to support building strong link with families and now that money needs to come out of residential budget and they say they have not got it. (LSM)

A number of challenges were identified in relation to the DPS, including time to get permissions to develop bids, the time taken to get permission and sign off from the commercial team and the time taken to put bids on the system. Some respondents were also concerned that they would not be able to spend their allocated budget within the year. Some felt the system was not flexible enough to spend small sums of money and others were concerned that there was an art to writing the specifications and it was not within some managers' skill sets.

One of my colleagues she is commissioning quite a number of contracts on DPS but actually you are sort of talking about a contract meeting each month with each one of those contractors so it could get quite unmanageable quite quickly if you didn't monitor it. (LSM)

Governor empowerment becomes a bit of a myth. As far as I am aware if it is coming off the DPS system you cannot spend 10 quid without it going through the whole procurement system. (Governor)

The DPS certainly hasn't turned out to be this very slick straightforward mechanism for procuring the additionality but that again can only get better. (Governor)

Others felt that the DPS gave them less flexibility, particularly around information, advice and guidance (IAG) provision.

The money that is seeping out could have been spent on what you actually need in HR and finance. We were all told that we had to have IAG. And I said we don't need it, we have 22 peer mentors and I can still run that system for the next two years so I don't need somebody. I spoke to the

governor about it and it was £50,000 but we were told we had to have it. (HoRR)

We had company ... in and there has been three different people coming and there's a feeling they don't want to be here even though they bid for it. And I'm now in the process of saying although we haven't paid, it started in April and it's six months of not having anybody and I don't want to pay but I don't know if I can do that because it's a national thing. What a waste of money when we said it wouldn't fit with our needs. (HoRR)

Some respondents were positive about the DPS and could see its potential to develop and increase the education and training provision in their prison. One staff member was positive about the ability to engage with training providers to offer employment related training, e.g. fork-lift driving. Another staff member was pleased about the potential to engage with local suppliers and smaller organisations. Some staff felt that having the DPS was a move in the right direction for education provision but that prisons needed support from learning and skills specialists to ensure Governors understand good commissioning and educational best practice.

## **Skills required for commissioning, monitoring and contract management**

The research identified five key areas of skills development that staff required training and support with:

### **Writing bids and specifications**

There was general agreement that the process of writing the specifications for the PEF contract was challenging and while there was guidance often it was not provided in a timely manner. There was an acknowledgment that this had developed the skills of HoLSs/LSMs and that they had learnt by doing. There is an ongoing need to write specifications for the DPS and this was identified as an area of skills development.

Write the specification, put it on Bravo, evaluate the bids, award the contract ... It's all additional work and there's no formal training for it. It is worrying when you consider the amount is over £100,000. (HoRR)

### **Understanding the terms of the contract**

Additionally, some staff were confused about specific contractual terms and there were different understanding about some of details of the contractual changes.

There is a need for understanding how the contract works as there are so many different facets – qualification, attendance, allocation, withdrawals ... can draw down 95% of funding on allocation but if a person doesn't turn up or is transferred then they allocate someone else. (Governor)

The allocation is a real issue as before we would substitute somebody else. Needs to be looked at, it is one of the biggest issues with the new contract. (Governor)

### **Understanding the monitoring information system**

The new contracts had required a new data management information system (MIS). The MIS (also named Curious) was introduced in April 2019. As the system needed testing prisons were required to enter data into this system and their existing systems for a period of months, thereby increasing staff workload. Many Heads of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers were finding the new system challenging and in some cases, even distressing. The challenges reported included that there were fewer recording mechanisms than previously been recorded by providers and did not meet with the requirements of the data reporting asked for by MoJ. Respondents also mentioned difficulties downloading reports for Ofsted and other purposes:

Like I say there is two people putting in two sets of data when we really need one set of data. And eventually it will be amazing but at the moment it's not really what we need. I understand you've got to start somewhere. (HoRR)

Some respondents could see that there would be eventual benefits of the new system, for instance the transparency of the data means that it would be easier to collate this for Ofsted inspections and other reports. Other benefits were that prison would own the data, rather than the contracted provider and the system would have the potential to track prisoners' journeys and show progress and achievements even when transferring between prisons.

### **Understanding and interpreting data**

The increased emphasis on understanding and interpreting data has arisen as a result in the change of the contract arrangement. Previously this would have been the domain of the education provider. The HoLSs/LSMs identified that they needed to understand more how to work with the data. However, this was not universal and where a HoLS/LSM had an education background they were comfortable with the data.

Data management; data analysis is very important. Because of the new contract there is more freedom and responsibility; at the same time to deliver the contract you need to be that much more aware of the data and to be able to analyse it that much better. It is a lot of pressure to make sure your numbers are right and to make sure every month you're getting the right data. I don't think it was as important before but I've only joined with a new contract was signed off. (LSM)

The Education Managers recognised for them the change in the data management system had necessitated a closer working relationship with the HoLS/LSM and there was an increased emphasis on communication, transparency and diplomacy.

## Finances

Governors acknowledged that they had budget holder training and were confident with finances. Those who indicated that they needed to develop skills in this area were the functional head – Heads of Reducing Reoffending, and Heads of Learning and Skills/ Learning and Skills Managers. There was an acknowledgement that this was not just in relation to the PEF contract.

I do my own finance, my own finance management, my own budgeting, my forecasting, my compliance checks ... we are expected to know all this and to be able to do all of that – without any training – other than an hour and a half of PowerPoint and having a broad oversight of what we need to do. (HoRR)

## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prison education is in an obviously transitional phase, as the new arrangements bed down. This report has illuminated the challenges facing those with responsibility for the implementation of the system, at different levels. Many of these challenges are very specific to the prison system, as is clear from the detail set out earlier. But there is clear congruence between these challenges and the ones facing leaders in the wider FE sector. Notable among these are:

- The fundamental issue of adequate funding.
- Managing contractual work which is often both complex and short-term.
- Developing professional skills in educational staff, including for senior leaders.
- Catering for diversity in the learner population.
- Developing and managing partnerships.

Funding for prison education has not increased since 2013 and it is disappointing that this important part of rehabilitation still does not have sufficient resource. The PEF appears to have decreased on-the-ground resource in many areas. Arrangements for managing finances under the PEF contract are creating some challenges. The Treasury and MoJ review of education provision is urgently needed.

New contractual and regional structures have added layers of complexity to the management of prison education. These structures are not consistent with existing line-management arrangements. While regional roles offer the chance to develop

effective practice and share expertise with staff in prisons, the different structures make it challenging to attribute accountability.

In individual establishments, the Heads of Learning and Skills/ Learning and Skills Manager role varies considerably, with different responsibilities, pay grades and structures. There appears to be a shift in the selection criteria for recruitment as those staff who are new in post are more likely to have an education background.

Governors have generally had the most training and development opportunities, although these have not been consistent. Heads of Reducing Reoffending have sometimes initiated their own training but there are no standardised programmes, which is a concern, particularly considering the importance of the role in many prisons. HoLSs/LSMs are more likely than previously to have an education background and education managers from providers have generally had comprehensive and ongoing training opportunities. Responses overall demonstrated a mixed picture of development and training opportunities for prison education leaders.

Governors were also easily able to describe leadership qualities: they spoke about vision, visibility and integrity. Heads of Reducing Reoffending and HoLSs/LSMs were more focused on practical aspects of the roles and management rather than leadership. Education Managers were most likely to use 'creative' words in describing leadership but were also very focused on the practicalities of day-to-day resource management

Leadership is underdeveloped in prison education and while there are some good opportunities for very senior leaders, generally training and support starts too late in career, when people already have significant responsibility. Succession planning is under-developed.

Online training and guidance manuals are insufficient for prison education leaders – training needs to be practical and hands-on, and time needs to be allocated for this. There is a clear call

for the prison service to develop and/or recruit the professional expertise in education and contract management to discharge that responsibility properly.

There is a keen interest in development opportunities – some staff are painfully aware that they require training for new skills needed from new arrangements. Getting time off duties is crucial, which means cover has to be available if the system is not going to grind to a halt.

Governor autonomy remains more rhetoric than reality. The vision set out in the Coates report has not been realised and the centralised control processes limit Governors' influence over education in their prisons. The premise that the prison Governor needed to take greater responsibility for education delivery is not being fundamentally challenged (albeit the degree of autonomy is nowhere near what Coates envisaged).

To back that up, Governor accountability measures need to be put in place looking at outcomes in educational progression and delivery of learning aspirations including connections in FE and other learning through the gate.

The evidence suggests that, while the new arrangements for prison education have the potential for leaders to develop a whole-prison education culture, there needs to be significant investment in development opportunities for staff before this opportunity is realised.

Joint working is fundamental to effective education delivery in prisons. While the research found numerous examples of practices that supported this, there were also many practices that impeded the delivery of education. Few prisons appear to have a coherent coordinated strategic approach to allocation and activities. Sequencing is a complex challenge and, in many prisons, the competing demands on prisoners' time get in the way of delivering education. Prison officers do not always understand the importance of education and workshop instructors, and education departments are not always as integrated as they need to be.

There is significant work needed to engage all prison and contracted staff to support and promote an education agenda across all elements of the prison community and support rehabilitation. The change in arrangements is significant and has an important place within the system, providing a structure for cultural change. For many, prisons the new arrangements support the work already undertaken and for others there is more distance to be travelled.

However, it is extremely positive that prison education leaders are keen to learn, keen to engage with organisations outside prison and most specifically with further education colleges. The lack of input and communication from further education colleges is a massive missed opportunity, not only for prison education staff, but also for learners. Prison staff need support to develop these links effectively.

Understanding contract management and commissioning are the key immediate training needs of prison education leaders. Additional processes and the work created were uppermost in the minds of many interviewees.

There is a willingness within the prison system and a foundation to build on. However, there is a need for investment and resources to support effective professional development and to establish the conditions that allow for learning and culture change. The pressure of time spent on management, monitoring and reporting risks detracting from time and resources that are needed to support a whole prison education culture. The resources for prison education need to be sufficient to meet the rehabilitative potential of the new arrangements as they become more fully effective.

## Recommendations

### Short term – recommendations that could be in place within one year

#### To Governors

1. Governors should involve senior education staff in key decision and information-sharing meetings and processes within the prison (e.g. morning meetings, SMT meetings). Education teams should be fully involved in any core planning around the regime allocation and activities and no allocation or activity processes should be a disincentive to education.
2. Governors should demonstrate their personal commitment to learning and creating a learning culture through: induction for staff, monitoring attendance and engagement, and recognising achievement.

#### To HMPPS Education, Employment and Industries Group and Leadership and Management Development Team

3. Governors and other senior staff must have the skills and support they need to manage the new education contracts. Additional practical training must be made available quickly and prison staff should have time to attend this. Training and development in commissioning and contract management could be part of a HoLS and governor annual assessment and personal development plan. For training to be effective, it needs to take place away from the establishment include different methods of learning and have opportunities for follow up support. The DPS system needs to be less time-consuming for service providers and prison staff, and additional training and support is needed for prison staff to use it effectively.

## To HMPPS and the Ministry of Justice

4. There needs to be a national strategy to develop links and partnerships with further education colleges, and support for Heads of Reducing Reoffending to take the lead within prisons to develop relationships with local FE providers. This should include developing shadowing opportunities for prison leaders in their local FE colleges.

## Medium term – recommendations that could be in place within 1–3 years

### To OMIC (Offender Management in Custody)

5. More work is necessary to highlight the importance of education to wing and residential officers, so they can identify and recognise the impact on safety and order and to understand the link between good educational outcomes and successful resettlement. HMPPS should review whether officers are receiving the module on education as part of POELT training and make it key part of ongoing development. OMIC should develop a national strategy to develop key working support for education, including resources that help key workers to explore, encourage and motivate prisoners' progression. PEF providers should also be involved in training and supporting keyworkers.

### To HMPPS Education, Employment and Industries Group

6. HMPPS should develop a strategy around leadership in industries, including additional support to ensure that workshop instructors have the skills and time needed to identify and record prisoner's progression. Instructors' and teachers' development and training should be coordinated in each prison. HMPPS should ensure that all instructors have access to the Award in Education and Training and TAQA qualifications to enable them to fulfil their role by encouraging prison learners to achieve. Teachers, officers and workshop

instructors should have the opportunity to attend training together, and the suppliers and local FE colleges potential to support training and development for all staff in prisons should be explored.

### To HMPPS

7. Sharing of good practice is an important function of any leadership and governance structure. There are pockets of good practice in many prisons but no systemic way of sharing this. HMPPS Education Group should develop a simple strategy for the sharing of good practice and regional heads of learning and skills and lot leads should share effective practice and innovation should be captured and shared across the prison estate.
8. Developing a culture of continuous staff development will take time. Staff should be able to take control of their professional development and more opportunities (such as mentoring or studying at master's level) need to be made available earlier on in managers' careers. A programme of ongoing training for HoLSs could include: systems thinking, PEF contracts training, analysis of data, principles of lifelong learning and preparation for Ofsted inspections.
9. HMPPS should develop succession planning for governors and do much more to identify 'governors in waiting' to ensure that new governors are already equipped with the training, skills and experience they need.
10. The needs of specific groups of prisoners and the best way to support their learning needs to be better understood. HMPPS should provide support for prisons to develop a whole-prison approach to supporting prisoners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LD/D) and younger adults and to link in with expert knowledge.

11. Recruiting from the further education and other sectors for posts in prison leadership (not just posts directly providing education) would build a new culture in prison and help build professional development for existing staff. HMPPS should develop a more externally focused recruitment strategy – learning from other organisations, such as police, education and prison education providers – and noting contracted-out prisons are more likely to recruit externally. Recruiting from the further education and other sectors for posts in prison leadership (not just posts directly providing education) could build a new culture in prison and help build professional development for existing staff.

#### **To the Ministry of Justice**

12. Performance-management frameworks must be proportionate. It is unclear how Governors can be held to account in the current structure but performance measures that hold service providers and governors to account should be developed, following meaningful consultation with these groups. Measures that are clear about how prisoner's progression can be assessed and include partnership-working, including with higher and further education institution, would be welcome. Resettlement data that is currently collated from NPS/ CRCs on employment outcomes should be expanded to include educational outcomes.

#### **Long term – five years plus**

##### **To the Ministry of Justice**

13. The MoJ must secure the financial resources necessary to properly support education in prisons.
14. The MoJ and HMPPS should have a multi-year overarching strategy, setting out needs and deficits in leadership and providing a system of integrated support for recruitment, development and succession planning.

15. The MoJ must ensure that planning for successor arrangements to the current PEF contracts needs to begin sufficiently in advance to ensure that adequate training for the implementation of new arrangements is in place in good time.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

Interviews were carried out in 10 prisons.

These were selected to cover a range of geographical areas, prison functions and education providers. xx of the prisons had changed education provider in April 2019 and xx had retained education providers

### **The 10 prison sample consisted of:**

Three Category C training prisons.

Three Category B local prisons.

One Category B training prison.

One prison from the women's estate.

One prison from the long-term and high-secure estate.

One prison for young adults.

### **Interviewees:**

Ten Governing Governors (including one Director), one Controller and one Deputy Governor.

Ten Heads of Learning and Skills/Learning and Skills Managers.

Nine Education Managers, one Deputy Education Manager and one curriculum lead.

Ten Heads of Reducing Reoffending.

Ten staff in regional roles.



## Appendix 2

Extract from Ofsted's handbook for the inspection of education, skills and work activities in prisons and young offender institutions:

### **Effectiveness of leadership and management of education, skills and work activities<sup>27</sup>**

The common inspection framework sets out the overarching criteria for judging the effectiveness of leadership and management of education, skills and work activities.

In making this judgement, inspectors will consider:

- how successfully ambitions for the prison's or YOI's performance, including its aims to reduce re-offending, are set, reviewed and communicated with staff, prisoners, employers and other partners and the impact this has on the quality of provision and outcomes for all prisoners
- the extent to which leaders and managers collaborate with other partners to ensure that the range and content of the provision is aligned to local and regional priorities
- the extent to which the prison has sufficient education, skills and work provision for its population, the availability of accredited courses and the proportion of prisoners who benefit
- The effectiveness of the allocation and attendance measures in ensuring prisoners attend their activity on time with minimal interruptions
- how successfully leaders and managers secure and sustain improvements to teaching, learning and assessment through high quality professional development and robust performance management to tackle weaknesses and promote good practice across all types of provision

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-learning-and-skills-training-for-young-adults-and-adults-in-custody>

- the rigour of self-assessment, including through the use of the views of prisoners and, where applicable, employers and other stakeholders, its accuracy and how well it secures sustained improvement across the prison's or YOI's work, including any subcontracted provision
- the strategic priority prison leaders and managers give to the provision of English and mathematics to ensure that prisoners improve their levels of English and mathematics compared with their starting points to aid progression to future employment and their plans for rehabilitation on release
- how effectively leaders and managers monitor the progress of groups of prisoners so that none are disadvantaged or underachieve
- how well governors/directors and senior managers provide challenge and hold staff, partners and other stakeholders to account for improving the impact and effectiveness of the provision
- the extent to which managers and providers promote all forms of equality and diversity through learning and skills and work activities and foster greater understanding and respect
- the extent to which pay rates encourage self-improvement and prisoners are paid fairly, accurately and on time
- the extent to which prisoners receive thorough and impartial careers guidance to enable them to make informed choices about their current learning and future career and release plans, and how effectively learning plans are linked with and take account of prisoners' sentence plans
- how effectively (including through access to modern means of job search and job application via the internet) prisoners due for release are encouraged and supported to progress to suitable further education, training and employment on release

- how effectively leaders and managers monitor the progression and destinations of their prisoners (including whether prisoners enter secure and sustained employment) and use this information to improve provision
- the extent to which release on temporary licence is used to enhance prisoners' employment or training skills and prepare them for release.

## Appendix 3

Ministry of Justice and HMPPS

Governors responsibilities for education – extract from the Education and Library Policy Framework<sup>28</sup>

Governors must comply with the 12 mandations set out in paragraphs 4.11 – 4.22. These requirements apply to learning delivered anywhere in the prison.

Governors must ensure that sentenced prisoners have an assessment of their maths and English levels on entry to prison, when they transfer between prisons, and prior to release. Guidance on mandatory assessments referenced in section 5 sets out how different education assessments for prisoners should be approached.

• Output: Assessment results provide an understanding of prisoners' levels of literacy and numeracy and inform the personal learning plan goals that seek to progress the learner to at least Level 2. • Output: Prison level data is available to allow the production of progress measures, comparing prisoners' attainment in maths and English on release/transfer with those at reception into prison.

4.12 Governors must ensure that sentenced prisoners are screened for learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LD/D) on first reception.

• Output: Clear and detailed results and reports are produced as specified in Schedule C16 of the Prison Education Framework Specification (para 2.59), and used to inform the additional learning support needed to ensure the learner can achieve and progress in education.

5.11 Governors must ensure that maths and English assessment results and LD/D screening results are recorded on a central system so that data is stored for future use and available across the estate.

• Output: A single record is created for prisoners, reducing the risk of duplicating data and information. • Output: Prisoner data can be accessed by all establishments, reducing the chances of prisoners being unnecessarily assessed on subsequent receptions because data does not follow them around the estate.

5.12 Governors must ensure that all sentenced prisoners have personal learning plans in place that specifies the educational activity that should be undertaken during their sentence, supporting their rehabilitation journey and any employment aspirations. Plans should record important information such as assessment outcomes and required additional learning support identified via LD/D screening. This plan must be subject to regular review, be Wherever the term prisoner is used in these mandations, we also, by extension, mean those on remand who will be engaging with education, and it is for Governors to decide how to approach education with remand prisoners. sequenced with the sentence plan, and shared with key partners such as the Offender Management Unit and key workers.

• Output: Personal learning plans are in place for sentenced prisoners and set out their educational journey, providing clear aims and objectives to support their rehabilitation.

<sup>28</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/791622/prison-education-library-services-policy-framework.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/791622/prison-education-library-services-policy-framework.pdf)

5.13 Governors must ensure that personal learning plans are recorded on a central system, creating a single truth for each prisoner that provides consistency for them in their journey through the prison system. The system will work in a way that captures data from plans in order to support the development performance measures.

- Output: Plans can be accessed by all necessary parts of the estate, for example when a prisoner moves between establishments the receiving one can access the plan and continue to support the education journey of that prisoner, key workers will be able to see the plans for their prisoners and support them in education.

5.14 Governors must ensure that education providers, and prison staff who deliver learning, record learning against the personal learning plan.

- Output: An accurate and up to date personal learning plan is in place which enables proper monitoring and management of individual learner progression, and enables production of summary and individual level data on system performance in delivering against milestones.

4.17 Governors must ensure that maths and English delivery is adjusted to the needs of the establishment's learners and focused on progression to at least Level 2 •

Output: Learning provision is available to raise prisoners' levels of maths and English attainment towards at least Level 2.

4.18 Governors must ensure that education providers, and prison staff who deliver qualifications, use specific awarding bodies in the following seven subject areas: Maths The City and Guilds of London Institute English The City and Guilds of London Institute Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR) English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Gateway Qualifications Catering & Hospitality The City and

Guilds of London Institute Construction, Planning & the Built Environment The City and Guilds of London Institute Cleaning & Facilities Management WAMITAB (Waste Management Industry Training and Advisory Board)

- Output: Prisoners who transfer to a different prison part-way through a course in any of the seven subject areas mentioned above are able to bank and build on their progress, helping to ensure consistency in the learning journey.

4.19 Governors must ensure that education providers, and prison staff who deliver learning, submit monthly data on the education delivered. Prison Education & Library Services for adult prisons in England Issue Date 1 April 2019 9 Policy Framework

- Output: Management information is available on the prison education services being delivered and it can be used to assess quality and manage performance both locally and nationally.

4.20 Governors must ensure that education providers' staff, and those prison staff who deliver learning, are appropriately trained and qualified to develop and meet the additional support needs of prisoners with LD/D.

- Output: A prisoner will have sufficient, focused and professional support that will enable them to achieve their full potential and achieve against milestones in their Personal Learning Plan.

4.21 Governors must ensure that education providers' staff, and those prison staff who deliver learning, receive effective Continuing Professional Development.

- Output: teaching staff are developed which will support the raising of education standards.

4.22 Governors must ensure that all prison information, forms and digital systems are available and/or designed

with suitable adaptations to support those with dyslexia and other LD/D.

- Output: Prison learners with dyslexia and other LD/D will be able to access materials and information which has been designed or adapted to support their specific needs and enable them to achieve their full potential and progress against milestones in their Personal Learning Plan.

## ABOUT FETL

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**The Further Education Trust for Leadership's vision is of a further education sector that is valued and respected for:**

- Innovating constantly to meet the needs of learners, communities and employers;
- Preparing for the long term as well as delivering in the short term; and
- Sharing fresh ideas generously and informing practice with knowledge.

## ABOUT PLA

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The Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) is a network of organisations and individuals with expertise in prison education. We use our collective voice to improve prison education.

- We engage constructively with, and exercise a responsible influence on, opinion formers in shaping policy and practice debates in prison education.
- We hold government to account by monitoring the implementation of policy and practice on prison education in order to improve outcomes for prisoners.



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