National Research and Development Centre
for adult literacy and numeracy

Post-16 education and training provision for young people involved in crime

Literature review

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About this report

This literature review forms part of a wider NRDC research project on improving the literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) skills of young people involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, youth crime. The NRDC research project aimed to develop LLN provision for young people learning in various youth justice contexts and evaluate its effectiveness. In addition, the project explored improving engagement in education and training through understanding how this group of learners interpret and construct their own leaning over time and in response to various educational contexts. This literature review was designed to inform and contribute to the wider NRDC research project by drawing together key and consistent findings within the diverse and complex bodies of literature examining post-16 education and training provision for young people involved in offending.

Background

Government strategies for preventing youth crime and dealing with young people already involved in offending increasingly emphasise the importance of education and training. The estimated social and economic benefits of engaging this group of learners in education and training include reducing re-offending rates and facilitating entry into the labour market. However young people involved in offending often represent one of the most difficult and challenging groups of young adult learners to engage. As a group they continue to be identified in adult education policy as a priority for improving literacy, language and numeracy skills. It is clear that developing effective education and training provision for young people involved in youth crime is a critical and significant challenge.

Government partnerships

The Skills for Life strategy introduced a key partnership between the (as was) Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Home Office by establishing a dedicated Offenders Learning and Skills Unit. The Offenders Learning and Skills Unit became operational in April 2001. Along with the Prison Service, Probation Service, Youth Justice Board and Learning and Skills Council, these agencies are responsible for the strategic development of education and training provision for young people learning in various youth justice contexts, including custody.

Rationale and review aims

The focus of this literature review is post-16 education and training for young people who are involved in youth crime. With so much government ideology and resources invested in education as a preventative and rehabilitative strategy for young people involved in youth crime, this review aims to explore to what extent

this is supported by evidence. This review aims to move past a fragmented understanding of how this group of young people engage in post-16 education and training by incorporating learners' experiences and views. Three review questions were explored.

1. What is the role of education and training in preventing youth crime and reducing recidivism?
2. What is effective teaching and learning practice with young people learning in various youth justice contexts?
3. How do young people involved in youth crime interpret and experience education and training?

Scope of the review

There are diverse and complex bodies of literature which cover a wide range of topics contributing to our understanding of post-16 education and training for young people involved in youth crime. This literature review draws out the main themes and findings that address the research questions (outlined above). A number of disciplines are covered and types of research included. International literature has been referred to where appropriate, but the main focus of the review has been on UK literature. This review was not designed to be a systematic mining and presentation of all relevant literature. Similarly it is beyond the scope of this literature review to apply a weighting system that assesses the quality of all the studies.

Key findings

The preventative and rehabilitative role of education in youth crime

- Three areas have been identified in the literature where it is thought signification links occur between offending and education. These are detachment from mainstream education, the impact of custodial sentences and educational underachievement.
- A relationship between youth crime and disengagement from statutory schooling is well established in various bodies of literature. However the causal nature of this relationship, e.g. whether being involved in offending leads to disengagement from school or whether being disengaged from school leads to offending, is unclear.
- Young people excluded from school are more likely to be involved in offending, commit more offences, commit more serious offences and receive a custodial sentence. It is clear that exclusion from school is related to offending behaviour.
- There is limited evidence about why young people involved in crime tend to have problems at school or why there are differences in offending patterns once excluded. A number of explanations have been proposed that focus on various areas: the school, the young person, the effect of custody and the police.
- A key source of evidence about disengagement from school comes from young people themselves who report that: a) they had bad experiences of

school both in terms of treatment from teachers and quality of teaching; b) they were identified by teachers as troublemakers by teachers and c) in some cases this affected them emotionally.

- The impact of being disengaged from school and leaving school without qualifications has far reaching personal and economical consequences. Young people tend to lack the LLN skills that are increasingly considered necessary for entry into the labour market and may be left with serious attitudinal barriers towards engaging in post-16 learning.
- Gaining education can be a key protective factor against offending. This may be because good LLN skills can improve young people's employment prospects.
- Effective programmes tend to be multi-modal, e.g. able to address young people with multiple needs such as substances misuse, offending behaviour, housing issues as well as education and training.
- It is likely that there is a threshold of contact hours for programmes to be effective but the number of hours is debated in the literature and ranges from 75 to 150.

Highlighting effective teaching and learning practice in youth justice contexts

- Identifying effective pedagogy for young people involved in youth crime and learning in a variety of educational contexts is problematic. This group of learners are clearly not children but neither can they be completely conceptualised as adults.
- Key themes emerging from models of adult learning can make a substantial contribution to our pedagogic understanding of how young people involved in youth crime learn. In particular, a more complex understanding of the combination of factors affecting how adults learn is emphasised. Central to this approach is the conceptualisation of the agency or self-direction of adult learners. This indicates a more strategic and individualised approach to learning which takes full account of learners' particular characteristics and circumstances.
- Key pedagogical concepts particularly relevant to young people involved in crime are: a) a focus on each individual learner; b) the setting and social context; and c) an understanding of learners' relationships with peers and tutors.
- Adult oriented pedagogy employing less formal teaching methods may work better for young people with a history of disengagement.
- Informal learning with socially excluded young people reports that LLN skills embedded in real-life activities and contextualised tends to work best.
- In the classroom there may be a constantly shifting balance between learning and behavioural issues for tutors to manage, particularly in the custodial environment where young people may be on courses they have not chosen or are attending education as a requirement of the prison regime.
- Having a range of teaching strategies in place to plan lessons, teach in the classroom and assess outcomes, is highlighted as effective practice. This includes teaching practices such as developing Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), using SMART targets, developing schemes of work, developing lesson plans and having regular individual tutorials.

- Taking account of young people's needs and interests is critical to successful teaching and learning. This often means offering flexible teaching and support as well as ensuring that materials are up to date and relevant.
- Using key teaching concepts with young people in learning in custody and subject to prison regimes can be challenging. For example, it may be difficult to meet with young people individually to conduct tutorials and develop ILPs. Short-term sentences and frequent transferrals of learners to other establishments can present issues for setting longer-term targets and tailoring learning to each individual's needs.
- Effective leadership and management which has a clear strategy for delivering education and training and supporting staff on the front line is critical to success.

Young people's interpretation of and engagement in education and training in youth justice contexts

- Models of learning from psychology and the adult education field are united in their positioning of learners as central to the success of education and training provision. Understanding how learners construct and interpret their own learning, over time and in various educational contexts (school, community and custody), can deepen our understanding and increase engagement.
- Young people involved in crime are at a particular life stage, adolescence, and are making the transition from childhood to adulthood. Leaving school represents a structural turning point and entering post-16 education and training provision can pave the way to work. Offending can disrupt this transition.
- The focal theory of adolescence (Coleman and Hendry 1990, 1999) provides a framework for understanding this transition and emphasising the active role young people themselves play in their educational development.
- Bloomer and Hodkinson's (1997) theoretical frameworks, 'Studentship' and 'Learning Careers', although based on mainstream young people in various types of post-16 provision, can potentially develop our understanding of how young people involved in crime engage in learning.
- Research giving a voice to young people involved in the youth justice system and their views and experiences is building. Although this body of work focuses on a wide range of youth justice issues, some studies include education.
- Motivation is a complex and important factor in how engaged young people are in education, yet we know very little about why young people involved in crime do or do not engage in education. Tentative findings suggest that this is about gaining entry into the labour market and that vocational courses such as carpentry and mechanics, which directly facilitate gaining employment, are preferred.
- Young people's previous negative experiences of statutory school-based education can act as a barrier to further post-16 learning. However, young people on post-school education and training courses tend to compare post-16 provision favourably in comparison to school. Evidence suggests this is related to a more adult environment.

Identifying areas for further research

There is a growing evidence base to build upon, which not only informs how to develop education and training provision for young people involved in youth crime, but which also indicates where to focus research capacity.

1. *LLN outcomes* – there are very few studies that measure improvements in literacy and numeracy skills, particularly in the custodial context. In custody, gaining reliable data is a challenge due to short sentence lengths and prison turnover. The improvements may also be small in nature and difficult to detect with assessment instruments.
2. *Longitudinal outcomes of gaining LLN* – there are very few studies which examine the longitudinal outcomes of gaining LLN. Key issues to explore include the effect on recidivism and employment.
3. *Barriers towards learning* – being in custody can be a very difficult time for young people and understanding more about how this affects learning is critical.
4. *Motivation* – a key issue for learners is motivation. There are indications that gaining employment is a key aim for many young people involved in offending, but having a better understanding of what motivates this group of learners would enable better provision to be developed.
5. *Effective practice and embedding LLN* – how literacy and numeracy provision is taught in relation to vocational training or offending behaviour programmes is becoming increasingly important. This is particularly the case in custody where there can be significant challenges to embedding LLN in prison run vocational workshops.
6. *Using ICT in the secure estate* – another aspect of effective practice is the use of ICT in custody. Implementing web-based learning such as Learn Direct presents a significant security challenge. However, having access to the internet in custody has the potential to completely revolutionise learning in the secure estate and widen participation.
7. *Contemporary LLN skills* – a contemporary understanding of what these skills mean to young people would help to develop provision. This would include exploring how young people use the LLN skills they have and the activities which potentially present problems, e.g. filing in application forms.

Conclusions

- It is clear that gaining education and training can have wide ranging benefits for this group of young people's lives and evidence suggests that this can make an effective contribution to preventing offending and reducing re-offending.
- The research community has a key role to play in supporting the youth justice system in using education and training as a preventative and rehabilitative strategy for young people involved in youth crime.
- There are several clear and consistent messages emerging from the literature that form a solid foundation for developing what we know about education and training for young people involved in crime.
- Literature emerging over the last decade from the adult education field has substantially increased our understanding of what is best teaching and learning practice. Concepts such as contextualising and embedding LLN skills

have become, or are becoming, a key part of many youth justice related education and training provision.

- Starting at the point of the learner and taking account of the context of their lives and their aims and motivations for learning is a key aim. This is reflected in the Personalised Learning Approach. These findings are interrelated and reinforce the multi-agency, multi-modal approach that is characteristic of effective interventions.
- To provide effective education and training provision for young people involved in crime there needs to be a fundamental shift past a fragmented understanding and a move towards a more complex and realistic model of how this group of learners engage in education.
- Understanding how young people involved in offending interpret and construct their own learning is critical to providing effective provision.
- There is a both a need to take stock to ensure that as the evidence base is building, findings are utilised, and to ensure that key future research priorities are identified.

1. Introduction

Government strategies for preventing youth crime and dealing with young people already involved with the youth justice system increasingly emphasise the importance of education and training. However, young people involved in offending often represent one of the most difficult and challenging groups of learners to engage in education and training. At statutory school age these young people tend to be disengaged and excluded from mainstream learning. As a result they often they leave school without GCSEs and with low levels of literacy and numeracy skills. At this stage it can be critically important for young people to gain post-16 education and training; evidence suggests that gaining education can act as a protective factor against further offending and may facilitate entry into the labour market. Yet after school age this group of learners continue to be disengaged from education and training and are highlighted in adult education policy strategies as a priority group (DfES 2003b).

1.1 Definitions of young people involved in crime

The term 'young offender' currently refers to young people supervised by the youth justice system aged 10–17 who have committed an offence, while offenders aged 18–21 are referred to as 'young adult offenders'. A further distinction was made for young people who have been sentenced on three or more separate occasions, within three years of the last offence, who then become 'persistent young offenders' (Home Office 1997). Government agencies and organisations involved in youth crime tend to refer to 'children and young people involved in offending or who have committed an offence', or 'children and young people supervised by the youth justice system'.

In research literature each study or project defines young offenders in different ways. This tends to depend on when the study was published, reflecting current views on politically correct terms. It can also reflect positions in the youth justice system such as whether a young person has been convicted of an offence or not. Some young people may be involved in offending but have not been caught or come to the attention of police or youth offending teams. Some young people may not be involved in crime but may be at risk of offending. Again the criteria for being at risk of offending may vary by study.

The focus of this literature review is post-16 education and training for young people who are involved in youth crime. Taking this approach includes the various positions of young people involved with or potentially involved with the youth justice system.

1.2 Youth justice context

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) for England and Wales was set up by Parliament in 1998 as a non-departmental public body. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 underscored the need for the youth justice system to develop the capacity to prevent youth crime and the YJB's statutory aim is to prevent offending by

children and young people under the age of 18. The YJB also serves to monitor and improve the youth justice system as well as addressing the causes of young people's offending behaviour.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 specified that in every local authority, multi-agency Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were to be set up. The YOTs form a key part of the initiative giving the prevention of offending statutory status for a range of professionals working with children and young people. The YOTs bring together five statutory partners: the Police, the Probation Service, Social Services, and Education and Health. They are involved in all stages of the youth justice system from pre-court and court to post-court community and custodial sentences. Thus, the YOTs are designed to provide a comprehensive service, responding to the wide range of children and young people's needs.

The youth justice system offers a range of official pre-court and post-court community and custodial orders that deal with the problem of youth crime. These measures tend to be rehabilitative in nature, focusing on the specific needs of each young person and emphasising restorative justice and victim satisfaction. Continued awareness of the needs and requirements of these young people is reflected in current government strategy documents (DCSF 2007). The YJB aims to use restorative justice approaches in 60 per cent of disposals.

At the pre-conviction stage there are a number of orders that are open to the Police and Local Authority that deal with antisocial behaviour outside the court system. These include an Acceptable Behaviour Contract, an Anti-social Behaviour Order, a Local Child Curfew and Child Safety Order. These orders are for young people who have come to the attention of statutory agencies for offending-related reasons and it is hoped that they will help reduce the likelihood of further antisocial behaviour. The YJB also have a comprehensive prevention strategy of programmes and schemes targeting young people at risk of offending.

After conviction the court can impose a range of community orders where young people are supervised by YOTs. Community orders imposed by the court range in severity and include a Supervision Order, an Action Plan Order and a Reparation order. The recently introduced Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme is the most rigorous of non-custodial orders.

There are two main custodial orders for young people convicted of a criminal offence. The main custodial sanction is the Detention and Training Order (DTO). Young people are detained in the secure estate for half of this order then released to serve the remainder of their order 'on licence' in the community. For young people who have committed a serious offence, for which an adult would have received a sentence of 14 years or more, they can receive a Section 90/91, which is served entirely in custody and passed by a Crown Court.

At the heart of the national youth justice strategy is rehabilitation and investment in young people. The range of pre-court and post-court community and custodial sentences, including wider youth inclusion programmes, aim to balance deterrence, punishment and promoting skills that help young people get their lives back on track. This forms the basis of dealing with what is a serious social problem, young people offending.

1.2.1 The extent of youth crime

Young people committed around 302,000 offences (resulting in a pre-court or court order) over the financial year 2005–06 (YJB for England and Wales 2006). Unofficial estimates of the extent of youth offending may be much higher. Exclusion from school has a dramatic effect on the extent of youth crime, with young people self-reporting a steep increase in offending when excluded from school (MORI 2003).

This has led to a media furore in recent years about exclusions from school and youth crime spiralling out of control. However, more recent YJB statistics report that youth crime has risen by 11.4 per cent from 2002/03 to 2005/06 (YJB for England and Wales 2004a, 2005, 2006, 2007). The long-term official picture of the extent of youth crime is unclear, with changes in procedural reporting practices providing illusory trends (Farrington 1996). In addition, there is no clear idea of how much youth crime goes unreported.

The types of crimes young people commit vary and a range of offences were represented in the YJB's annual statistics 2005/06 (YJB for England and Wales 2006). The most common were Theft and Handling (18.5 per cent), Violence Against the Person (18.1 per cent), Motoring Offences (5.6 per cent), and Criminal Damage (12.9 per cent). Boys were responsible for 80.6 per of the offences and the young people were of predominately white ethnicity (85.2 per cent). Seventeen-year-olds committed the highest proportion (25.3 per cent) of offences, followed closely by sixteen-year-olds (24.3 per cent).

There are clearly debates about the trends in youth crime, how offending statistics are sourced and constructed and whether they include crimes which have not resulted in a formal conviction. However, it seems safe to suggest that youth crime is a serious social problem and one which will be an ongoing concern for any government.

1.2.2 Youth justice policy

The Skills for Life strategy introduced a key partnership between the (as was) DfES and the Home Office by establishing a dedicated Offenders Learning and Skills Unit, which became operational in April 2001. Along with the Prison Service, Probation Service, Youth Justice Board and Learning and Skills Council, these agencies are responsible for the strategic development of education and training provision for young people learning in various youth justice contexts, including custody.

Within these partnerships the blueprint for the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service is set out in two key documents; *The Offender's Learning Journey: Learning and skills provision for juvenile offenders in England* (LSC, Youth Justice Board, DfES, HM Prison Service 2004) and *The Offenders Learning and Skills Service for Adults and Juveniles Delivery Framework for England* (OLASS 2004). Respectively these documents set out what the service aims to deliver and how it aims to deliver it. New developments in other policy frameworks are identified such as The Carter Review, The 14 to 19 Education and Skills Summary, Entry to Employment (E2E), Every Child Matters and the New Children's Act 2004. These policy initiatives have different implications for young

people learning in various youth justice-related contexts (such as custody) and are highlighted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Policy initiatives and implications at a glance

Policy Initiatives	Key points and their implications for young people involved in the youth justice system
The Offender's Learning Journey: Learning and Skills provision for Juvenile offenders in England December 2004 from OLASS in DfES. The Youth Justice Board's specification for learning and skills 2002.	➢ Aimed to ensure that at least 90 per cent of young offenders are in suitable full-time education, training and employment during and at the end of sentence and that good resettlement plans are in place for young people leaving secure facilities. ➢ Ninety per cent of young people in Young Offender Institutes (YOIs) will receive 30hrs a week of education, training and personal development activity. ➢ YOIs will ensure that attendance rates for timetabled education and training sessions do not fall below 90 per cent. ➢ All young people entering secure facilities will be tested for literacy and numeracy with 80 per cent of young people on DTOs of 12-months plus improving by one skill level or more in literacy and/or numeracy to the level of need set out in their ILP. ➢ All young people entering secure facilities will have a training plan developed and subsequently reviewed in accordance with the national standard for youth justice.
The Carter Review of Correctional Services – *Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime: A new approach* (Carter 2003).	➢ The Carter Report recommended significant reforms to the criminal justice system including the introduction of the National Offender Management Service. However it was acknowledged that there is a need for a separate youth justice system with the YJB at the centre. ➢ The Carter Report will impact most on young people approaching 18 to 21 and moving into the adult criminal justice system.

14–19 Education and Skills White Paper Summary 2005 from DfES	➢ Achieving functional skills in literacy and numeracy should be at the heart of the 14–19 curriculum, reaching Level 2 in functional English and maths is a vital part of good education. To help achieve this the DfES have:
	   o Reduced the amount of prescription in the KS4 curriculum, providing more scope for teachers to support catch up and provide personalised learning
	   o Extended the KS3 strategy to improve classroom practice.
	➢ The gradual implementation of the 14–19 curriculum will lead to better vocational pathways and the

	increasing involvement of the FE sector in the 14–16 age group.
Entry to Employment (E2E) introduced in 2003	➢ E2E is a learning programme for young people established in 2003. ➢ The programme aims to help young people who are not yet ready to move straight into FE, modern apprenticeship programmes or employment. ➢ The programme is not time limited and will work with each young person on an individual needs basis to help prepare them to enter and be able to sustain a suitable training or employment post.
Every Child Matters Green Paper 2003 from the government (multiple departments)	➢ As a result of a public inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbie, Lord Laming made a series of recommendations. He made it clear that child protection cannot be separated from policies to improve children's lives as a whole – there is a need to focus both on the universal services which every child uses, and on more targeted services for those with additional needs. ➢ This led to the publication of *Every Child Matters* (TSO 2003), which set out policies designed both to protect children and maximise their potential. The aim is to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential by reducing levels of educational failure, ill-health, substance misuse, teenage pregnancy, abuse and neglect, crime and anti-social behaviour among children and young people. ➢ *Every Child Matters* sets out the vision of improving five outcomes for all children and young people. The ambition is to improve these five outcomes for all children and young people and to narrow the gap between those who do well and those who do not. The five outcomes are: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic well-being. ➢ The criminal justice system makes a vital contribution to all five of these outcomes. The prison service aims to create discrete regimes for young people with the emphasis on their well-being and preparing them for a constructive law-abiding life in the community. The emphasis which the prison service juvenile estates places on learning and skills means that for many young people – particularly those with a history of truancy and school exclusion – their time in custody gives them the first real experience of regular, uninterrupted education as well as the first opportunity to undertake vocational training.

The Children Act 2004, Chapter 31 linked to Every Child Matters published by the Office of Public Sector Information	➢ The Children Act 2004 provides the legislative foundation for *Every Child Matters* and the whole-system reform of children's services. ➢ The impact of reform in children's services driven by the new Children Act will introduce significant changes to services for children and young people. For example, the establishment of new multi-agency local authority children services departments will change the way information is shared between agencies and enable more holistic interventions and hopefully a more seamless service between custody and the community for young people currently in custody.

1.3 Education and training provision for young people involved in youth crime

1.3.1 Community and custody contexts

The types of post-16 education and training provision open to young people involved in the youth justice system can be diverse. Young people supervised in the community tend to attend provision similar to their non-offending peers. Such provision may be targeted at socially excluded young people and those who have left school without qualifications and with low levels of LLN. As a consequence, although these education providers may not be targeting young people involved in the youth justice system, they may have a high proportion of learners who are supervised by YOTs. YOTs also get to know the education providers in the areas which take their clients. The reverse is true for young people in custody where education provision is targeted at inmates only. However, different establishments have different education providers and educational regimes. Although to an extent this is standardised by policy. The key point is that with so many different types of provision and learning contexts, producing a definitive what works in all situations is problematic.

1.4 The challenge for education stakeholders

1.4.1 Post-16 education and training providers

One of the biggest challenges all post-16 education providers for young people have is the inclusion of LLN in wider courses. Subject specific tutors in vocational settings may not have the commitment or the training to embed LLN within their teaching. Similarly LLN teachers may not have sufficient knowledge of particular trades to contextualise LLN effectively. A key task in the secure estate is meeting the statutory requirements set out in policy, achieving associated key performance targets set by regulatory bodies, whilst ensuring that LLN provision is integrated into the wider prison curriculum. This includes vocational courses provided by the prison service. It is clear that progress has been made to embed the delivery of LLN in all YOIs but more needs to be done to ensure that there are

the year on year increases in levels of achievement set out in key policy documents.[1] How to go about managing and integrating these various factors and ensuring that young people in custody have high levels of achievement is not clear.

1.4.2 LLN tutors

Teachers delivering post-16 education and training courses, including LLN, in various youth justice related contexts can be faced with two serious challenges, as outlined below:

1. Teachers can often be confronted with *difficult learners*, who because of their history of educational disengagement, are hard to engage. A cycle of disengagement may have been formed early on and can represent a significant barrier to learning. There can also be associated behavioural problems in the classroom for teachers to deal with. For teachers to work effectively they must overcome these barriers and manage behaviour effectively. This is particularly the case for teachers in the custodial context, who are working within an environment bound up with punishment.
2. Applying *effective practice* in the classroom is a challenge for all teachers regardless of context. This is particularly the case for LLN teachers as these subjects are difficult to teach as they tend to be associated with school. They are a turn off for many learners, young and old alike. Effective practice such as contextualising and embedding LLN are now well established in the adult education field, with research evidence of their effectiveness emerging. A number of resources and materials have been developed for teaching LLN skills in a contextualised format. The problem is that disengaged young people in post-16 provision are often no older than 18 and the materials are less well developed for this age group. Clearly under-18s are not children but neither are they yet adults. This can result in material being used that is either too young and basic or too old and unrelated to their interests. Gaining access to materials can also be a significant issue for some teachers in highly specialised contexts such as the secure estate.

1.4.3 Young people involved in crime as adolescents and learners

Understanding the context of disaffected young learners' lives is an important first step in re-engaging them in education and training. These young people are to varying degrees adolescents and this is something often neglected by policy, education providers and tutors. Seminal work on the nature of adolescence by Coleman and Hendry (1990) starts by arguing that there are a number of theoretical approaches to adolescence with current thinking moving past stage theories and emphasising the idea that adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood. This agued transitional period is growing longer and must be viewed in the context of current social and economic changes (Coleman and Hendry 1999). Youth crime can have a serious impact on the transition from childhood to adulthood.

For many young people, leaving school represents a key milestone in their journey towards adulthood. However young people who have been involved in crime have often truanted or been excluded from school prior to school-leaving

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[1] LSC, Youth Justice Board, DfES, HM Prison Service (2004)

age. For them the next step is either post-16 education and training or entry into the labour market. As discussed above, this group of young people are often reliant, after leaving school early without GCSEs, on obtaining post-16 education and training to gain employment. Getting a job represents a key milestone towards adulthood and is a key aim for many young people involved in the youth justice system (Hurry et al. 2004). An extended period without employment or education and training may lead to a prolonged period of adolescence and potentially to offending.

Coleman and Hendry (1990, 1999) propose a 'focal' theory of adolescence which argues that different patterns of relationships become a major focus at different points. The young person in this approach is assumed to be an active agent, managing their own development and the events that occur during their transition to adulthood. Incorporating the concept of agency, Coleman and Henry (1999) later discuss success adaptive coping and adjustment to changes. Conceptualising young people involved in offending in this way has a number of advantages. Firstly, it prioritises their role as learners and highlights their motivations for learning. Secondly, it takes account of the competing stressors young people face when they are learning as well as fulfilling the requirements of court imposed orders. Thirdly, the concepts of coping and adjustment to changes can help in the understanding of why some young people are disengaged from learning.

The custodial context can present particular difficulties. Being in custody is often a very difficult and traumatic time for young people, particularly if they have never been in custody before. There are a number of potential challenges and barriers facing young people learning in a secure context, as are outlined below.

- **The prison curriculum** may not be able to meet young people's needs. For example there may be particular vocational courses that young people want to do but are unable because they are not available in that institution, or there are no places or they have not been security cleared. Other issues include work being pitched at the appropriate level; some young people not finding work challenging enough while others struggle to keep up. In some cases, the short-term nature of their sentence may prevent them starting courses such as GCSEs.
- **The learning environment** in many YOIs is unstable and noisy. Young people are confronted with volatile environments where there may frequently be severe disruption requiring prison officers to intervene. It is difficult to work under these conditions and young people may be drawn into a culture of non-work and disruption. This issue can be exacerbated by the poor state of some classrooms and subjects being taught in inappropriate classrooms, e.g. LLN in an IT room where young people can play games on the computer.
- **Young people's cognitive functioning** may be somewhat affected by being in custody and dealing with elements of the regime. For example, not receiving a letter from home or not getting a call home, only being allowed one shower a week, not receiving enough food or being given meals at unpredictable times. This may lead to feelings of fear, anger and confusion, making attention to learning very difficult if not impossible. Even if a young person is committed to education, learning may come at the bottom of a myriad of other needs.
- **Learning in custody may introduce identify conflicts** as the custodial environment is associated first and foremost with punishment. The compulsory nature of attending education may lead to it being associated with punishment.

In this sense young people see themselves as criminals doing their time and not learners entering a classroom to gain knowledge.

- **There may be other factors such as bullying** which affect a young person's ability to engage in education. Although all YOIs have clear anti-bullying policies which are enforced, this is still a frightening experience for young people and may lead to reluctance to attend classes.

1.5 Scope of literature review

This literature reviews examines post-16 education and training for young people learning in youth justice contexts. There are diverse and complex bodies of literature which address various different aspects of our understanding. This literature review draws out the main themes and findings relating to the research questions specified in the next section. It covers a number of disciplines and types of research, including both qualitative and quantitative methods. Similarly, both governmental and academic research is evaluated. International literature has been referred to where appropriate, but the main focus of the review has been on UK literature. As such the review was not designed to be a systematic mining and presentation of all relevant literature. Similarly it is beyond the scope of this report to apply a weighting system that assesses the quality of all the studies. This literature review was designed to contribute to an NRDC research project on improving LLN skills of young people involved in, or at risk of becoming involved in, youth crime.

2. Aims and literature review questions

2.1 Review aims

With so much government ideology and resources invested in education as a preventative and rehabilitative strategy for young people involved in the youth justice system, this review aims to explore to what extent this is supported by evidence.

This review begins by exploring the relationship between education and youth crime. Three key areas are emphasised: the link between exclusion from education and offending, the reasons for exclusion from school and the impact of exclusion on young people's lives. The question of whether education is a protective factor that can act to reduce offending and re-offending is addressed along with what characterises an effective intervention.

Over the last five years a clear picture has been emerging of what effective teaching practice in the classroom is. This is mainly emerging from the adult education field with a particular focus on teaching adult literacy and numeracy. As a result of key government documents such as Moser (DfEE 1999) which initially highlighted national deficits in LLN, and more recently Leitch (2006) on the long-term skills needs of the country, improving literacy and numeracy continues to be a government priority. This body of work provides an indication of what may work with young people supervised by the youth justice system, many of whom have become disengaged from education and training. However debate continues about how best to apply these findings to the various youth justice contexts within which young people find themselves

Literature examining what works in preventing and reducing youth crime and research identifying what is effective teaching and learning practice, continues to be informative and essential. However, research focusing directly on young people involved in crime as learners is comparatively underdeveloped, despite there being a strong theoretical basis for taking this approach and the potentially substantive contribution these findings can make to knowledge in the field.

Models of learning from psychology and the adult education field are united in their positioning of learners as central to the success of education and training. Consulting young people about matters that concern them is also becoming an increasingly popular approach by government agencies such as the YJB. Examining the contribution disaffected young people as learners make to how engaged or not they are in education can strengthen the developing evidence-base based on 'what works'.

This literature review aims to move past a fragmented understanding of post-16 education and training provision for young people involved in youth crime. By bringing together the main findings from diverse disciplines and areas of study, it is possible to examine how they relate to each other, to provide a more sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of how this group of learners engage in post-16 education and training. Fundamental to this approach is

incorporating the views and experiences of young people who are key stakeholders and learning within the context of the youth justice system.

2.2 Research questions

This report addresses three main research questions related to the aims outlined above.

2.2.1 What is the role of education and training in preventing youth crime and reducing recidivism?

For a youth justice system emphasising prevention as much as rehabilitation, the relative contribution of education and training is a critical question. It is clear that education and training can potentially have a wide range of positive effects on young people's lives. These may include facilitating entry into the labour market, reducing the likelihood of offending or re-offending and improving soft skills such as increased confidence. This review will examine the key findings of literature designed to assess the effectiveness of education.

2.2.2 What is effective teaching and learning practice with young people learning in various youth justice contexts?

Identifying key features of effective teaching and learning practice can help to raise the quality of post-16 education and training provision for young people learning in youth justice contexts. In combination with discussions about pedagogy and models of adult learning, this body of literature can provide a sound rationale for developing and delivering post-16 education and training provision. In particular this review will examine the Personalised Learning Approach and how this can be applied to specialised youth justice contexts such as custody.

2.2.3 How do young people involved in youth crime interpret and experience education and training?

It is increasingly recognised by policymakers and the academic community that consultation with learners is integral to developing and delivering effective education and training. To successfully engage one of the most challenging and hard to reach groups of young learners, key stakeholders must move beyond 'what works' and 'best practice' literature to include learners themselves. Without a clear understanding of young people's perspective, it may not be possible to develop provision that is truly effective. This review will examine the body of literature exploring the voices of young people attending education in the context of the juvenile justice system.

3. The preventative and rehabilitative role of education in youth crime

3.1 The relationship between youth crime and education and training

A relationship between youth crime and disengagement from education has been well established in various bodies of literature from many different disciplines (Armstrong et al. 2005, Flood-Page et al. 2000, Ball and Connolly 2000). Stephenson (2007) identifies three areas where he argues there are significant links: detachment from mainstream education, the impact of custodial sentences and educational underachievement. However, Stephenson goes on to point out that research in these areas is uneven and sometimes non-existent. The relationship between youth crime and education is a complex one with large gaps in our knowledge. However, there are some clear and consistent messages emerging about the relationship between young crime and education which can provide a basis for further exploration.

3.1.1 Exclusion from school promotes offending

As new studies emerge it is reported that a disruptive school environment is strongly associated with anti-social behaviour in young people (Hayward and Sharp 2005). A self-report survey conducted by MORI (2003) for the YJB, found that 60 per cent of young people excluded from school reported offending in comparison to 26 per cent of mainstream young people. The MORI survey (2003) found that one factor mediating this link between school exclusion and offending may be having too little to do. Forty-two per cent of excluded young people, in comparison to 25 per cent attending school, cited boredom as a reason for offending. Previous findings reported by the YJB in (YJB 2001) tell a similar story. Young people involved in crime tend to be disengaged from school and this may affect their levels of criminal activity.

There are differences in the types of offences (related to seriousness) committed by young people excluded from mainstream education. For example, hurting someone was cited as one of the most common offences by all young people taking part in the MORI survey. However, for those young people excluded from education, this more often resulted in the victim needing medical attention (62 per cent in comparison to 41 per cent in mainstream education). The most common offence for young people in mainstream education was travelling on public transport without paying the fare, whereas for excluded young people, it was carrying a knife. First offences also tend to occur around the same time as first truanting (Rutter et al.1998) and truancy is thought to be the greatest single predictor of youth crime (Reid 1999).

Stephenson (2007) points to further differences, reporting that young people who are excluded from education are much more likely to receive a custodial sentence. This may not be surprising considering the finding that young people excluded from school report committing a higher volume of crimes and that those

crimes tend to be more serious offences. It is also possible that these young people have more serious behavioural issues which resulted in their being excluded in the first place. Clearly this area presents a critical gap in knowledge and highlights the complexity of making causal links between young people being excluded from school and committing crimes.

3.1.2 Reasons for disengagement

There is less research evidence examining why young people involved in crime tend to have problems at school and are more involved in offending. Stephenson (2007) provides a clear account of the influence of school, highlighting key factors such as the quality of the school, the demographics of pupils and high incidences of bullying. Once excluded from education, explanations for increased offending include young people having increased opportunity to offend, greater involvement with delinquent peers, more conflict at home and greater surveillance by the police (Stephenson 2006). There are clearly a number of other factors involved in explaining why young people offend.

Andrews (1995) provides a fairly typical list of factors as follows:

1. Antisocial/pro-criminal attitudes, values, beliefs and cognitive-emotional states.
2. Pro-criminal associates and isolation from anti-criminal others.
3. Temperamental and personality factors conducive to criminal activity, including psychopathy, weak socialisation, impulsivity, restless aggressive energy, egocentricism, below average verbal intelligence, a taste for risk, and weak problem-solving/self-regulation skills.
4. A history of antisocial behaviour evident from a young age, in a variety of settings and involving a number and variety of different acts.
5. Familial factors that include criminality and a variety of psychological problems in the family of origin and, in particular, low levels of affection, caring and cohesiveness, poor parental supervision and discipline practices, and outright neglect and abuse.
6. Low levels of personal educational, vocational or financial achievement and, in particular, an unstable employment record.

There are clear indications from these studies about what factors are associated with offending in young people. There is no doubt that a troubled educational history and employment are associated with offending. What is lacking from such studies is a more detailed understanding. Perhaps the most valuable source of evidence about why young people involved in offending are disengaged from education comes from research focussing on young people's experiences and perspectives.

Braggins and Talbot (2003) examined prisoners' (including young people) views on education and included their previous experiences of school. Unsurprisingly, they found that many participants reported poor experiences of school. This included experiences of truanting, exclusion, poor quality of teaching and feelings of having wasted many years of life and achieving nothing. There is clearly an emphasis on the quality of the school and the feeling that it wasn't something that was of benefit to them.

Lyon et al. (2000) report similar findings from work with young people in custody. Not only did young people report having little contact with statutory school and of leaving school before they reached compulsory school age, but they had a clear sense that they were identified by teachers as problematic. In some cases young people felt picked on by teachers. Young people also reported criminal activity taking place at school. Out of the few young people in the study staying on until school-leaving age, very few reported gaining any qualifications. In a similar way to Braggins and Talbot (2003) these findings point to aspects of the school and how young people were dealt with by teachers.

The picture so far of why young people involved in the youth justice system are disengaged from education was developed by Hughes (2005) who examined prisoner-students' views of distance learning in custody. Similar to previous findings, again participants reported a history of truancy, exclusion and problem behaviour. However, internal factors were also highlighted with reports of a general dislike of school, with feelings of lacking confidence, fear of being bullied and problems with undiagnosed learning difficulties. These findings build upon the work of Lyon et al. (2000) and Braggins and Talbot (2003) by focusing on how internal factors can contribute to disengagement.

3.1.3 Impact of disengagement: personal and economic

There are a number of serious economic and personal consequences for young people disengaged from education. As discussed above, being excluded from school may have a negative impact on young people's offending rates and they may get into further trouble. However, the literature clearly identifies two additional consequences. Firstly, young people disengaged from education tend to lack school-based qualifications such as GCSE's and have low levels of literacy and numeracy. This is problematic because there is evidence to suggest that lacking these skills, particularly numeracy, can impede entry into the labour market. Secondly, they may develop a negative attitude towards school which may prevent further engagement in much needed post-16 education and training provision. In this sense, young people involved in the youth justice system maintain their disengaged status and move from being disengaged school pupils to disengaged post-16 learners.

Economic consequences
Disengagement from school tends to result in young people leaving school early and having low educational achievements (Farrington 1995, Berridge et al. 2001). In particular low levels of numeracy and literacy skills have been reported (Social Exclusion Unit 2002) for this group. The results of the Youth Lifestyles survey show a significant relationship between truancy, exclusion, leaving school without qualifications and offending (Flood-Page et al. 2000). In the custodial setting, 10 per cent of the YOI population were at Entry level 1 in literacy and 12 per cent in numeracy. Fifty-one percent of the YOI population were below Level 1 and 52 per cent on numeracy (ECOTEC 2001). For a population of young people supervised by YOTs in the community, 57 per cent were below Level 1 in literacy and 63 per cent were below Level 1 in numeracy as assessed by the Basic Skills Agency assessment and compared to the national standards (Hurry and Moriarty 2004).

Educational attainment and good basic skills are intrinsically linked to employment. Good literacy and numeracy skills improve young people's

employment prospects (Parsons and Bynner 1999). Research evidence from the British Birth Cohort Studies (Bynner 2004) examining the link between literacy, numeracy and employability, reported that for school leavers, literacy and numeracy was significant not only in gaining employment, but in retaining employment and progressing in the labour market. Low LLN skills were as important as a lack of qualifications when predicting unemployment. There are signs of increasing polarising between those with low LLN skills and those who are competent, in their labour market positions (Bynner 2004). Bynner continues to argue that the consequences of low LLN skills in this area could perhaps pose the biggest threat to a cohesive society and social inclusion. Gaining employment has also been reported as potentially a protective factor against offending and re-offending in young people (Farringdon et al. 1986).

Personal consequences

Negative experiences at school and exclusion from the formal schooling process may leave young people not only lacking in qualifications but with an aversion to future learning. Young people involved in crime tend to continue to be disengaged in learning after compulsory school age. Providing effective education and training provision for young people involved in the youth justice system remains a challenge for policymakers and practitioners. How past experiences of education affect current levels of engagement is a critical issue for researchers to explore and address.

In 2002, the Learning and Skills Council commissioned Opinion Leader Research to examine young people's attitudes to learning. Although this research did not focus on young people involved in the youth justice system, the young people participating had few or no qualifications. Experiences at school strongly influenced their current perceptions of education. This was negatively associated with systems, rules and regulations and in particular as something they were not in control of. Negative experiences included bad teachers, boring work and the perception of school being a waste of time. Young people reported negative experiences at school as an attitudinal barrier to learning. A related finding was that training and learning had more positive associations as young people choose to do them. This has two main implications for young people who are also involved in the youth justice system. Firstly, as previously discussed many young people involved in youth crime have had negative experiences of school and this may contribute to continued disengagement in post-16 learning. Secondly, some young people are attending education on a compulsory basis as they are in custody or it is part of their sentence. Again, compulsory attendance is similar to school and may have an impact on current learning.

Summary

The literature discussed so far in this review has established some clear and consistent findings about the relationship between youth crime and education. Young people excluded from education are more likely to be involved in youth crime, they are more likely to commit a higher volume of offences and the offences they commit appear to be more serious. Furthermore, once caught research suggests they are more likely to receive a custodial sentence. It is clear that exclusion from education has far reaching consequences.

There can be serious personal and economic consequences for young people being excluded from education. Not only do they often leave school without qualifications but often they also have low levels of literacy and numeracy. This

can impede progress on post-16 courses and present a barrier to entering the labour market. In addition, this group of learners often hold negative attitudes towards education based on their troubled experiences of school.

Given that disengagement from education has serious effects on young peoples' lives and futures and is a risk factor for offending, it is critical that this group of young people are engaged in education provision both pre- and post-16. There is some evidence to suggest that gaining education and training can make a substantial contribution to helping young people involved in youth crime back onto the right track.

3.2 Effectiveness: can gaining education and training reduce offending and social exclusion?

The YJB report that the benefits associated with engagement in education are widely recognised as major factors in preventing offending (Education, training and employment corporate brochure series).[2] As a result education and training provision for young people forms an important part of the YJB's national strategy for reducing re-offending. By March 2006, the YJB were aiming to ensure that 90 per cent of young people involved in the youth justice system were in suitable full-time education, training and employment (Target 5, in the Youth Justice Board's targets for 2004/05 to 2006/07 (YJB for England and Wales 2004b)).

3.2.1 Risk and protective factors

A recent report by Anderson et al. (2005) for Communities that Care and the YJB reported that there is now considerable research evidence examining risk and protective factors for youth crime. Protective factors are defined as 'those that moderate the effect of exposure to risk' (Anderson et al. 2005). In the presence of risk factors, protective factors are reported to protect against involvement in youth crime. School is identified as one of four risk/protective factor domains. There are four school-based factors identified: low achievement beginning in primary school, aggressive behaviour such as bullying, lack of commitment such as truancy and school disorganisation. Earlier work, reported that educational achievement has been found to act as a protective factor against offending (Hawkins et al. 2000).

Andrews (1995) provides further useful detail, estimating the relative importance of each set of factors. Based on an analysis of 372 studies of the correlates of crime published in England since 1970, he tabulates the mean correlation coefficients of each of these six categories of risk/need factors with criminal behaviour (with number of contributing studies in parentheses).

1. Lower class origins   0.16   (97)
2. Personal distress/psychopathology   0.08   (226)
3. Personal education/vocational achievement   0.12   (129)
4. Parental/family factors   0.18   (334)
5. Temperament/misconduct/personality   0.21   (621)

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[2] http://www.yjb.gov.uk/Publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=335&eP=

6. Antisocial attitudes/associates   0.22   (168)

Such a list demonstrates that educational/employment factors, whilst correlated with or predictive of crime, leave a lot unexplained. According to Andrews' list, they explain only 1.4 per cent of the variance in criminal conduct[3]. Other factors such as antisocial attitudes and temperament are slightly more predictive, explaining around 5 per cent of the variance, but again they are only giving us a small piece of the picture. However, the more risk factors that a young person accumulates the higher likelihood of offending (Farrington 1995).

As one might expect from the fact that criminal behaviour is predicted from an accumulation of risk factors, those young people who are exposed to risk in one form or another may be protected by 'resilience' factors. Summarising the field, Hawkins and colleagues (2000) list the following as important:

- Intelligence/academic achievement
- Resilient temperament
- Appropriate values within community
- Social competence
- Pro-social involvement

The presence of these factors has been found to reduce an individual's likelihood of offending. There is evidence that we could add employment to this list. Farrington and his colleagues (1986) found that official crime rates were lower for young men (14 to 18 ½ year olds) during periods when they were employed, than when they were unemployed. Interestingly, this difference was observed for offences involving material gain (theft, burglary, robbery, fraud). Employment had little effect on other offences (violence, vandalism, drug use). This suggests that legitimate access to money was protective.

Education and training have the potential to influence not only academic achievement and employment opportunities, but also values and 'pro-social involvement'. For example, Ayers et al.'s (1999) longitudinal study of young people who had stopped offending, found that young men who had skills that would support conventional involvement in school and other social systems were more likely to stop offending. For both young men and young women, commitment to school predicted less offending.

However, evidence of the effectiveness of education programmes aimed at reducing recidivism in the young is limited, both in Britain and internationally (Utting and Vennard 2000). Largely on the basis of research carried out in the US, there is convergence that intervention generally can reduce offending both in adults and young people and that education is one type of intervention that looks promising.

One of the largest studies of the impact of education on offending was carried out in Canada (Poporino and Robinson 1992). Re-admissions to prison of 1736 offenders who had participated in Adult Basic Education (ABE) were monitored for 1.1 years. They were classified into three groups according to their participation in ABE: those who had completed ABE, those who were released before completing ABE and those who withdrew from ABE. Thirty per cent of

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[3] The square of the correlation coefficient.

completers had re-admissions in the follow-up period, compared with 35.5 per cent of those released before completion and 41.6 per cent of those who withdrew. Whilst these results are optimistic in terms of the impact of education on offending, interpreting the comparison is not straightforward. For example, the group who withdrew from ABE were self-selected. In an attempt to address this, the authors compared the three groups on a number of dimensions including history with the criminal justice system and age. Whilst they were similar in terms of average sentence length and percentage serving violent offences, they were different in terms of previous custodial sentences and age (completers were more likely to be first time inmates and to be younger).

3.2.2 Characteristics of an effective intervention

A key study by Lipsey (1995), a meta-analysis of 400 studies, exploring the effectiveness of various types of treatments on young people involved in offending, highlighted what makes an effective programme. These studies had to meet certain minimum standards in terms of methodological adequacy. The work was done in a context of pessimism about the existence of any treatment that could reduce offending. Overall, Lipsey reported a 10 per cent reduction in offending as a result of treatment and this was heralded as evidence that society can make a difference. Whilst he warns of the difficulties of identifying effective programmes with great precision from such meta-analyses, the results suggest that certain broad types of programme are a better bet than others. On the basis of his meta-analysis Lipsey (1995) reported that:

- Interventions that focused on the young people's behaviour and skills (rather than for example, internal states) were the most effective. Basic and vocational skills would come into this category.
- Such interventions were most successful when delivered in 'multimodal packages', for example, including elements addressing behaviour, academic skills, vocational skills and communication skills.
- Much less effective were programmes involving counselling (including vocational counselling or careers advice without a job-finding element).
- The most effective progammes run within the juvenile justice system (probation, prison or parole) were those targeting employment. This was not true for programmes run by voluntary and non-government organisations, though the reason for this was not clear.
- Lipsey found that greater involvement of researchers in treatment design and implementation was associated with effectiveness. He interpreted this finding to support the importance of supervision and monitoring in ensuring good implementation.
- Provision of 100 or more contact hours, delivered at two or more contacts per week over a period of 26 weeks was associated with effectiveness.

A few years later Lipsey and Derzon (1998) carried out a meta-analysis of programmes delivered to young people who were considered to be serious offenders. The results suggest that the impact of such programmes are slightly larger for the more serious offenders than for the less serious. For this group the most consistently effective programmes were those targeting interpersonal skills, individual counselling and behavioural issues. This may well reflect the particular significance of antisocial behaviour in the aetiology of serious offending. Multiple service programmes were also effective. The four employment-related programmes (which only included those that actually involved paid work) and two

academic programmes showed moderate effects overall (equated effect sizes = 0.30 and 0.29 respectively). Such effect sizes are good for social interventions and well worth having. However, there was a good deal of variation between the programmes within each of these categories (employment and academic), some were very effective and others were not effective.

In a more recent meta-analysis of European interventions to reduce recidivism, Redondo and his colleagues (1999) concluded that whilst cognitive-behavioural techniques were effective, education programmes were not. However, only five education programmes were included, all of very short duration (two weeks or one week, with one programme lasting two months).

Kendall and colleagues (2002) examining the effects of alternative education initiatives reported a number of findings relevant to offenders:

- Students with offending records were more likely to have ended up in undesirable destinations (unemployed, no provision or custody).
- Students who had the highest number of offences (18) were unable to be traced and persistent offenders were most likely not be traced.
- The link between number of offences and undesirable and untraceable destinations suggests that some of the more vulnerable students were not sufficiently supported.
- There is a slow down in the increase in students recorded offending while attending alternative education provision.
- Alternative education initiatives can have a positive impact on young people with relatively low levels of offending.

A study on the impact of corrections: a review of 'what works' by Harper and Chitty (2005) reported that the evidence in Britain is mixed and limited, but there is robust evidence to support the use of offending behaviour programmes. Correctional Services are defined as interventions with adults, which aim to reduce re-offending. Although, this work focuses on adults and was not directly focussed on the impact of behaviour programmes for young people involved in offending or indeed education and training provision, their key findings are in line with past evidence. In particular, that multi-modal approaches to interventions is likely to be the most effective. Multi-modal approaches tackle the variety of needs young people involved in youth crime may have (e.g. behaviour issues, substance misuse, housing, etc., as well as education and training). The question of how education and training provision fits into multi-modal programmes for young people in the youth justice system is an important area to explore.

The 2001 Hobbs and Hook report for the YJB (YJB 2001) examining effective practice with young people in secure facilities reported five broad principles of effective practice:

1. Risk classification – high risk offenders need to be matched to higher levels of intervention.
2. Offending related needs – the focus of programmes should be on problems that directly contribute to offending, i.e. substance misuse.
3. Learning styles – programmes must incorporate the different learning styles of offenders into programmes.
4. Multi-modal – programmes must recognise that there is no 'magic bullet' and that offenders have a variety of complex needs.

5. Programme integrity – programmes should be delivered consistently to allow for evaluations.

Based on 'research and practice', McGuire (1995) noted further guidelines for more effective programmes:

- Risk classification – high risk offenders should receive more intensive services.
- Criminogenic need – if the aim is to reduce offending, target the factors which are most likely to cause people to offend. The relationship between employment and offending explored by Farringdon et al. (1986) is consistent with this argument.
- Responsivity – participatory methods are preferable to those which are didactic or loose and unstructured.
- Community based – programmes based in the community tend to achieve greater effects than those in custody where the environment can presents additional problems.

Consistent with this, in the UK Nuttall et al. (1998) have argued that crime reduction should be addressed through an integrated strategy, echoing Graham and Bennett's (1995) conclusions that interventions with multiple foci and integrated into a package are more cost effective than those with a single focus. More recently, Morris et al. (1999) have published a critical review of evidence published from 1988 onwards to consider strategies that have been successful for engaging disaffected young people. They also conclude that longer-term, multi-stranded programmes which are devised and delivered through a multi-agency approach are the most effective. They add that this mix of programme elements should be delivered in a logical sequence and that there should be a focus on the individual young person through action planning, with clear target setting. They recommend that programmes should aim to develop young people's confidence and self-esteem before raising education and employment issues, but this is not supported by Lipsey's analysis (1995), which found that targeting internal states rather than behaviour rarely showed an impact on offending behaviour.

From the basic skills perspective, there is an acknowledgement that we do not know a great deal about the key features of effective basic skills provision. Brooks and his colleagues (2001) wrote that 'there is an absence of intervention studies exploring what factors in teaching basic skills cause progress in learning basic skills' and that 'there is an absence of intervention studies exploring what factors in teaching basic skills cause progress in learning basic skills.' Coben et al. (2003) make a similar point in their review of adult numeracy research.

However, there are some findings which turn up with regularity. One is that there needs to be a certain number of contact hours to produce reliable learning. Estimates for desirable/minimum requirements vary from 75 hours (Brooks et al. 2001) to 150 (Commings and Soricane 2005, Commings et al. 2000). This mirrors Lipsey's comments on effective criminal justice interventions. A key finding in Condelli's review of effective ESOL provision was that connecting literacy teaching to everyday life made a significant difference in reading basic skills development (2002). Related to this, Coben et al. (2003) remark that adults use of numbers is 'deeply embedded in the contexts in which they occur and that

that makes transfer of learning problematic'. Finally, Tusting and Barton (2003) give as their first key idea about how adults learn that 'adults have their own motivations for learning.'

Mindful of this last point and the fact that a common issue for basic skills programmes is high drop out, it is important to understand what adults want out of education and training and what motivates them to attend. A key theme emerging again and again in the literature is that successful programmes need to be multi-modal. Education needs to be part of a range of interventions. This may be particularly the case for young people involved in crime who have multiple needs and who have proved difficult to engage in education and training provision.

Summary
The literature suggests that education and training can make a positive contribution to preventing and reducing re-offending, but more evidence is needed, especially for young people and the UK context. There are debates about the relative contribution of education in relation to other interventions (tackling issues such a substance misuse, offending behaviour and housing needs). There are some consistent findings about what constitutes an effective programme. A key finding is that programmes need to be multi-modal and address the number of issues a young person may face. In the context of education, research evidence suggests that number of contact hours is important and that there may be a threshold of contact hours required for education to be beneficial. Although the actual number of contact hours proposed for effective education and learning varies.

4. Highlighting effective teaching and learning practice in youth justice contexts

Practitioners working with young people involved in crime are often confronted with a group of learners whose previous experiences of education present a barrier. What happens in the classroom is critically important. If practitioners are to be effective, they must overcome the challenges presented by the learners (such as their attitudes and behaviour), whilst ensuring they deliver high quality provision. This starts with the pedagogic rationale underpinning practice and continues with what we know about how best teaching and learning practice is applied in the classroom. The literature in this section is drawn from the wider evidence base on what is best practice in teaching adults LLN. It provides a solid base from which to develop what is best practice with young people involved in crime. Where possible this review will highlight how best these findings can be applied to various youth justice contexts and identify any areas of potential difficulty.

4.1 Teaching and learning pedagogy for disengaged young people

Identifying effective pedagogy for disaffected young people involved in the youth justice system is problematic. Young people and young adults involved in crime can be in various educational situations: in their last year at school, in Pupil Referral Units, in custody or in mainstream post-16 provision. This group of learners are clearly not children but neither can they be completely conceptualised as adults.

Debate about pedagogy in the 1970s focused on whether there should be a different pedagogical approach for adults. Tusting and Barton (2003) in their review of models of adult learning, point to three key publications which argued that adult learners were distinct from child learners: Houle (1972) *The Design of Education*, Kidd (1978) *How Adults Learn* and Knowles (1973) *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species.* Whether young people or more specifically young people in the criminal justice system are positioned as children or adult learners is a key conceptual issue to resolve.

4.1.1 Child versus adult centred approaches

Knowles' influential work on adult learners has three central arguments underpinning an adult model of learning called 'andragogy'. Firstly, Knowles argues that adults need to know why they are learning what they are learning (Tusting and Barton 2003). This is in contrast to pedagogic models of teacher-directed learning which argues that children don't need to know why they are learning only that is it taught by their teacher (Tusting and Barton 2003). In this sense children are dependent and adults are self-directing. Secondly, it is argued that adult learning is connected to their stage of life and social roles, which are underpinned by adults having accumulated a different quality of experiences to

children (Tusting and Barton 2003). This is again in contrast to child-centred pedagogic models within which children's experiences are of little value and learning is subject-oriented dictated by the curriculum (Tusting and Barton 2003). Thirdly, Tusting and Barton (2003) point out that Knowles' model of andragogy argues that adults are driven by internal motivation and engage in problem-centred learning. This is in contrast to children whose learning is not centred on resolving problems but is subject centred.

The concept of andragogy itself was questioned and developed with debates throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. These ideas make a substantial contribution to developing a framework for understanding how disaffected young people may learn in community and in custody, particularly the work of Hanson (1996), who questioned the intrinsic notion of absolute differences between how adults and children learn, which lead to generalised theories of learning such as andragogy (Tusting and Barton 2003). Instead, Tusting and Barton (2003) summarise that Hanson called for a focus on each individual learner, the setting, social context and an understanding of the learners' relationships with peers and tutors.

4.1.2 Using non-traditional pedagogy

Hanson's approach provides a framework for understanding the complexity and diversity of disaffected young people supervised in the community or learning in the secure estate as a heterogeneous group of learners within a particular learning context. As Tusting and Barton (2003) point out in their review of models of adult learning, a critical difference between how adults and children learn is the voluntary nature of adult learning. For young people who offend this is a critical distinction; young people in custody frequently attend education on a compulsory basis and in the community the voluntary nature of participation in education may not be explicit. This questions whether the ideas involved in models of adult learning can be applied to young people attending education provision on a similar compulsory basis as school. Negative experiences of compulsory schooling have often been reported to deter adults engaging in post-16 learning. For young people who offend this is clearly a potential barrier to learning and one which a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of adult learning must incorporate. In a sense this is involves taking account of a learner's educational history and previous experience of education.

There are key themes emerging from all of the models of adult learning and subsequent debates discussed that are critical for understanding how disaffected young people learn. Both the principles of andragogy and subsequent developments argue that we need to develop a more complex understanding of the combination of factors affecting how adults learn. Central to these approaches is the emphasis of the agency or self-direction of adult learners and a consideration of their particular characteristics and circumstances. However, in the case of unfamiliar subjects a pedagogic teacher-directed approach may be more useful which rejects seeing adults as intrinsically different and again highlights a more strategic and individualised approach to adult learning.

An example of how using a different pedagogical approach in practice is reported in a study examining informal learning with socially excluded young adults. McNeil and Smith (2004) reported on ways to 'hook' young people into learning.

These included, sessions such as 'shop and cook' where young people chose menus, made shopping lists, budgeted for purchases and learnt how to prepare a meal. An employability/job search helped young people to find and prepare for the working world, while other sessions included map reading, journey planning and applying for a bank account. Many of the informal 'hooks' into learning involve life skills and the authors report gains associated with social inclusion, such as developing self confidence, finding employment with training and securing long-term accommodation.

Findings from mixed methods (experimental and qualitative) research with young people learning in youth justice contexts reported that traditional classroom arrangements can impede learning, and that the largest literacy and numeracy learning gains are made in vocational contexts. Specifically, learning environments that offer the sort of flexibility found in the workplace are particularly attractive to young people, whole-class sessions incorporating discussions of topics of interest to the young people were observed to work well, especially surrounded by some structure. Engaging these young people relies heavily on their willingness and interest and policy actions need to do more to take learners' values and culture into account (Hurry et al. 2004).

4.2 What is identified effective practice with young people learning in youth justice contexts?

4.2.1 Effective teaching practice

A range of teaching and learning practices, in order to plan, teach and evaluative the effectiveness of provision, have been associated with good practice. Some examples of what is considered to be effective teaching and learning practice have been outlined below.[4]

Planning teaching
- It important to design learners' programmes around individual needs, interests and expected length of stay (if in custody), however this can be unpredictable. Session planning should be reviewed constantly to evaluate learning outcomes and details of learners' progression.
- LLN provision must be underpinned by structured schemes of work which can adequately cater for prison churn and the routine practice of different learners joining courses at different times.
- Delivery of LLN must be underpinned by effective lesson plans that meet the needs of young people and include clear objectives for the lesson and SMART targets. Lesson plans should incorporate the results of learner's initial assessment and learning styles.
- Clear direction is given through strategic objectives, targets and values that are fully understood by all staff, including subcontractors and work-placement providers.
- Resources and materials should be up to date and relevant to learner's needs and interests. In particular, pitched at the right levels, e.g. making sure that

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[4] This is not designed to be an extensive checklist of good teaching and learning practice.

material is not perceived to be aimed at primary school pupils even if this is the level of learners LLN.

In the classroom

- LLN teachers working with young people in various youth justice contexts need to be aware of both learning and behavioural issues. In practice this means developing good group management strategies in the classroom.
- Teachers in custody also need to be able to work within and alongside the prison regime and security regulations. An understanding of the nature and demands of the custodial environment is essential for teachers to successfully support young people learning.
- Accommodation provides a suitable setting for good teaching, training, learning and support for learners.

Evaluating practice

- Learners are accurately assessed and have effective personal support to help them complete their course or program, including access to specialist support services where appropriate.
- Learners receive regular reviews of their progress against targets outlined in their ILPs.
- Procedures are in place for recognising poor punctuality, non-attendance and poor performance and for taking appropriate action.
- For learners with low literacy and numeracy skills, positive progress can mean small steps improvement such as writing their own name. Long-term goals will mean progressing from Entry level 1 to Entry level 2 in literacy or numeracy. Assessments need to be sensitive to both small and large LLN gains.

The government, through its Skills for Life policy, recommends education providers develop a strategy to co-ordinate activities between teachers and all departments of the institution. This is thought to be essential in achieving effective literacy and numeracy teaching. If possible all literacy and numeracy learning should be integrated with industrial and vocational workshop practices, to illustrate and assess the application of literacy and numeracy skills among young learners. This is not always possible and in some cases discrete LLN classes using contextualised material are in operation.

4.2.2 Taking account of learners' needs and interests

Effectively meeting the needs and interests of learners, necessitates making sure education providers have a clear idea of what those needs and interests are. This is becoming central to inspection criteria and policy initiatives. Two key examples are the Every Child Matters policy strategy and the *Common Inspection Framework* (Ofsted 2006). From an educational practice perspective this means ensuring that LLN skills are embedded in courses which young people want to do and are pitched at the right level. This section will discuss these three areas.

A key component of policy documents such as the *Common Inspection Framework* (Ofsted 2006) developed by Ofsted and amended for use in YOIs in November 2006, is taking account of young people's needs. This document covers the age range of 14 to 19 and outlines the principles related to the inspection of education, training and physical education. At the heart of each of

the sections (overall effectiveness, achievement and standards, the quality of education and training, leadership and management) in the *Common Inspection Framework* (Ofsted 2006) is making sure that all provision meets the needs and interests of learners. The *Common Inspection Framework* is also set against the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

The five Every Child Matters outcomes, which have been mapped to the Common Inspection Framework are: 1) Being healthy; 2) Staying safe; 3) Enjoying and achieving; 4) Making a positive contribution; and 5) Achieving economic well-being. These five outcomes are all related to how well programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and how well they are guided and supported.

An educational approach to ensuring that learners' needs and interests are met is integrating LLN skills with vocational areas of learning. It means offering a flexible teaching and support program to enable a wide number of learners to improve their LLN skills in the contexts of their interests. Educational providers must be able to offer LLN provision for the wide range of levels young people may present. Some young people may be up to and above Level 2. This can be particularly problematic if the majority of young people in classrooms are at Level 1 and below. Learners at higher levels may be marginalised and not challenged in dedicated youth justice educational provision such as custody.

4.3 The Personalised Learning Approach (PLA)

4.3.1 What is the Personalised Learning Approach?

The Personalised Learning Approach takes the debate about whether adult or child-centred pedagogy is more appropriate for young people learning in youth justice contexts and intrinsically focuses on learners' needs and interests. It draws upon the concepts of adult-oriented pedagogy. This approach emphasises the individual learner and how best to meet the wide variety of needs young people may have. This is also the key aim of the Common Inspection Framework; meeting learners' needs with rigorous teaching and learning techniques.

The aim being to make the best practices universal, particularly for children whose needs can be the most challenging to meet. The DfES (as was) suggests that personalised learning should:

> … contain elements of individualised learning and one-to-one tuition. But personalised learning is not about letting students work at their own slowest pace. Most categorically, personalised learning is not about a return to 'child centred education'. It has a strong focus:
> - on standards, identifying what individuals already know, what they need to do to improve and how best they can do so.
> - on pedagogy, developing effective teaching and learning skills through a range of whole class, group and individual teaching, improving learning and ICT strategies so as to best transmit knowledge, to instil key learning skills and to accommodate different paces of learning.

- on inclusion, working to dismantle barriers to learning whatever their causes and to foster the best possible conditions for learning.[5]

4.3.2 The principles of Personalised Learning Approach

From a learner's perspective the principles of PLA are:

- Having their individual needs addressed, both in the classroom and beyond
- Co-ordinated support to enable them to succeed to their full potential
- A safe and secure environment in which to learn, with problems effectively dealt with
- Having a say about their learning.

From a teacher's perspective the principles of PLA are:

- Having high expectations of every learner, giving the confidence and skills to succeed
- Access to and use of data on each student to inform teaching and learning with more time given over to assessment
- Opportunities to develop a variety of teaching strategies.

From an education provider's perspective the principles of PLA are:

- A professional ethos that accepts and assumes every young person comes to the classroom with a different knowledge base, skill set, life experience and aspirations
- A determination for every young person's needs to be assessed and their skills/talents developed through appropriate teaching strategies.

   'The rationale of these principles is to raise standards by focusing teaching and learning on the aptitudes and interests of young people and by removing the barriers to learning.'[6]

4.3.3 The five components of Personalised Learning Approach

1. Assessment for Learning (AfL)
Assessment for learning means using evidence and discussion to identify where young people are in their learning, where they need to go, where they want to end up and how best to get there. This requires:

- Clear evidence on how to improve individual attainment
- Clear feedback to and from young people on learning
- Clear links between lesson planning and student learning

The National Strategies are currently supporting teachers in developing their AfL in the classroom at the point of teaching and learning and provide a number of resources to aid teachers in this process.

2. Initial assessment
All young people are entitled to an initial assessment on entry into custody. An initial assessment should provide an accurate and more detailed account of a young person's skills, building on the initial screening process linked to the

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ASSET. The outcomes of which should be used to place a young person in an appropriate learning programme based on ability and where possible interest.

3. Diagnostic/formative assessment

Diagnostic or formative assessment is an evaluation of a learner's skills, strengths and weaknesses. Diagnostic assessment is an in-depth assessment process that should use the results from the initial assessment as a starting point. As the outcomes of the diagnostic assessment are used to inform and structure the young person's ILPs, it is important that the young person remains engaged as much as possible in the assessment process, therefore materials for diagnostic assessment should be chosen specifically according to the young person's interest and be age appropriate.

4. Summative assessment

Summative assessments, appropriate to the young person, should be carried out at different points throughout the young person's learning programme. The main aim should be to assess the young person's progress and if necessary, to alter and develop their ILP to fit the learning needs of the young person more appropriately.

5. Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

ILPs are a requirement of the Offenders Learning Journey and therefore central to a young person's education and development for the whole of their sentence. It is therefore vital that all education practitioners make sure they are able to access a young person's ILP when needed.

4.3.4 Personalised Learning Approach and effective teaching and learning

Personalised learning requires teachers to develop teaching and learning strategies that encourage the confidence and enhance the competence of every young person in the classroom by actively engaging them in the process. This requires focusing on:

- The range of teaching skills utilised throughout a lesson
- Subject specialisms
- Management of the learning experience.

A young person's learning journey should involve a combination of entitlement and choice that delivers a breadth of study and personal relevance. This learning journey should be characterised by:

- A guaranteed core curriculum
- Enrichment and enquiry
- An increase in choice as the young person gets older
- Support to make informed choices
- Flexibility leading to relevant qualifications

Personalised learning requires managers and teachers to think creatively about departmental and classroom organisation, so as to best maintain high quality teaching and learning and to ensure that student performance and welfare are mutually supportive. Creating these conditions for learning involves:

- Using the benefits of workforce remodelling to build a whole-team approach to better support the learning of each student and increasing the planning, preparation and assessment time for teachers;
- Using ICT effectively;
- Creating a clear and consistent policy on 'behaviour for learning' to create an environment in which all students feel safe and secure.

4.3.5 Personalised Learning Approach beyond the classroom

Building partnerships beyond the classroom is the key to both supporting learning within the classroom and enhancing student well-being. This is particularly important for young people who are transferring from education within a secure environment to community-based education provision. Preparing a young person for 'beyond the classroom' should include:

- Effective pastoral care
- Guidance and support for every young person
- Tackling additional needs with targeted and specialist support where necessary, such as multi-agency intervention/support using opportunities of the Every Child Matters paper to integrate children's services
- Community partnerships.

4.4 Summary

This section has discussed effective pedagogy for young people learning in the context of the youth justice system and identified examples of best practice in teaching LLN to adults. The key theme running throughout all this literature is focusing on the learner and working with them. The personalised learning approach was highlighted and discussed as potentially a good strategy to use with young people who offend. However LLN teachers of disengaged young people are often working in very difficult conditions. This can lead to a reactive rather than a proactive and planned approach to teaching. Applying these teaching practices is easier said than done in many of the wider criminal contexts in which LLN tutors work. A key challenge for this education sector is using best practice with difficult learners in challenging contexts.

5. Young people's interpretation of and engagement in education and training in youth justice contexts

The common denominator amongst the myriad of provision available for young people involved in offending is the young people themselves. A lack of knowledge about how this group of learners respond to and interpret education and training is critical to providing effective provision. A key task is identifying and understanding from their perspective the conditions under which they engage or disengage in learning.

5.1 Active agency and adolescence

Models of learning from psychology and the adult education field are united in their positioning of learners as central to the success of education and training provision. Learners are conceptualised as active agents in their learning and not passive receptacles. Taking account of the wider context of their lives and motivations for learning is critical. Different models take various forms depending on the discipline and different aspects of learners and learning emphasised. In literature this has translated into an ethos of building learners voices into research projects. Although very few studies centralise learners conceptually and focus on how active agency is expressed over time or in different contexts, there are frameworks for taking this approach.

5.1.1 Frameworks for understanding

Starting at the point of young people as learners suggests that as well as learners, we need to take account of young people as developing adolescents. Contemporary theories of adolescence (Coleman and Hendry 1990, 1999) move past conceptualising adolescence as a series of stages and emphasise the agency of young people as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. Leaving school and entering post-16 education or the labour market are key events during this transition. Education and training can play a key role in the transition to adulthood.

Bloomer and Hodkinson's (1997) theoretical frameworks, 'Studentship' and 'Learning Careers', although based on mainstream young people in various types of post-16 provision, can potentially develop our understanding of young people involved in crime.

The concept of studentship (Bloomer 1997) is a way of describing the wide range of factors influencing a learner's current relationship to education. Active agency is central to Bloomer's concept of studentship. In particular:

> 'just as teachers exercise agency in their creation of learning opportunities, so student act upon those learning opportunities in the creation of their descriptive curricula and their learning. It is this expression of human agency,

'acting upon', which I have termed studentship' (Bloomer, 1997, p. 137).

Furthermore, the concept of studentship is sufficiently broad to include social and cultural influences, as well as other circumstances, such as involvement in the criminal justice system.

Intrinsically related to the concept of studentship is the concept of learning careers. In a sense learning careers describe the changes in learners' disposition and studentship over time and from context to context (Bloomer 1997). Learning careers, as conceptualised by Bloomer and Hodkinson (1997), incorporate both objectively and subjectively defined experience. The emphasis is on a comprehensive holistic understanding of educational life. This includes all spheres of human activity and how they may impact on learning. The present learning context is related to the past and the future, which affords insight into the continuity and transformations that, may occur as young people involved in crime drop our or leave school and continue into post-16 learning.

Bloomer (1997) argues that the concepts of studentship and learning careers provide some basis of a unified theory of learning as they incorporate three central components; structure, agency and action. Essentially, this means that the interrelationships between these various factors can be explored and how changes come about identified. This is particularly important for learners such as young people involved in youth crime, who have often had chaotic and disengaged educational histories, with numerous factors interacting to influence their engagement in learning and educational outcomes.

Bloomer and Hodkinson's (1997) concept of studentship and learning careers share many aspects of contemporary adult learning theory: emphasis on the agency of learners, taking account of factors in adult learners lives, how learners interact with the learning opportunities presented to them and how young people identify themselves as learners. All of these things are critically important to understanding the role of young people who offend in education and training. The key problem is that these concepts have not been developed on or applied to this group of young people. However, it could be argued that they are robust, complex and flexible enough to account for both engagement and disengagement in learning.

5.2 Listening to the voices of young people who offend

Research conducted at the Learning and Skills Development Agency (Ward 2002) placed learners central to investigating progress and achievement in literacy. A new approach was proposed in the form of a metaphor called 'learning journeys'. This is a conceptual framework which aims to facilitate effective communication between researchers and learners. Key findings included the way learners defined learning gains in terms of application to their lives and not of technical skills.

Again with mainstream learners, but this time with young people, earlier research reported that the judgements that young people make themselves about different course options were more influential than career guidance, when choosing a post-16 course (Kidd and Wardman 1999). These studies illustrate how young people themselves can assert a greater influence on their education and training

choices than professional input, and how learners themselves may define learning gains in a different way to specified course outcomes. This is a finding which was later reported by Ward (2002) from research with adult learners.

Many of the findings with adults and mainstream young people can be related to young people in learning in a youth justice context but with caution. Those learning in the youth justice system are not approaching post-16 education and training from a traditional trajectory. Many have not only been disengaged school pupils, but they are also involved with the Youth Justice System, and they approach education and training within this context. In addition, the sorts of education and training provision that they encounter are in many cases not mainstream environments such as colleges, but dedicated and specialised provision, sometimes with the implicit aim of reducing offending.

Slowly an evidence base is building from research that has focused directly on adults and young people involved in crime. This literature emerges from many disciplines and tends to use a variety of qualitative research techniques. For example many of Her Majesty's Prison Service Prison Inspections include a section on offenders' views (see HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales1997). Similarly, key youth justice agencies such as the Youth Justice Board have commissioned audits of education provision which include young people's views. Other research emerges from collaborations between university departments and specialist criminal justice organisations.

A report published by the Prison Reform Trust (Braggins and Talbot, 2003) examines adult prisoners' views of education in custody. Key findings were related to two main areas: process-type and people issues. Process-type issues included identified literacy and numeracy needs not being followed up and people issues included prisoners having to choose between attending the gym or library. Although such findings with adult offenders may provide a good starting point, the experiences and approaches of young people involved in offending to education may be very different.

A large scale survey conducted throughout 2003–04 by Eves for the YJB and HM Inspectorate of Prisons examined children's experiences of prison, including education. Eighty per cent of young people in custody were involved in education. There were significant differences based on race with more black and ethnic minorities reporting taking part in education (88 per cent in comparison to 77 per cent). Sixty-eight per cent said that they thought education was helping them. More boys who were sentenced (70 per cent) reported that education was helping them than unsentenced boys (62 per cent).

An audit of educational provision in the secure estate presented messages from the young people themselves (ECOTEC 2001). Key findings included the preference for education in the secure estate in comparison to experiences in the community and anxiety about lost academic opportunities while in custody. Young people reported the need for one-to-one input with literacy and numeracy learning and were critical of teaching staff and the learning environment. Such findings provide a useful large-scale survey of young people's views and experiences of learning across the youth justice system.

Lyon et al. (2000) conducted substantial research with young people in 10 custodial establishments, holding focus groups about their views and

experiences. Amongst other issues these included education and training. A key finding was young people's view that prison personnel were unprofessional, with sloppy service delivery. This has important implications considering findings reported earlier about the reasons adults drop out of courses. In particular, the issue of poorly structured classes. Similarly, some young people reported that their interactions with prison tutors reinforced their disengagement in education. This resonates with findings that suggested that boring uninspired teaching contributed to adults dropping out of courses (Martinez 2001). It should be noted that significant reforms in the delivery of education in the adult (and YOIs) has occurred since the time of this research, with delivery now provided through the new Offender Leaning and Skills Service funded via the Learning and Skills Council.

In comparison to school, the young people participating in Lyon and colleagues (2000) study reported better experiences of education in custody. This tended to be related to being awarded certificates and gaining qualifications. However, this was tempered by the negative effect of having a criminal record. Similarities to school such as regulated attendance were experienced negatively. A positive benefit of education in custody for a few young people was not being treated like a prisoner, but a learner. This has important implications for young people's identity as learners in custody and suggests an avenue of future research.

Over a decade ago, research in Ireland examined young people's perceptions of the impact of a community-based training programme, using structured questionnaires (Shorts 1989). Shorts found that most young people perceived positive programme benefits, both in terms of gaining new skills and increasing self-confidence. Both ambivalent and positive attitudes were found with regard to employment, which in turn were associated with future predictions of re-offending. Shorts, like Lyon et al. (2000), integrated findings to report a more complex account of the agency of young people in their learning.

Clearly, a commitment to including the views of offenders as learners goes someway to filling the gap in the literature about the agency of young people in the success of youth justice related education provision. The problem occurs with the limited design of some studies taking this approach. In particular, questions about whether well-designed data collection tools were used and the data were collected within a clear methodological framework. In this case, complex data analysis is possible and a more in-depth sophisticated understanding is developed. Without such an approach the voices of offenders as learners can appear no more than a surface level snapshot of a particular time point. Furthermore, in a similar way to the experimental literature on what programmes work, education is often part of wider research projects with a broader focus. This is not to suggest that all research making offenders as learners a focal point is flawed. Rather an acknowledgement that such research is not immune from the empirical standards that govern good quality research as a whole is necessary.

The literature examined in this section focuses more directly on young people. Although research of this kind is scarce, it builds upon what is known about adult learners. In particular, it reinforces the idea that the young people themselves are critical to success. More research to examine these findings with young people directly is essential.

5.3 Improving engagement and motivation

There is a broad consensus that developing and maintaining motivation on programmes is essential to success (Martinez 2002). Motivation is a complex issue. However most of the literature on motivation is based on adult learners on mainstream courses. This section discusses this literature and highlights the implications for understanding young people learning in youth justice contexts.

Initial motivation for enrolling on a course, aspirations and expectations of college, may not predict students who will stay or leave. In 2001 Martinez reported that various studies have found no significant motivational differences at the outset between those who stay and those who leave. However, intrinsic interest in courses was different for those students who withdrew and those that stayed on (Martinez and Munday 1998). There are differences between current learners and withdrawn learners regarding how they perceive the quality of the college. Withdrawn learners report lower opinions (Davies 1999). Learners that have withdrawn from courses are more likely to have recorded a worse experience of the college compared to their expectations of college before they enrolled (Davies 1999). Both staff and students identified lack of motivation and commitment as key factors affecting retention (Martinez and Munday 1998).

Such findings emphasise how important experiences of education are in terms of engagement, both at the beginning and throughout courses. As discussed earlier, many young people involved in offending report negative experiences of school, which may contribute to problems with future engagement in education. Exploring this relationship more thoroughly may help to provide effective provision. Research shows that there tends to be multiple and complex reasons for dropping out of courses, which are rational and positive from the perspectives of the learner (Martinez 1995).

A number of factors have been reported to have positive effects when engaging adults, which may have implications for young people in the youth justice system. Good group dynamics have been found to be important in bringing students back to the class after a long period of absence (East Surrey College case studies in Martinez, 1995). Other strategies such as phone calls home may have little effect in bringing students back (East Surrey College case studies in Martinez, 1995). All students placed a particular emphasis on relationships with each other and with tutors (Martinez and Munday 1998). Such findings may be particularly relevant to young people for whom fellow learners may provide social contact and support outside of the course. Even though young people involved in crime tend to report negative experiences of school on the whole, friends are often seen as a very enjoyable part of school (Hurry et al. 2004).

Colleges need good early warning systems to identify students who are most at risk of dropping out or struggling to succeed on their course programme (Martinez 2002). As already discussed, young people involved in crime are such students who are likely to drop out. An early diagnosis of student requirements for LLN skills and additional learning support within learning programmes has been found to improve retention (Martinez 2001). Again, as outlined earlier, young people disengaged from education are more likely to have requirements for LLN. A higher degree of integration of LLN was one of the main areas of good practice associated with successful completion of work-based learning

programmes (Martinez 2002). A lot of post-16 education and training for young people both in the community and custody is moving in that direction and integrating basic skills within vocational training.

It is important for retention to ensure that students are on the right courses and that there is not a mismatch between expectations and reality (Martinez and Munday 1998). Goals are important in retaining students. Those students who are clear about their goals are more motivated to achieve them. In addition clear progression goals are a reason for students to continue on courses (Martinez and Munday 1998). Students on courses that lead to a qualification, which may help employment prospects or enable access to higher education, tend to continue courses after the first year (Martinez and Munday 1998). A primary aim for many young people involved in crime is finding employment and courses that improve the likelihood of that are favoured (Hurry et al. 2004).

A number of factors related to teaching and learning have been reported for students dropping out and staying on courses. These include: uninspiring, 'boring' or poorly structured teaching; poor group ethos or dynamics; inadequate or poor course design; inappropriate or inadequate induction and large gaps in student timetables (Martinez 2001). High quality teaching and learning is an important way to sustain student motivation and interest in courses (Martinez and Munday 1998). Many teachers felt that an important aspect of maintaining motivation was giving students positive feedback (Martinez and Munday 1998).

A study of community-focused provision (Hannon et al. 2003) reported that the benefits of learning in the community for learners included rooting learning in the lives and interest of learners. An emphasis was placed on the importance of delivering a curriculum that was geared to learners' needs and at their own pace. This means that whilst a traditional learning outcome such as a certificate might be expressed, the route to that outcome might be unorthodox. Achievement and progression within this model were often identified in relation to the structure of people's lives and how they perceived progression.

5.4 Summary

Models of learning from psychology and the adult education field are united in their positioning of learners as central to the success of education and training provision. Learners are conceptualised as active agents in their learning and not passive receptacles. Although very few studies centralise learners conceptually there are frameworks to underpin this approach.

Contemporary theories of adolescence (Coleman and Hendry1990, 1999) move past conceptualising adolescence as a series of stages and emphasise the agency of young people as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood. Education and training can play a key role in the transition to adulthood. Bloomer and Hodkinson's (1997) theoretical frameworks, 'Studentship' and 'Learning Careers', although based on mainstream young people in various types of post-16 provision, can potentially develop our understanding of young people involved in crime.

A commitment to including the views of offenders as learners goes someway to filling the gap in the literature about the agency of young people in the success of youth justice related education provision. Slowly an evidence base is building from research that has focussed directly on adults and young people involved in crime. This literature emerges from many disciplines and tends to use a variety of qualitative research techniques. Many of Her Majesty's Prison Service Prison Inspections include a section on offenders' views and key youth justice agencies such as the Youth Justice Board have commissioned audits of education provision which include young people's views. Other research emerges from collaborations between university departments and specialist youth/criminal justice organisations.

As established in the literature a variety of leaner and course related factors have been identified, which affect how adults approach education and training. For learners their past experiences of learning, their motivations for learning and what they want to achieve are important. Within the course, good group dynamics, good relationship with tutors, proactive identification of learning needs have all been associated with high engagement in learning. The few studies on young people involved in crime directly report similar findings about internal motivation and aspects of the provision. Courses that are flexible and not like school and which provide young people with routes into work, tended to be more effective. However, these young people may have different leaning approaches to mainstream adults and more research exclusively about learning in the youth justice system is necessary.

6. Conclusions

The research community has a key role to play in supporting the youth justice system in using education and training as a preventative and rehabilitative strategy. Research evidence can contribute to developing effective education and training provision by underpinning policy thinking and practice with evidence. There is a need to both take stock to ensure that as the evidence base is building, findings are utilised, and ensure that key future research priorities are identified.

There are several clear and consistent messages emerging from the literature that form a solid foundation for developing what we know about education and training for young people involved in crime. It is clear that gaining education and training can have wide ranging benefits to this group of young people's lives and evidence suggests that this can make an effective contribution to preventing offending and reducing re-offending. Literature emerging over the last decade from the adult education field has substantially increased our understanding of what is best teaching and learning practice. Concepts such as contextualising and embedding key skills have become a key part of many youth justice-related education providers courses. In practice starting at the point of the learner and taking account of the context of their lives and their aims and motivations for learning is a key aim. This is reflected in the Personalised Learning Approach. Prioritising young people involved in youth crime within the research process is also fundamental. These findings are interrelated and reinforce the multi-agency, multi-modal approach that is characteristic of effective interventions.

To provide effective education and training provision for young people involved in crime there needs to be a fundamental shift past a fragmented understanding and a move towards a more complex and realistic model of how this group of learners engage in education. The emerging body of literature on what works and identifying effective practice is clearly critical, but in the youth justice/education arena, this only represents a good start. There needs to be more differentiation about what is effective in particular youth justice contexts such as the secure estate and with 17 to 21-year-olds. Young people involved in crime continue to be one of the most difficult groups of learners to teach and our lack of knowledge about the active role they play in education is a critical deficit. Understanding how as learners they actively interpret and construct their own learning in response to education and training is critical to providing effective provision.

6.1 Summary of what we know

6.1.1 The preventative and rehabilitative role of education in youth crime

- Three areas have been identified in the literature where it is thought signification links occur between offending and education, these are: detachment from mainstream education; the impact of custodial sentences and educational underachievement.

- A relationship between youth crime and disengagement from statutory schooling is well established in various bodies of literature. However the causal nature of this relationship, e.g. whether being involved in offending leads to disengagement from school or whether being disengaged from school leads to offending, is unclear.
- Young people excluded from school are more likely to be involved in offending, commit more offences, commit more serious offences and receive a custodial sentence. It is clear that exclusion from school is related to offending behaviour.
- There is limited evidence about why young people involved in crime tend to have problems at school or why there are differences in offending patterns once excluded. A number of explanations have been proposed that focus on various areas: the school, the young person, the effect of custody and the police.
- A key source of evidence about disengagement from school comes from young people themselves who report that: a) they had bad experiences of school both in terms of treatment from teachers and quality of teaching; b) they were identified by teachers as troublemakers by teachers; and c) in some cases this affected them emotionally.
- The impact of being disengaged from school and leaving school without qualifications has far reaching personal and economic consequences. Young people tend to lack the LLN skills that are increasingly considered necessary for entry into the labour market and may be left with serious attitudinal barriers towards engaging in post-16 learning.
- Gaining education can be a key protective factor against offending. This may be because good LLN skills can improve young people's employment prospects.
- Effective programmes tend to be multi-modal, e.g. able to address young people with multiple needs such as substances misuse, offending behaviour, housing issues as well as education and training.
- It is likely that there is a threshold of contact hours for programmes to be effective but the number of hours is debated in the literature and ranges from 75 to 150.

6.1.2 Highlighting effective teaching and learning practice in youth justice contexts

- Identifying effective pedagogy for young people involved in youth crime and learning in a variety of educational contexts is problematic. This group of learners are clearly not children but neither can they be completely conceptualised as adults.
- Key themes emerging from models of adult learning can make a substantial contribution to our pedagogic understanding of how young people involved in youth crime learn. In particular, a more complex understanding of the combination of factors affecting how adults learn is emphasised. Central to this approach is the conceptualisation of the agency or self-direction of adult learners. This indicates a more strategic and individualised approach to learning which takes full account of learners' particular characteristics and circumstances.
- Key pedagogical concepts particularly relevant to young people involved in crime are: a) a focus on each individual learner; b) the setting and social

context; and c) an understanding of learners' relationships with peers and tutors.

- Adult-oriented pedagogy employing less formal teaching methods may work better for young people with a history of disengagement.

- Informal learning with socially excluded young people reports that LLN skills embedded in real-life activities and contextualised tends to work best.

- In the classroom there may be a constantly shifting balance between learning and behavioural issues for tutors to manage, particularly in the custodial environment where young people may be on courses they have not chosen or are attending education as a requirement of the prison regime.

- Having a range of teaching strategies in place to plan lessons, teach in the classroom and assess outcomes, is highlighted as effective practice. This includes teaching practices such as developing ILPs, using SMART targets, developing schemes of work, developing lesson plans, and having regular individual tutorials.

- Taking account of young peoples' needs and interests is critical to successful teaching and learning. This often means offering flexible teaching and support as well as ensuring that materials are up to date and relevant.

- Using key teaching concepts with young people in learning in custody and subject to prison regimes can be challenging. For example, it may be difficult to meet with young people individually to conduct tutorials and develop ILPs. Short-term sentences and frequent transferrals of learners to other establishments can present issues for setting longer term targets and tailoring learning to each individuals needs.

- Effective leadership and management which has a clear strategy for delivering education and training and supporting staff on the front line is critical to success.

6.1.3 Young people's interpretation of and engagement in education and training in youth justice contexts

- Models of learning from psychology and the adult education field are united in their positioning of learners as central to the success of education and training provision. Understanding how learners construct and interpret their own learning, over time and in various educational contexts (school, community and custody) can deepen our understanding and increase engagement.

- Young people involved in crime are at a particular life stage, adolescence, and are making the transition from childhood to adulthood. Leaving school represents a structural turning point and entering post-16 education and training provision can pave the way to work. Offending can disrupt this transition.

- The focal theory of adolescence (Coleman and Hendry 1990, 1999) provides a framework for understanding this transition and emphasising the active role young people themselves play in their educational development.

- Bloomer and Hodkinson's (1997) theoretical frameworks, 'Studentship' and 'Learning Careers', although based on mainstream young people in various types of post-16 provision, can potentially develop our understanding of how young people involved in crime engage in learning.

- Research giving a voice to young people involved in the youth justice system and their views and experiences is growing. Although this body of work

focuses on a wide range of youth justice issues, some studies include education.

- Motivation is a complex and important factor in how engaged young people are in education, yet we know very little about why young people involved in crime do or do not engage in education. Tentative findings suggest that this is about gaining entry into the labour market and vocational courses, which directly facilitate gaining employment, such as carpentry and mechanics, are preferred.
- Young people's previous negative experiences of statutory school-based education can act as a barrier to further post-16 learning. However, young people on post-school education and training courses tend to compare post-16 provision favourably in comparison to school. Evidence suggests this is related to a more adult environment.

6.2 Identifying areas for further research

There is a growing evidence base to build upon which not only informs how to develop education and training provision for young people involved youth crime, but that can indicate where to focus research capacity. Seven key areas have been identified by the review.

1. *LLN outcomes in custody* – there are very few studies that measure improvements in literacy and numeracy skills, particularly in the custodial context. In custody, gaining reliable data is a challenge due to short sentence lengths and prison turnover. Key issues to explore include:

- Differentiating between literacy and numeracy outcomes.
- Understanding the effect of sentence length on LLN attainment.
- Number of hours teaching in relation to LLN attainment.
- Teaching methods associated with LLN gains.
- If a persistent offending career is related to LLN achievement.

2. *Longitudinal outcomes of gaining LLN* – similarly there are very few studies which examine the longitudinal outcomes of gaining LLN. Key issues to explore include:

- Whether young people who have made LLN gains go on to obtain employment.
- Whether gains in LLN skills are related to recidivism and in particular returns to custody.
- Whether young people who have made LLN gains in custody go on to and remain in further post-16 education and training provision in the community.
- Whether there are improvements in soft skills such as increased confidence and self-esteem.

3. *Barriers for young people learning in custody* – being in custody can be a very difficult time for young people and understanding more about how this affects learning is critical. Issues to explore include:

- Reviewing the prison curriculum to make sure that it meets young people needs: what are young people's educational needs?, how best to use the adult core curriculum, making sure the full range of vocations courses are available for young people, ensuring young people can start GCSEs and continue them

in the community, making sure the curriculum can meet the needs of more able students as well as young people who are struggling.

- Understanding more about the learning environment itself and how some young people are able to deal with working in a noisy and unstable environment or how the set up of the classroom affects engagement in learning, e.g. is this more difficult if there are distractions such as computers in the room.

- How being in custody affects cognitive functioning, in particular how other elements of the regime affect learning such as not receiving a letter from home or not getting a call home, only being allowed one shower a week, not receiving enough food and at unpredictable times.

- The nature of the relationship between the dual identity of being in custody and therefore a criminal and being a learner there to gain knowledge – the compulsory nature of attending education may lead young people to identify more strongly with being a criminal than a learner.

- Other factors like bullying, or the potential to be bullied, may have an impact on how young people engage in learning in the juvenile secure estate.

4. *Motivation* – a key issue for learners is motivation. Having a better understanding of what motivates this particular group of learners would enable better provision to be developed. In particular:

- What do this group of young people want to get out of education and training in different contexts (community and custody)?

- What are the factors influencing the young people involved in offending who are engaged in education and training?

5. *Effective practice and embedding LLN in vocational prison-run workshops* – how literacy and numeracy provision is taught in relation to vocational training or offending behaviour programmes is becoming increasingly important.

- What is the best way to organise LLN within courses, for example could front-loading LLN capitalise on new learners initial burst of motivation and commitment to the course?

- How can prison vocational instructors and LLN teachers work together to embed LLN in courses?

- What is role of Learning Support Assistants in the vocational classes where LLN is embedded?

6. *Using ICT in the secure estate* – another aspect of effective practice is the use of ICT in custody. Implementing web-based learning such as Learn Direct presents a significant security challenge. Having access to the internet in custody has the potential to completely revolutionise learning in the secure estate and widen participation. Issues to explore include:

- What maximises young people's engagement in learning LLN on the computer: educational games, using contextualised LLN materials to correspond with vocational subjects of interest or starting a business, using LLN related to life skills?

- Does learning LLN on the computer lead to great engagement and participation in learning?

- Does learning on the computer lead to greater LLN gains?

7. *Contemporary LLN skills* – the nature of LLN skills is changing. A contemporary understanding of what these skills mean to young people learning in custody would help to develop provision:

- How do young people maximise using the LLN they have already obtained?
- What activities do young people engage in where their lack of LLN is a problem?
- What do young people think would be the most useful for them in their lives?

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