

July 2016



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BRIEFING

“Let there be no doubt. Education should be at the heart of the prison system.”

Dame Sally Coates

Unlocking potential: a review of education in prison

The Coates Review

Introduction

In September 2015, the then Secretary of State for Justice Michael Gove, asked Dame Sally Coates to conduct a review into prison education and to make recommendations for how it could be improved. The National Alliance for Arts in Criminal Justice (NAACJ) engaged in the review process¹ and Clinks submitted written evidence to the review team, in which we highlighted the importance of a wide-ranging curriculum that includes the arts and sport, along with the involvement of families, and the role the voluntary sector can play in educational provision within prisons.²

The review report, published on 18 May 2016,³ was a prelude to the Queen’s speech. Her Majesty announced the introduction of six reform prisons led by four executive prison governors, and the Prison and Courts Reform Bill. The Bill will legislate for prison governors to have greater autonomy over how they run their establishments.⁴

The review makes 31 recommendations, 17 of which are listed as key, and the government has accepted them all. It is important to note that the recommendations and report are directed principally at public sector prisons in England, although the report states that there “is no reason why the principles...set out should not have meaning equally for the private estate, and be generally applicable in Wales as well.”

As the review document is extensive this briefing summarises the main themes from the review. We have included a timeline for implementation and the 17 key recommendations as an appendix.

Prison education – the background

Before outlining the detail of the report and its recommendations for change, this section gives a brief overview of how the provision of prison education currently takes place in England. Prison education in Wales is a devolved responsibility and funded directly by the Welsh Assembly Government via the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in Wales.

The policy and funding responsibilities for prison education in England sits within the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), which is part of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). The SFA has developed and overseen the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS), whose arrangements are currently in place for all those aged over 18 and serving their sentence in a public prison. The current OLASS contracts only cover England and come to an end in July 2016.

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There are currently four OLASS contractors covering prisons in England:

- Milton Keynes College
- NOVUS, part of the Manchester College group
- Weston College
- PeoplePlus.

When the OLASS 4 contracts were let by the SFA in 2012, it was anticipated that governors would play a more central role in deciding the curriculum and holding the providers to account; yet due to constraints in the contract, many governors were unable to do this.

OLASS providers currently need to provide a core education offer comprised of four elements that include:

- Mandatory assessment of maths and English attainment on reception to custody
- basic skills – English, maths and English for Speakers of Other Languages
- vocational qualifications
- employability skills, which include team working, personal and social skills.

OLASS providers define success principally in terms of participation, as 80% of their funding comes from learners completing a course of study, whilst 20% is based on the level of achievement learners attain.

Ofsted works alongside Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) to inspect education. Their assessment forms part of the final HMIP report on a prison. Ofsted has highlighted a decline in education performance over the last two years, which they suggest is largely driven by the failure of prisons to facilitate prisoner attendance at classes.

Accountability and the role of prison governors

In line with the Governments' prison reform programme, Dame Sally's vision is for prison governors to have "new autonomy for the provision of education, and be held to account for the educational progress of all prisoners in their jails."

To achieve this vision, the report states that education budgets and contract management should be the responsibility of the prison governor, who will commission education provision. It will be the responsibility of the governor, as the commissioner, to judge and manage the performance of the provider or providers that they appoint. The report is clear that there will be no need for central government to intervene in this relationship and that poor provider performance will not excuse the governor from overall accountability.

The review highlights an expectation that governors will "manage their providers' performance actively, applying contractual sanctions, pressing for key staff to be replaced, and re-tendering where necessary. Prison leadership (or the operator in the case of a private prison) should be held to account for the success or lack of success in achieving educational outcomes and be recognised and rewarded or face sanctions (ultimately removal) accordingly."

This signals a significant change from current arrangements, and many governors will have limited experience of commissioning and monitoring education providers. This is recognised in the report, which states that governors will need to be "properly trained, supported and incentivised and that good practice be rewarded and shared."

“Properly qualified experts” will provide this training, yet the review does not make it clear who they are and importantly, whether voluntary sector organisations would be able to engage in this process.

The current education contracts, delivered through OLASS, will be extended until July 2017. After this date, the report recommends that “Governors of reform prisons [are] given the full budget for their education services and the ability to opt out of all, or part of, their OLASS arrangements and choose their own providers.’ In line with the wider implementation of prison reform, the report states that all governors should have “full freedom over the choice of education providers for their prisons.”

Although stressing that governors must be accountable for education in their establishments, the review also recognises the need for consistency. It highlights the need for minimum system requirements for education that are centrally mandated. This is especially important given the ‘churn’ in the prison system, with the report stating it is essential that there is “smooth movement of prisoners to colleges, training providers and employers in the community upon release” as well as smooth transitional arrangements between prisons.

Ensuring integrated provision

The review found that there is sometimes a “crowded multi-agency picture of service provision in prison that doesn’t always integrate as well as it should.” To address this issue, the report places prison governors at the heart of facilitating and supporting education for prisoners by recommending that they take ‘the lead in integrating assessment, resettlement, and education and employment support services.’ Although Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) have responsibility for delivering resettlement services, prison governors are encouraged to engage with the contract managers at NOMS regarding the quality of through the gate provision delivered by CRCs. Furthermore, the report states that this will enable them to raise any concerns about a CRC’s services.

Outcome measures

To ensure governors can be held accountable for education outcomes, the review states the need for an agreed set of measures that captures what they are looking to achieve. It recommends that prisons use a similar tool to the RAISE online system used in schools, which records demographic and performance data, to enable governors to have a clear picture of the educational profile of the people in their prisons. This is seen as a long-term aim, as gathering this data is likely to be challenging. Prisons are more complex organisations than most schools and the cohort of learners is made up of people of different ages with different educational experiences and needs.

The review highlights that the key measure for education should be how far learners have progressed since their assessment on reception to prison, which need to be compared to their expected progress as recorded on their Personal Learning Plan. Ofsted inspectors should examine a sample of Personal Learning Plans during their inspections to check they are sufficiently stretching learners and to determine the extent to which they are monitored and updated. The review notes that many further education colleges already have good systems for tracking performance, but they are unable to transfer these to the prison environment because of the limits, in terms of capacity and security restrictions, on prison ICT.

Inspections

During current inspections, Ofsted's judgement contributes to HM Inspectorate of Prisons' award for Purposeful Activity. This means that if education provision is poor, but overall Purposeful Activity is graded more positively, the need for improvements in education provision can be lost. The review indicates that quality and effectiveness of education should be one of the key functions, alongside security and safety, which inform an overall assessment of how a prison is performing. It maintains that this should help to hold governors to account.

The review states that the assessment criteria, report format and level of detail for any inspection report on the provision of prison education should be equivalent to that used in reports of the further education and skills sectors. Inspection reports should also assess employment links and opportunities alongside education, to reflect a more integrated vision of progress 'through the gate', which is currently considered separately. If education provision is judged as requires improvement or inadequate, swift re-inspection of the prison, by Ofsted alone if necessary, should take place.

Developing a personalised approach to learning

The review points out the diverse educational needs of those in prison, something that Clinks⁵ and the Prison Learning Alliance⁶ emphasised in official responses to the review, and stresses the need for education provision to be personalised.

To determine the needs of people in prison, the review recommends that every prison that receives remand or newly sentenced prisoners give all prisoners a mandatory maths and English assessment on reception. This should be undertaken with an assessment tool mandated from central government to ensure consistency. The tool is intended to:

- Provide a clear assessment of the academic level to which someone is working
- record whether prisoners have existing qualifications
- include screening for learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD), unless the prisoner has an Education, Health and Care Plan in place.

Whenever the screening tool indicates that a prisoner has an LDD, there should be a presumption of the need for additional support and adaptations provided to meet their needs. The report goes on to highlight that "Governors should be specifically scrutinised for the progression and inclusion of this important group within the activities available in the prison." This is particularly welcome given the high levels of LDD experienced by people in prison.

It is acknowledged that some prisoners will not want to engage with the assessment process, especially as this will take place upon reception to custody, which is a particularly stressful time for many. It is not clear whether there will be opportunities at a later stage for prisoners to comply with the assessment tool, or who will be responsible for conducting it. Many voluntary sector organisations have long track records of working to engage with those who are perceived to be hard to reach and could work to support the assessments. This is also true for prisoners who could provide peer support.

Meeting the needs of specific groups of prisoners

The review explores the educational experiences and needs of specific groups of prisoners and how these can be met.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) learners

There is a lack of data to represent the experiences of BAME learners in prison and the review states that there is “no evidence in terms of participation to indicate that BAME engagement is lower in a prison context.” Although respondents to the review seldom raised attainment of BAME learners was raised infrequently by respondents to the review, the concerns that were raised focused largely on the employment opportunities post release and, in particular, how prison education prepared young black men for employment. The review states that “Governors should ensure that: the performance in education is monitored with respect to race (and protected characteristics); an ethos is maintained that values diversity; there is appropriate BAME representation on prison staff; and BAME ex-prison learners return to speak to current prison learners to inspire and raise expectations.”

Young adults

Although the number of young adults in prison is declining, they are often the hardest to engage in education. The review cites a number of reasons for this, including peer pressure and a lack of maturity. It outlines the “importance of providing learning with content, and in settings that engage with young adults’ interests and aspirations.”

Women

Compared to their male counterparts, women have a different offending profile and experience a higher prevalence of needs, including mental health problems and use of Class A drugs. They are also more likely to have caring responsibilities for dependants. In response to this, NOMS and education providers have been piloting “a more holistic programme that includes Personal and Social Development (PSD) and recognises women’s caring responsibilities.” This has been piloted in three women’s prisons and the review says there are some encouraging initial findings. It goes on to highlight the need for women to be able to access a broad curriculum and for prisons to avoid stereotyping in the educational courses they offer. Further to this, and in recognition that the employment outcomes for women serving short term sentences are three times worse than for men, the review says that “Governors should seek to develop opportunities for work experience.”

Older prisoners, those serving long sentences and sex offenders

Education for these groups of prisoners is an important factor supporting their mental well-being and well-being of the wider prison community. The review states that these groups of prisoners also need to have access to activities, including gardening and chess that will provide them with personal development opportunities. It also specifically states “peer mentoring can be a fulfilling role for longer-sentenced offenders.”

Prisoners with LDD

The review recognises that there are likely to be high numbers of prisoners with LDD. It states “prisons should adopt a whole-prison approach to ensuring that the regime is as appropriate as possible to their needs.” Examples of practical steps prisons can take include writing prison forms in simple, plain English, on coloured paper to support people with dyslexia and with illustrative diagrams or images to accompany the text.

To support these wide-ranging needs and experiences, prison education should be personalised to the individual. Steps to support this include:

- The availability of PSD education
- a whole prison approach to learning, where prisoners will be able to learn on the wings or in their cells rather than just in designated areas or classrooms
- using peer mentors to teach basic maths and literacy skills to encourage learning of others but to also support their own development.

Alongside this, the review states that it is crucial for “Governors to address the ‘design’ of the prison – in terms of the way its lay-out facilitates learning, and the way in which time is allocated for lessons.” The review hopes that this is addressed through the wider prison reform programme.

The Reducing Reoffending Third Sector Advisory Group (RR3) – an advisory group to the Ministry of Justice and National Offender Management Service, whose secretariat and chair are provided by Clinks – was recently asked by the previous Minister for Prisons and Probation, Andrew Selous, to provide information on how the voluntary sector can be engaged in the government’s programme of prison reform and contribute to reducing re-offending.⁷ The resultant RR3 paper demonstrates that, it is not only important for governors to be involved in the design of prisons, but also local voluntary sector organisations providing services in that prison and through the gate, as well as the prisoners themselves.

A shared personal learning plan

Many prisoners have learning plans but evidence shows that their use – and the extent to which they are reviewed, shared by partners and integrated with sentence plans – is variable. The review highlights the importance of all prisoners having a Personal Learning Plan that is developed with them that they feel real ownership of and have regular access to through appropriate Information and communications technology (ICT). The time taken to develop the Personal Learning Plan should be proportionate to the risk/length of sentence and level of study undertaken.

The review says that the Personal Learning Plans should always be in a format, and held on an IT platform, that enables:

- Different providers to log achievements against the plan, including those beyond traditional learning delivery, such as completing a basic reading scheme, or acting as peer mentor
- data to be lifted for monitoring purposes
- the plan to remain available on transfer between prisons and be made accessible to the prisoner on release.

There are data-sharing arrangements to support the development of Personal Learning Plans at HMPs Liverpool and Peterborough. The review recommends that lessons from these pilots should be learned and applied to the rest of the prison estate.

A whole-organisation approach to learning

All staff, including governors, prison officers, teachers and instructors, as well as prisoners are a crucial part of developing a whole-prison approach to learning. The review states that the teaching workforce should be developed, which should be undertaken via a threefold strategy, looking at:

- Attracting and training new teachers
- attracting experienced teachers
- providing high quality professional development for the existing workforce.

Pages 23 and 24 of the review give details as to how this strategy can be implemented.

Blending roles and exchanging learning between teachers, instructors and prison officers is encouraged by the review, which states that NOMS should expand current initiatives to train officers to teach basic skills to support more officers and instructors to gain formal teaching qualifications.

Further to this, the review proposes that a new scheme, similar to the Teach First initiative, is introduced to encourage graduates from top universities to work as prison officers.

The role of peer mentors

The review states that “the contribution that prisoners themselves can make to the education workforce must not be overlooked” and supports the use of peer mentors to support other prisoners’ learning. As well recognising the existing roles that many peer mentors currently undertake, such as acting as classroom assistants, delivering reading and maths schemes and providing resettlement support, the review also says that there is no reason not to encourage prisoners to take on teaching roles. Where prisoners are able to take up teaching roles, the review states that they “should be supported out of the public purse to undertake teaching and information, advice and guidance (IAG) training at an appropriate, professional level.” This training will not only increase their skills, but also their chances of employment on release and support them on their desistance journey.

Supporting family relationships

The review recognises the central role that families have in supporting someone on their journey to desistance and notes that education can play a key role in facilitating and supporting the development of healthy relationships and family ties. As well as this, families can help to support someone achieve their educational aims as recorded on their Personal Learning Plans. The review states there should be “no barriers to funding family relationship-strengthening approaches as part of a broad education offer”.

The importance of arts interventions

We are pleased to see that the value of arts interventions has been explicitly recognised. It states “the arts are one route towards engaging prisoners when they have had negative experience of traditional classroom subjects, or struggle with self-esteem and communication. They can be the first step towards building confidence and more formal learning.”

As well as this, the review notes that, although the provision of art, drama and music courses are not a core part of current OLASS arrangements, where they do operate or where one-off projects or performances have taken place, they were often the first thing that both staff and prisoners told the review team about. This demonstrates the interesting and inspiring nature of many arts interventions and how they can act as a hook to engage people, especially those who are defined as being hard to reach.

Recognising the importance of arts interventions, not only in supporting and facilitating learning but also to support someone on their journey to desistance, the review states “there should be no restriction of the use of education funding to support the creative arts, Personal and Social Development opportunities, and family or relationship courses. These can be used to engage prisoners in education and support them to make progress against their Personal Learning Plan.”

This is welcome and could signal an important opportunity for the many voluntary sector organisations that already deliver a range of successful arts interventions in prison. However, the review does not make it clear how these organisations will be able to engage with the review as the recommendations are implemented.

Supporting higher level learning

The review recognises the importance of supporting prisoners to access Further and Higher Education, which can equip them to increase their career prospects and earnings on release, and ultimately lead to a reduction in reoffending. Unfortunately, the review does not go as far as to recommend that all learning at level 3 and above be funded by the public purse, yet it does recommend that ministers “consider the potential for extending the coverage of public funding (perhaps via a combination of grants and discounts) for all (or a proportion of) the first module of an OU degree, rather than only fund access modules.”

There is a need for better and more consistent advice to be available to prison learners around student loans. The Education (Student Support) Regulations should be amended to extend student loan eligibility to prisoners who have more than six years left to serve on their sentence.

In recognition that many prisoners have missed out on the opportunity to get a full education, the review outlines that governors should have freedom to use their education budget to commission Level 3 and above courses in their prisons to meet prisoner aspirations and achieve rehabilitative outcomes. To reduce costs, governors should be free to use their resources to make the most use of distance learning alternatives. However, ICT in prisons needs to improve to support this.

ICT that supports learning

A central theme of the review is the need for prisoners to have access to appropriate digital technology to support their learning and increase their employability. Indeed, the review states, “if prisoners are, on release, to secure employment, continue to study, or otherwise contribute to society, they must be given the opportunity to use and improve their digital skills while in prison.”

It notes that NOMS has been given capital to develop digital infrastructure across the prison estate and is also “exploring the feasibility of providing digital ‘In Cell’ facilities in all prisons in England and Wales.” The services offered would be similar to those provided by the Prisoner Self-Service Custodial Management System, which allows prisoners to use kiosks to complete tasks including ordering food, booking visits and arranging medical appointments, which can support their autonomy and prepare them for release. Once the digital cabling for this is installed, the review recommends that the delivery of education resources should be a priority strand for this work. In-cell learning opportunities should be explored, with the use of secure tablets and video conferencing, which would not only enable prisoners to access remote learning, but would also help them maintain strong contact with their families.

Alongside this, the review supports the Prison Reform Trust and Prisoners Education Trust’s call for prisoners to be able to have secure and controlled access to the internet. It recommends, “the security arrangements that currently underpin the use of ICT in the prison estate should be reviewed. Governors should be allowed to develop an approach that allows suitably risk-assessed prison learners to have controlled access to the internet to support their studies and enable applications for jobs on release.”

Supporting employment, education and training on release

The review highlights the importance of Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) in enabling prisoners to access opportunities in the community to support them to achieve their education aims, as well as to achieve positive employment outcomes. This echoes a recent Clinks and the Prison Reform Trust briefing which detailed that ROTL is a pivotal part of the process of resettlement and rehabilitation and can enable people to gain education, training, sort out jobs and establish contact with their families. The review recommends "the current practice should be reviewed to streamline the risk assessment and decision-making process regarding the approval of ROTL to give more discretion to Governors."

One of the challenges in supporting continuation of a prisoner's education into the community is that he or she is unlikely to be released at the right time of the academic year to enable smooth transition. Appropriate use of ROTL can help to address this issue, enabling prison learners to enrol on courses in the community before their release to allow continuity of learning. To ensure that people with convictions can enrol at universities and colleges when they are in the community, the review also recommends that "the University and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS), individual universities, colleges and training providers should review their current system for risk assessments on those with criminal convictions to ensure that all applicants are treated in a just and transparent way."

Responding to the labour market needs

The review recognises that it is vital that what is taught or learned is relevant to rehabilitation and employment and reports that there "still appears to be a significant amount of vocational education and training that is undertaken without clear reference to the impact it will have on an individual's future employment." It cites one reason for this being reluctance amongst providers to change courses as there is a difficulty finding appropriate staff or teachers and a reluctance to make staff redundant. In response, the review recommends that "providers must look at upskilling and diversifying the workforce to meet needs."

Vocational education provided to prisoners should clearly link to the needs of the labour market and include the delivery of core employment skills as part of preparation for release. Vocational training must also "include training on how and when to disclose convictions, and be supported by an employer engagement and brokerage function that supports and incentivises employers to engage with prisons and employ offenders on release. It makes absolute sense for training and transferable work skills to be better embedded into prison industry."

To ensure that prisoners are able to access employment opportunities in the community, there is the need for good quality engagement with employers and the review recommends the development of a "charter mark for employers who demonstrate willingness to support offenders back into employment should be explored."

Timetable for implementation

There are significant reforms to the prison system currently taking place⁸ and the review recognises that for its recommendations to be implemented, they need to be sequenced and aligned not only with the wider reforms to the prison system, but also the Further Education sector and the introduction of the new devolution arrangements.

The timetable for implementation is split into three phases:

- Early wins
- transition
- new service delivery.

Each phase will build on the next but does not need to wait for the previous phase to be completed before any activity can start. In summary:

Early wins phase (April to July 2016) – aligns with the planning and provision for the next academic year and the review expects governors to begin demonstrating more consistent and visible leadership during this period. As part of this, it is envisaged that the governor will actively engage with the full range of local partners who are named in the review as education providers (both OLASS and non-OLASS), prison industries, employers, the National Careers Service, and Community Rehabilitation Companies. It also recommends the rapid review of the digital offer to support education takes place, and that mechanisms to share good practice, including those highlighted in the review, are introduced across the prison estate.

Transition phase (August 2016–July 2017) – the review recommends that the four current OLASS contracts covering prisons in England are extended for a maximum of one further year, until the end of July 2017. However, prison governors of reform prisons should be given the full budget for their education services and the ability to opt out of all, or part of, their OLASS arrangements and choose their own providers. The formal governance framework for OLASS contracts should be changed during this phase to ensure that governors are able to commission education and contract manage provision in their prison.

Other activities that should take place during this phase include:

- Identification of shared local performance measurements between providers and governors
- flexibility over the balance of the use of each individual prison's education budget, based on qualifications and Personal and Social Development relevant to the needs of its learners and local employers
- increased ability for governors to bring in specialist and vocational skill development providers to be more responsive to changing local labour market needs, and to integrate this as part of an overall education offer
- creation of the new scheme to recruit high calibre graduates to work in prisons for two years.

The review states that there should also be opportunities to:

- Learn early lessons from the engagement of new reform prisons with the market and in securing different types of education provision
- undertake market engagement activity to stimulate interest in delivering prison education services, including with local employers
- explore how governors can facilitate access to higher level qualifications (Level 3 and above)
- increase integrated recording of Personal Learning Plans as part of existing prison sentence planning tools
- pilot in-cell technology and explore opportunities to roll this out.

New service delivery phase (from August 2017) – the implementation of all the recommendations, along with all governors having full autonomy over education provision and learning, becoming embedded into the prison environment is

expected to align with the overall timescales of the wider prison reform programme. As such, an end date for achieving this phase has not been given.

However, the review states that as all prisons work towards this end-state, the following is expected to take place as soon as possible:

- Education budgets and contract management arrangements resting unambiguously with governors so they can choose their own mix of providers to meet the needs of their prison learners and local employers
- a new accountability framework for governors, setting out their autonomy and accountability, including step-in arrangements in the event of poor performance
- a new minimum performance framework and payment mechanism
- governors having access to timely performance information and the ability to track outcomes through custody and on release
- a range of new locally agreed contracting arrangements with governors able to introduce a broader range and diversity of local and specialist providers, delivering education interventions in custody and supporting employment activity through the prison gate into the community
- introduction of new ICT to support education, including in-cell technology
- cohorts of the new graduate scheme entrants being placed in prisons.

The implementation of these education reforms will need to be accompanied by the gathering and sharing of evidence on learning, outcomes and good practice.

Conclusion

The Coates Review has been welcomed by many voluntary sector organisations, but there clearly remain many challenges to its full implementation. Rod Clark, chief executive of the Prisoners Education Trust, who also acted as a member of the review's expert panel, discussed these in a blog. He writes, "but as we celebrate, we should not ignore the context in which the reforms will seek to operate – and the serious security and financial issues that will continue to burden Governors, however much freedom they are offered."⁹

As the recommendations from this review are implemented, we hope voluntary sector organisations, especially those providing arts-based and educational services, are fully involved as both strategic and delivery partners. Through our voluntary sector co-ordination pilot project in three South West prisons¹⁰ and a new guide for prisons, *The Rehabilitative Prison: good engagement with the voluntary sector*,¹¹ Clinks is working to ensure continued and meaningful engagement between prisons and the voluntary sector as the wider prison reform agenda is implemented.

Appendix: the 17 key recommendations

1. Every prison must use a consistent and rigorous assessment mechanism to set a baseline against which to measure individuals' academic performance and screen for learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD).
2. Every prisoner must have a Personal Learning Plan that specifies the educational activity that should be undertaken during their sentence. This should be in a consistent digital format that can follow the prisoner through the system if they move prisons.
3. A core set of educational performance measures should be used by all prisons. Such data should be monitored consistently to drive continuous improvement.
4. Ofsted should carry out inspections using the same framework as for the adult skills sector, with inspection intervals and follow-up arrangements driven by performance data and levels of performance.
5. HMIP (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons) should give prisons an overall performance measure, with educational performance (as measured by Ofsted) receiving a separate, distinct assessment. This will be made available to the Governor concerned much closer to the 25-day Ofsted timetable in its work in schools and colleges than currently. It should not be possible for a prison's overall performance to be more than one grade higher than the measure awarded for its education provision.
6. Governors, senior leaders, teachers, prison officers, instructors and peer mentors must be given appropriate professional development to support them to deliver high quality education.
7. The recruitment of high quality teachers needs to be developed.
8. A new scheme to attract high calibre graduates to work in prisons for an initial period of two years should be introduced.
9. The current mechanism for funding prison education should be revised so that Governors and/or providers can design a curriculum that meets the individual needs and Personal Learning Plan of each prisoner for whom they are responsible.
10. Governors should be free to design a framework of incentives that encourage attendance and progression in education.
11. Governors and providers should begin from a planning assumption that there will be substantial numbers of prison learners who will have significant learning support needs. Every prison should adopt a whole-prison approach to identifying, supporting and working with prisoners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD).
12. Governors should be able to use their education budgets to fund learning at Level 3 and above.
13. The planned investment in digital infrastructure should be used to enable more flexible learning across prisons.
14. The security arrangements that currently underpin the use of ICT in the prison estate should be reviewed. Governors should be allowed to develop an approach that allows suitably risk-assessed prison learners to have controlled access to the internet to support their studies and enable applications for jobs on release.
15. The roles and responsibilities of existing organisations supporting prisoners into employment should be reviewed with opportunities to rationalise these roles and responsibilities explored.
16. The government should continue to develop an approach that encourages and supports employers to work in prisons and to employ prisoners on release.
17. Reforms to prison education provision should be introduced in three phases, linked to wider prison reforms. As part of this, the current OLASS contracts should be extended up to August 2017.



CLINKS

Clinks supports, represents and campaigns for the voluntary sector working with offenders. Clinks aims to ensure the sector and all those with whom they work, are informed and engaged in order to transform the lives of offenders.

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End notes

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