



# LEARNING, SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

A review of good practice in Scottish prisons



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## **The Scottish Ministers**

**We are pleased to forward a report on a joint thematic review of good practice in learning, skills and employability in Scottish Prisons.**

**Graham Donaldson**  
**HM Senior Chief Inspector of Education**

**Andrew R C McLellan**  
**HM Chief Inspector of Prisons**

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HM Inspectorate of Education  
Denholm House  
Almondvale Business Park  
Almondvale Way  
Livingston  
EH54 6GA

Tel: 01506 600 200

Fax: 01506 600 337

E-mail: [enquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk)

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## **Foreword**

This joint thematic review is the first time that potential examples of good practice in Learning, Skills and Employability identified through the inspection programme or put forward by establishments have been evaluated and described in detail. It emphasises the fact that inspection is as much about sharing good practice where it is found as it is about identifying where improvement is required.

Learning and developing new skills is a vital element of reducing offending behaviour, promoting rehabilitation and preparing prisoners for life outwith prison on release. We encourage establishments to review their practices and adopt models that will meet the needs of their prisoners.

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# Introduction

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Learning, Skills and Employability

Research demonstrates that when ex-offenders gain employment the risk of their re-offending reduces by between a third and a half<sup>1</sup>. However, many prisoners have few qualifications and low levels of literacy, and many have never held a proper job. Learning, Skills and Employability (LSE) aims to provide appropriate education and training so that prisoners can improve their prospects, obtain fulfilling and sustainable employment, and continue in or enter new learning or training following their release. Improving literacy skills is one of nine offender outcomes which reduce the risk of a prisoner re-offending<sup>2</sup>. Another offender outcome specifically relates to increasing employability prospects. It also underpins a number of other offender outcomes, as demonstrated by the good practice examples in this report.

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) LSE Policy defines learning, skills and employability as:

*“a range of coordinated activities and interventions that addresses offenders’ needs and develops the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours for offenders to access education, training and employment opportunities on release.”*

If offenders are to gain the skills and qualifications they need to make a positive contribution in society, learning programmes in prisons require to be comparable in content and quality to those available to the wider community. The delivery of labour market relevant, high-quality learning, skills and employability education and training within prisons is key to establishing this position.

#### **The focus of learning opportunities in the LSE Policy is:**

- **Learning for Health.**
- **Learning for Life (in the community).**
- **Learning for Work.**
- **Learning for Leisure.**

1 *Social Exclusion Report: 2002*

2 *Reducing Re-offending: National Strategy for Management of Offenders – Scottish Executive, 2006*

In April 2005, SPS procured a new LSE service to replace the previous education service contracts across SPS establishments. It awarded contracts to two learning providers, Motherwell College and Carnegie College, Dunfermline (formerly Lauder College). Kilmarnock Prison, which is privately operated by SERCO, was not included in these arrangements.

**LSE contractors are contracted to deliver programmes across the following areas.**

- **Adult literacy and core skills.**
- **Computing and information technology.**
- **Art and design.**
- **Cookery.**
- **First aid.**
- **Health and safety.**
- **General education.**
- **Languages.**
- **Leisure subjects.**
- **Mathematics.**
- **Music.**

Uniformed staff employed by SPS deliver Vocational Skills Training (VT) in areas such as bricklaying, painting and decorating, joinery, plumbing, basic electrical skills, engineering, industrial cleaning, laundry work, horticulture and catering. A number of prisons offer the Scottish Progression Award (SPA) in Building Crafts. Physical Education Officers employed by SPS deliver physical education (PE). Some of the range of physical education and recreational activities lead to formal certification. As part of the wider resettlement agenda, SPS has established a

number of collaborative arrangements to enable local authority literacy learning providers to be located within Links Centres in



prisons. The purpose of these arrangements is to provide a coordinated transition for offenders who wish to continue with literacy learning on release.

A key part of the LSE contractors' work is to provide employability support for offenders through training in areas such as job seeking, together with activities designed to motivate offenders and improve their attitudes to seeking employment. In addition to the LSE contractors, a range of other organisations currently assists SPS to support offenders in improving their employability skills. These organisations include Jobcentre Plus, Careers Scotland, Apex, and The Prince's Trust. Some SPS establishments have sought to engage employers with regard to the employment of ex-offenders.

The delivery of LSE is integral to the Scottish Government's *Skills for Scotland* strategy, which includes:

*"We believe that all our providers – colleges, universities, community learning and development, schools, private training*

*providers, voluntary sector organisations and the Scottish Prison Service – are part of one and the same learning system, geared towards helping individuals develop the skills they need and with all providers understanding and supporting the transitions individuals make both into and out of particular courses or programmes<sup>3</sup>.”*

## 1.2 Purpose of inspection

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for Scotland is responsible for the inspection of LSE provision within Scottish prisons. HMIE contributes to the LSE inspection process and to the dedicated LSE section of the report on each prison. It operates within the HMI Charter and the Code of Practice for Child Protection. Inspection procedures are designed to ensure that inspections are independent, responsive, fair and open.

**The purpose of each LSE inspection is to provide an independent and impartial evaluation of key aspects of LSE provision in a prison. Each inspection is designed to answer the following key questions.**

- **How well are LSE policy objectives being met?**
- **How well do SPS and its contractors promote access and inclusion to LSE opportunities?**
- **How effectively is the identification of offenders’ LSE needs being undertaken?**
- **How effectively are offenders’ LSE needs being met?**
- **How well are offenders achieving in LSE provision?**
- **How well does LSE provision support community reintegration and the reduction in re-offending?**



## The review

### 2. The review

#### 2.1 Rationale

HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) reports on LSE against an agreed set of headings and outcomes. Inspectors from HMIE operate as part of the inspection team to carry out the inspection in this area. Their evaluations are included within the published establishment inspection report. The inspection of LSE over the past four years has identified good practice, as well as weaknesses and challenges across the full range of prison establishments. Each prison establishment shows a different balance of strengths and areas requiring improvement. This report goes beyond published reports for individual establishments to highlight and present good practice with the aim of disseminating it and promoting its adoption by other establishments.

HMIE, working in partnership with HMIP, agreed to undertake a joint review to identify examples of good practice which could be shared with others involved in the delivery of LSE. This report does not present itself as comprehensive or definitive on good practice

in a prison establishment setting. Its aim is to help prison establishments and LSE providers learn from the experiences of good practice elsewhere and achieve better outcomes across the prison population of Scotland as a whole.

#### 2.2 Arrangements to identify good practice

The prison establishments to be included in the review were agreed jointly by both HMIE and HMIP. HMIE and HMIP analysed previous inspection reports and sought nominations through an open invitation to all prison establishments. Twelve prison establishments submitted a total of 41 nominations of practice. Following the analysis of inspection reports and a review of the nominations, HMIP liaised with ten prison establishments to agree access arrangements and programme details for inspectors from HMIE and HMIP to evaluate 22 projects. Inspection activities included ten focus groups of prisoner learners and interviews with 32 members of staff. Inspectors confirmed the 13 examples of good practice included in section 4 of this report.

### 2.3 Criteria for inclusion in the review

HM Inspectors focused on practice that was:

- part of the agreed LSE contract but going beyond its core expectations;
- not delivered routinely across other establishments;
- making a positive difference to the learners' experience; and
- improving outcomes.

They looked specifically at the outcomes and impact of LSE provision in terms of:

- increasing prisoners' skills and knowledge;
- increasing prisoners' self-confidence and self-esteem;
- having a positive impact on prisoners' lifestyle in areas such as health, exercise, and applying improved literacy skills; and
- responding to identified need.

## Main findings

### 3. Main findings

There were a number of examples of good practice within the field of LSE. Overall, there was a wide range in the quality of LSE provision but in a number of cases, prisoners' lives had been positively transformed as a result of a high-quality LSE experience.

This section summarises the factors identified by inspectors as supporting high-quality provision and outcomes, and the areas in which they identified barriers that require to be addressed to improve, sustain and extend provision to maximise its positive outcomes.

#### 3.1 Success factors

##### *Vision and commitment*

- Establishments' recognition of the value of learning programmes.
- The strong commitment and dedication of staff from both the SPS and LSE provider.
- Establishments' willingness to adopt a flexible approach.
- Providers who were both flexible and creative in identifying and overcoming obstacles in the process to achieve the agreed goal.

##### *Partnership*

- Effective partnerships and working relationships both internally and with external agencies at a local level.
- Effective links into broader community networks such as local authority literacy partnerships.
- Involvement of local employers at an early stage with regard to employment initiatives.

##### *Learning planning and activities*

- Learning that was relevant and linked to prisoners' experiences and interests.
- Learning opportunities well matched to identified local needs and gaps in the market.
- Activities which were purposeful and had an end product or outcome.
- A structured approach to vocational training.
- Good use of nationally accredited qualifications.
- Transferability of learning outcomes for use in the community setting.

***Ethos and promoting achievement***

- Focus on motivating prisoners to get involved and complete programmes.
- The active involvement of prisoners as stakeholders in the activity.
- Appropriate use of praise and encouragement.
- Recognition and celebration of achievement.
- Encouragement of positive relations between prisoners, their families and their children.

***Institutional context***

- The creative use and sharing of available resources to gain maximum impact.
- Programmes adapted to comply with necessary security measures.
- Prisoner transfers managed to minimise impact on learning.

**3.2 Barriers to success**

Inspectors found that the following factors particularly inhibited the development of good practice.

- Establishments according low status to LSE provision.
- Establishments and LSE providers not working together in constructive partnership.
- Ineffective communication between services delivering LSE.
- Insufficient clarity between partners as to contributions expected.
- Limited resourcing.
- Projects being so dependent upon one member of staff (uniformed officer or LSE provider) as to be unsustainable if that individual moved.
- No systematic approach to recording and tracking learners' progress.
- The transfer of prisoners during their learning programme:
  - where no similar programme existed in the receiving establishment,
  - where not accompanied by a record of learning for use in the receiving establishment,
  - where an individual contribution lost to the project threatened its viability and its benefits to others.

## The impact and outcomes of LSE

### 4. The impact and outcomes of LSE

This chapter shows how LSE, at its best, is making a difference to the lives of prisoners. These examples of good practice were identified as making a positive contribution to the opportunities and experiences available and to outcomes for prisoners within Scottish prisons.

Links to the HMIE website at [www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice](http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice) offer further details of specific good practice examples and provide contact details.

#### 4.1 HMP Barlinnie – *Employability*

The Barlinnie employability programme specifically targeted prisoners looking to gain employment or further training upon liberation. Prisoners attended the education centre for eight weeks and participated as a member of a work party on a daily basis. They took core skills units in *communication, numeracy and information technology* and worked towards gaining the British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICS) certificate and units in health and safety, food hygiene, first aid and manual handling. A number of potential employers recognised these certificates. Prisoners also learned how to prepare a CV and prepare for an



interview. Since its inception in 1998 over 900 learners had benefited from the scheme. A number of prisoners had gained employment.

Positive working relationships between SPS Industries, Motherwell College, Jobcentre Plus and the Careers Service contributed to the effective running of the project. The integration of practical learning and core skills development had resulted in improved learner self-confidence and self-esteem and helped build their aspirations for potential employment on release. Prisoners were positive about the benefits of the programme and saw it as a launch pad for future work opportunities.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=148>

#### 4.2 HMP Barlinnie – *Home from Home (Tales from the Big Hoose)*

*Home from Home* was funded by *Learning Connections*<sup>4</sup>. Its focus was on the creation of a book of literacy learners' writing which could be used as a teaching resource with other learners attending literacy classes. Over 50 learners took part in the project, which culminated in the publication of a book entitled *Home from Home (Tales from the Big Hoose)* made up of stories, poems and illustrations by learners on the theme of "Home".



The exercise was planned and coordinated by the creative writing teacher, supported by learning centre staff. Learners in basic English and creative writing classes made an active contribution based upon their recollections of their experiences and were encouraged to take responsibility for their input to the book. Prisoners also took responsibility for proof-reading. One prisoner collected and collated contributions and where necessary typed them up. Contributors who could not write were encouraged to dictate their stories to other prisoners. Print workshops developed learners' skills in creating prints and illustrations for the book. All contributors received a copy of the printed book.

Learners took part in a public reading of extracts at a special reception to mark the book launch. Articles in national newspapers commended learners for their efforts and also featured their photographs. One participant commented that it was "*the first time I have had a mention in the press without it being a crime report*".

<sup>4</sup> *Learning Connections*, formerly part of Communities Scotland and now a unit within the Scottish Government, supports the development of adult literacies and other community learning.

The project offered a good opportunity to develop integrated teamwork amongst various groups of learners. The linkage of the project with regular classes on communication, English and creative writing ensured learners were able to use what they learned as they went along. Their self-confidence improved as a result of involvement.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=147>

#### 4.3 HMP & YOI Cornton Vale – *Reader in Residence*

The *Reader in Residence*<sup>5</sup> in Cornton Vale had created a range of informal learning activities. These activities successfully engaged prisoners who would not otherwise have taken part in education. The activities were designed to be enjoyable, informal and of relevance to the prisoners' lives. They included a newspaper discussion and creative writing group, a film and book discussion group, and the creation of children's *Story Sacks*<sup>6</sup>. The programmes varied in length from standalone sessions to longer-term programmes. All prisoners had opportunities for participation. Activities were promoted at weekly welcome sessions and by word of mouth. Even remand prisoners and those who were reluctant to make a long-term commitment to education had become involved and were benefiting from taking part. As one woman explained:

*"You go back from the group on a high and the other prisoners want to get involved because they see the difference it makes to how you feel."*

Literacies and core skills such as ICT were effectively integrated into the delivery of the sessions. Groups were well supported by good access to interactive ICT resources available on the prison's intranet site. The prison education centre was responding positively to the negative experience that many prisoners previously had of formal education and their unwillingness to attend formal literacies classes.

Activities facilitated by the reader in residence had a highly positive impact on the attitude, self-esteem, self-confidence and mental wellbeing of those taking part. Many prisoners planned to continue their involvement in learning after release. Learners also confirmed that their involvement had improved their skills in writing, listening and expressing opinions.

*"I have read books I wouldn't normally read and am going to try and join a book group in my area when I get out."*

*"The class was funny. You can forget about everything and at the same time you are learning and have lots of things to think about."*

The prisoners involved in creating *Story Sacks* valued the fact that it helped them to improve their communication with and understanding of their children.

*"You learn to see things from their point of view."*

*"I will read to them more now and create more time for them."*

5 A Reader in Residence offers an emphasis on encouraging a reading culture within a prison establishment.

6 A *Story Sack* is created by a prisoner for children within their families. Each prisoner chooses a theme for their individual sack. Contents include unique, individual stories, poems, word games and quizzes to highlight work on sentence structure, spelling, grammar, descriptive and inspiring writing.

Since the introduction of the reader in residence project, visits to the prison library had increased by 70% and book borrowing by 50%.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=147>

#### 4.4 HMP & YOI Cornton Vale – Hairdressing

Cornton Vale provided high-quality training courses in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Courses were formally certificated at a range of levels from basic introductory skills to HNC. A qualified tutor provided the training in an industry standard salon. Effective liaison with the prison education department and the employability officer was a strong feature of this provision. The development of core skills, including ICT, was an integral part of the course, delivered in conjunction with the education centre. Trainees' motivation to complete core skills assignments was supported by good design and close alignment with the vocational aspects of the training. Subject to suitable risk assessment, trainees also undertook a work placement prior to release, organised by the employability officer. Placement providers commented positively on the quality of the training the prisoners had received. The prisoners also practised their skills on other prisoners and officers, thereby making an important contribution to the wellbeing of the prison community as a whole. Out of 15 trainees who had been released, six had gained full-time employment in hairdressing and one notable example was now self-employed, successfully running her own salon. Current trainees commented that

taking part in the course, with the qualifications and increased employability it offered as well as the much increased confidence and self-esteem it gave them, was a life-changing experience:

*"Realising what I am capable of and getting this qualification will change my life."*

*"It has given me an aim and a sense of purpose and helped me to feel part of this community."*

Trainees from the course achieved first, second and third prizes in the relevant category of the national *Koestler Awards* in 2007. The *Koestler Awards* is an annual competition and exhibition of arts from UK prisons, YOIs, secure units and high-security psychiatric hospitals.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=148>





#### 4.5 HMP & YOI Cornton Vale – *Employability Skills*

Cornton Vale had successfully increased the range and number of community vocational placements available to prisoners. This had increased the number who gained employment outcomes after release.

The broad range of placements available to prisoners included opportunities in hairdressing, housekeeping, hospitality, horticulture, retail, marketing, sales, and industrial cleaning. Prisoners trained in industrial cleaning to British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICS) standard were now being trained as assessors. Administration placements included the criminal justice department of the local authority and the Youth Hostels Association. Some prisoners were attending university to undertake degree level studies as an alternative to a work placement. Amongst the placement providers was a small number of national employers, which opened up the possibility of post-release employment for prisoners who did not live within commuting distance of the prison.

The high-quality training that the prisoners received within the prison and the relevance of work placements to gaps in the local labour market were important contributory factors to the success of the placements. Work parties, such as those in the hospitality industry, were specifically designed as a result of labour market gap analysis. The employability officer used considerable initiative and imagination to persuade local employers to offer placement opportunities and had maintained positive relationships, despite some setbacks. Staff paid close attention to identifying the skills, aptitudes and interests of the prisoners and in finding

the right placement for each individual. There was a strong partnership with Jobcentre Plus staff based on site, offering interview and CV writing skills to work placement candidates. All 24 prisoners eligible for placements were currently in a full-time work placement or full-time education, with a further 30 placement opportunities available.

The partnership approach to developing employability skills was commendable, albeit that there were no written procedures to underpin arrangements.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=148>

#### 4.6 HMP Edinburgh – *College Culture*

The aim of the project was to develop a prison-based 'college culture' as a means of increasing prisoners' employability on release. One of the key successes was a change in culture in the workshops, with a move away from the traditional production workshop to a focus on prisoners learning new skills and achieving awards. A stakeholder working group made up of both short-term and long-term prisoners ensured prisoners had the opportunity to shape future provision. Staff also actively contributed to planning the transition from production work to accredited training.



The Edinburgh Training Centre offered 18 types of vocational training activities linked to the learning centre educational programme and pathways to employment (Jobcentre Plus). It was approved by the SQA to deliver 217 units across 30 subject areas. The training centre delivered accredited training and award certification for nine award bodies including the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS), Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), and the Guild of Cleaners and Launderers. Provision included a range of vocational qualifications in a variety of technical subjects such as building crafts, industrial cleaning, catering, laundry, forklift and health and safety. All 33 workshop staff had successfully achieved D32/D33 assessor awards.

There had been an increase in work skills attendance and in the vocational qualifications achieved. Prison authorities had actively engaged with Edinburgh City Council and other external agencies to break down barriers with prospective employers, and to identify and fill skills gaps in the local employment areas. Prisoners had developed an increased sense of purpose and achievement in workshops.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=148>

#### **4.7 HMP Greenock – Storybook Dads**

The *Storybook Dads* project, started in February 2007, was based on an original idea from HMP Dartmoor. Prisoners recorded short messages and stories for their own children onto a digital recorder. The recordings were then transferred to computer. Prisoners trained as editors and employed as an identified work party edited out hesitations and external noises, and added sound effects.

The work party was responsible for the production of the CD product from beginning to end. It comprised six prisoner editors who had successfully completed training.

The project had produced 160 CDs between February and November 2007. The learning centre provided a good range of ICT recording and editing resources within a dedicated area. CDs produced were of high-quality in terms of both audio and personalised decorative messages. Positive feedback from children had increased prisoners' self-esteem and presented them with an opportunity to reflect upon their parenting skills. Prisoners were encouraged to record their comments in a book kept within the learning centre.

*"I felt I was still part of my child's life."*

Editors benefited from improved ICT skills, personal development and core skills and were progressing towards a specialised ICT qualification. The project encouraged a sense of ownership, creativity and responsibility. Its formal work party offered a wide range of opportunities for problem solving, decision making and using initiative that were not normally available within the prison context.

A number of key strengths underpinned the project. Good partnership working between Motherwell College and SPS had improved relationships between both SPS and LSE staff and prisoners. There was a positive, purposeful and relaxed atmosphere within the learning centre. Good forward planning enabled the project to operate within, and comply with, the strict security measures in place.

An agreement with the prison not to transfer prisoners trained as editors enabled the establishment to capitalise on its investment. Recognition of the editor role as a genuine paid work party placement and investment by

the learning centre in software and hardware to enable a quality product contributed to the success of the project. The strong commitment by all partners to ensure a high standard was reflected in the quality of the finished product.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=149>

#### 4.8 HMP Greenock – *Fit Together*

The *Fit Together* programme had operated in Greenock Prison for ten years. Adults with learning disabilities from the local community attended the prison on a weekly basis to participate in a gym-based activity programme organised by prisoners. The programme was supervised and supported by the LSE provider and health and fitness instructors.

Joint activity sessions encouraged prisoners and adult learners to mix. The *Fit Together* group had forged effective links with the local community and had raised awareness of the issues faced by the two socially excluded groups, prisoners and adults with special needs. This had been achieved through a programme of games and social activities. Rigorous selection procedures ensured the participation of only those prisoners with appropriate social skills, security vetting and approval.

Effective partnership working was a key feature. Working relationships between fitness centre and learning centre staff were very positive. Good support and understanding from SPS residential and work party staff helped minimise disruption. Good external relationships with Inverclyde Council Community Support Service assisted the programming of the group and also provided

work placement opportunities for prisoners in the local community.

Staff and prisoners alike were committed to the group and enthusiastic about it. The group provided a good opportunity for prisoners to engage with the wider community. Prisoners welcomed the opportunity to reflect on their own personal circumstances and drew satisfaction from helping others:

*"It's a real morale booster and you always feel happy."*

Participation had increased prisoners' self-confidence, and improved their communication and teamwork skills and personal fitness levels. Prisoners had the opportunity for their skills to be certificated and ten had successfully gained the SQA qualification "Preparing to work with people with special needs" (Unit D10 211 at Intermediate 2 level) in the last two years. A number of prisoners had also successfully completed day release placements.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=149>

#### 4.9 HMP & YOI Perth – *Training Kitchen*

The *Training Kitchen* programme enhanced the employability skills of prisoners with an interest in cooking and catering. It differed from the prison kitchen work party, where prisoners developed skills and procedures related to industrial catering. This project was more focused on developing domestic skills and concentrated on developing prisoners' skills in cooking. The scheme also supported prisoners' development of core skills, particularly numeracy, ICT and working with others.



From a basic level of skill, a number of participants had progressed to an intermediate stage, making employment in the hotel and catering industry a realistic option on release from prison. As well as developing vocational skills, prisoners had also acquired or improved their numeracy skills as they scaled recipe ingredients up or down. Their ICT skills had improved through the creation of menus and other documents as had skills in working with others, essential in a working kitchen. In addition, prisoners had developed employability skills, including an ability and willingness to take instruction, punctuality, working to deadlines, attention to detail, and taking the lead where needed. Prisoners' self-esteem and confidence had improved.

The project benefited from the professional input of the chef-lecturer and from access to a fully operational training kitchen provided by SPS. This resource was an essential component in the success of the project.

Prisoners received a very good grounding in the basics of cooking. The addition of a more advanced one day per week programme benefited those prisoners who had completed the basic course and who wished to further develop their skills. The inclusion of core and employability skills enhanced the impact of the programme on the employability of the participating prisoners seeking employment in the catering industry.

Prisoners' achievements were recognised through distribution to the prison at large of cakes that they baked. The LSE provider was in the process of introducing award-bearing assessment including Intermediate 2 Cookery Process and Intermediate 2 Food Preparation Techniques. Participants in the basic level course received a college certificate of attendance detailing the elements covered.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=148>



#### **4.10 HMP & YOI Perth – Adult Literacy and Numeracy Partnership**

Perth Prison and the LSE provider were engaged in partnership work with the Perth and Kinross Adult Literacy and Numeracy

Partnership (ALN). This project was improving the literacy and numeracy skills of reluctant learners. The identified target group had a number of barriers to overcome, including mental health issues, drug-related problems, embarrassment over levels of ability, inability to fit into mainstream classes, or negative previous learning experiences.

Twelve prisoners were currently taking part in the literacy programme and six in the numeracy programme. They engaged in small group work and one-to-one tutorials. Work included letter writing, form filling, reading for information and leisure, 'Dear Dad'<sup>7</sup>, reading signs, and CV writing. Funding of £20,000 per annum by the ALN Partnership had been crucial in allowing the LSE provider to engage and train tutors in dyslexia and *English for Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL). The ALN partnership also funded literacy and numeracy work with groups whose sizes did not attract adequate funding through the normal SPS/LSE contract. Without the funding, there would not have been an ALN programme of this nature in the prison.

Partnership with other organisations had also raised awareness of good practice. There were improved links with the A K Bell Library in Perth. In particular the Learning Curve, a Literacies Learning area within the library, operated as part of the partnership. There had been increased uptake of ESOL as a result of onward referrals on release.

This was a well-founded project with clear aims to improve literacy and numeracy skills and was a very good example of partnership

working. It had directly benefited participating prisoners by raising their skill levels. Prisoners had successfully gained SQA certificates, and subsequently accessed college courses and other learning opportunities. Staff had benefited through training in dyslexia and ESOL.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=147>



#### 4.11 HMYOI Polmont – *Young Enterprise Scotland*

Run under the auspices of Young Enterprise Scotland, *The Mean Business Programme* developed enterprise and business skills in participants. The 12-week programme offered opportunities for prisoners to undertake a business-related project that would allow them to develop the skills and approaches required to start and run a successful small business.

<sup>7</sup> The 'Dear Dad' initiative encourages prisoners to read stories to their children. Prisoners select appropriate stories under the guidance of a literacies tutor. Stories are rehearsed and when the reader is confident they are recorded, edited and burned onto a CD. A personalised CD cover is designed by ICT students. The CD along with bookmarks and pencils are sent to the child.

Uniformed staff had previously identified that many young offenders lacked the skills to perform successfully as a team member, or to plan effectively and make informed decisions. They marketed the programme, discussing with prisoners the aims of the project and how they might benefit from the training. Young Enterprise Scotland staff delivered information sessions on the project during prisoner induction sessions. Competition amongst prisoners to join the scheme was keen.

Prisoners developed from an unstructured group of individuals into a coherent team with each member contributing effectively to the running of the business. From the initial three groups established, two groups continued to trade long after the completion of the training. A number of charities including Jacob Project and Malawi Science had benefited from the profits of the enterprise. Young Enterprise Scotland staff continued to monitor team progress on a quarterly basis.



Participants had developed a range of useful skills that would benefit them on release. They understood the world of business more

fully than before, worked effectively in teams, and suppressed their instinct to put their own interests first at all times. Participants took decisions based on evidence and were better able to see the results of their decisions. They developed confidence and self-esteem and gained the respect of their peers and uniformed staff.

New members had been successfully inducted into the project, which had been operating for over two years.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=148>

#### 4.12 HMYOI Polmont – *Independent Living Unit*

The *Independent Living Unit* project was designed to integrate a number of initiatives into a joined-up programme to prepare young offenders effectively for release. Potential participants who were within 12 weeks of release were prioritised and selected through the Integrated Case Management (ICM) process and referrals from Falkirk Council social work and housing departments and Phoenix Futures.

The programme was delivered in a purpose-built independent living unit facility with prisoners attending for three-and-a-half days each week, Monday to Thursday. During the four-week programme the group worked together to establish and maintain harmonious relationships, manage the domestic aspects of the unit and develop new skills in coping with life in the community. SPS provided training in finance, housing issues, domestic skills such as cooking, cleaning, and food hygiene, managing appointments and relationships with community and other agencies. Partnership working was good with

a number of external partners including local banks, credit unions, Motherwell College and peer educators from the community. Forth Valley Health Board had donated £500 to support healthy eating initiatives. Since May 2007, four groups had completed the programme, which was available to both mainstream and protection prisoners.

Participants in the programme developed in maturity and provided each other with effective support as the programme progressed. Their standards of behaviour, team working and domestic skills improved from an early stage. As a result of participation in the programme, young offenders were more able to acknowledge and reflect on their own weaknesses, to discuss their situation with family members and to prioritise future personal development. SPS staff carried out pre-programme and post-programme evaluations in collaboration with the participants. The evaluations identified the knowledge and skills gaps to be addressed.

Participants benefited from this focused approach. The programme duration and timetable was improved to take account of the difficulties prisoners experienced in coping with long times out of cell. This initiative also addressed a number of issues relating to prisoners' ability to cope with life in the community after release. These issues had been well chosen and participants benefited from the opportunities to address their skills and knowledge gaps and prepare themselves better for life in the community. It was too early to evaluate the impact on prisoners who have been released but behaviour, attitude and skills had improved among those who had completed the programme.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=149>

#### 4.13 HMP Shotts – Art Exhibition

Members of the Shotts art class helped to organise, and submit their work to, an art exhibition at the prison run as part of a charities event. Prisoners who did not attend the art class were also enabled to participate in other ways. For example, one prisoner provided ambient music and another made and sold hand-made greeting cards.

Despite some initial reluctance arising from a lack of confidence in the standard of their work, the artists agreed in 2007 to submit their paintings for sale. Over £500 was raised for a local hospice. Exhibition guests, including representatives of the Scottish Arts Council, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, the SPS Chief Executive, the principal of Motherwell College, representatives from a range of criminal justice agencies and prisoners' family members, attested to the high standard of the paintings.



The exhibitors welcomed and valued the praise, encouragement and positive feedback that they received. They appreciated the opportunity the exhibition gave them to exhibit their work, contribute to the community, meet with their families in a relaxed environment and be seen in a different and more positive light by prison staff. They expressed pride in their achievement and the fact that they had set themselves high standards and met them. The exhibition deadline provided them with an impetus to succeed and an important sense of purpose. As one exhibitor put it:

*“Without the exhibition we would just paint and then either bin it or paint over it. This way we were painting for a reason, to please other people, and it was important that we did it well.”*

Good collaboration between uniformed officers and LSE staff overcame initial security difficulties and contributed to the success of the event. The LSE tutor was now in the early stages of planning a regional event with contributors from 11 other prisons in the area.

More detailed information is available at <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/GoodPractice/Materials.aspx?theme=28&topic=149>





## Glossary

<b>ALN</b>	Adult Literacy and Numeracy
<b>ESOL</b>	English for Speakers of other Languages
<b>HMIE</b>	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education
<b>HMP</b>	Her Majesty's Prison
<b>HMIP</b>	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons
<b>HMYOI</b>	Her Majesty's Young Offenders Institution
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>ITALN</b>	Introductory Training for Adult Literacy and Numeracy
<b>LSE</b>	Learning, Skills and Employability
<b>SERCO</b>	SERCO is a company that provides facilities management
<b>SPS</b>	Scottish Prison Service
<b>SQA</b>	Scottish Qualifications Authority
<b>YOI</b>	Young Offenders Institution

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Tel: 01506 600 200  
Fax: 01506 600 337  
E-mail: [enquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@hmie.gsi.gov.uk)

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