

MINUTES OF MEETING CROSS PARTY GROUP ON ADULT LEARNING

Wednesday 27 January 2016

Committee Room 2, The Scottish Parliament

MSPs in attendance: Jean Urquhart and Neil Findlay

Agenda items

1. Welcome

Jean Urquhart, MSP welcomed attendees to the eighth Cross Party Group meeting and gave the apologies for Jim King who was to provide the introduction.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

3. Introduction

Adele Hill, Head of Strategy and Project Development, Access to Industry kindly agreed to provide the introduction due to the apologies received from Jim King. Adele talked about how education opens up opportunities for offenders.

4. “Adult Learning and Crime” Presentations

Adele Hill also gave a presentation of some of the Innovations and Projects that Access to Industry carries out (presentation attached). The main areas that Adele covered were:

- Shine: Women’s Mentoring Service which works with women offenders.
- Passport aimed at male prisoners aged 21 and over who are in their last 6 months in HMP Edinburgh and returning to an Edinburgh address or who have returned to Edinburgh after leaving prison in the last 3 months.
- Transition which works with adults in recovery from drug/alcohol abuse.

Norman Ross, High Life Highland presentation was on “Transitions for Offenders” (presentation attached). Norman looked at the causes of offending through to transition to the community.

Jean thanked both for their presentations.

5. Open Discussion

Key Points:

1. Training is mainly carried out online and there is a significant lack of I.T equipment available within the prisons. Furthermore due to regulations technology is not permitted to be taken into prisons on an ad hoc basis.

2. Having offenders released on a Friday creates further complications as accommodation may not be available for the weekend and leaves them in an even more vulnerable position.
3. The need for continued funding, as the majority of funding lasts for approximately 12-20 weeks. Once the link has been made it is evident in many cases that the offender would continue with their learning and personal development and be less likely to reoffend but due to the lack in resources it just comes to a halt.
4. Shine offers the women the opportunity to come back as volunteers. But this requires huge resources as the women require training and support and supervision. It needs to be a formal arrangement, but the lack of funding again restricts this.
5. Talent spotting - allowing people to try different things and explore what they may enjoy.
6. It was agreed that there was significant gaps around the country with the lack of organisations being able to provide the services to offenders both in and outside prison.

6. Any other Business

The group discussed barriers that were faced in applying for courses or employment with the one of the main barriers being the disclosure of convictions. There is an anxiety about disclosing however given the appropriate advice this is an obstacle that can be overcome. This is an area that needs to be addressed.

Jean told the group about an inspiring project where social services are all under one roof, in addition there is a crèche and adult education classes, which include cooking on a small budget.

Adele advised the group that the Scottish Prison Service were in the process of developing a new learning strategy.

There was a discussion around the health of offenders and that some often feel that prison is a better option than living on the outside as they are unable to function. It was agreed that if a referral was made to a psychologist to early then there would not be a positive outcome.

A member of the group told how she had accessed the services after suffering post traumatic stress and how subsequently by attending the adult education classes that her life had been turned around.

7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 15 March 2016.


Those indicating attendance at the CPG:

Armstrong, Karen	Laing, Dughall
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Armstrong, Linda Bamford, Caroline Boucher, Fiona Callaghan, Lee Downie, Alex Dunbar, Lesley Dunbar, Lesley Gibbon, Ed Hill, Adele Howie, Jackie	Matemba, Yonah McHarg, Jim Reid, Dave Ross, Norman Scarlett, Rebecca Stevenson, Kaye Thompson, Richard Waddell, Tracy Cousins, Vanessa Henderson, Fiona
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Who is the service for?



Women offenders who are:


- short-term prisoners (>4 years), not subject to statutory supervision
- on remand
- subject to Community Payback Order and at high risk of breaching

Working With Women in Prison




- Immediate contact via mail or email a prisoner
- Mentoring plan agreed along with frequency of visits
- Housing: tenancy, supported or emergency accommodation
- Benefits
- GP appointments
- Addictions and mental health support
- Community Care Grant application
- Reports for court
- Advocacy
- Gate pick up

Working with Women in the Community




- Individual case work, mentoring plans
- Group Work (Spring, Access to Industry)
- Mapping resources, local partners
- Rural transport issues
- Support to attend Social Work where at risk of breach
- Support with housing, benefits, GP appointments, addictions and mental health, Community Care Grant
- Support and signposting towards outreach recovery college, other education, training, support facilities
- Attending court


Positive Outcomes 2015-2016 

For mentees


- Moving into education, employment and training
- Regaining access to or custody of children
- Completing Venture Trust 5 day wilderness challenge
- Maintaining tenancies, avoiding eviction
- Increased numbers of women released, bailed and given alternatives to custody
- Reduced Offending!

 **Who is it for?**


- Adult (21+) male prisoners in HMP Edinburgh in the last 6 months of sentence, returning to an Edinburgh address.
- Adult (21+) male who have returned to the Edinburgh area after leaving any jail in the last 3 months.

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 **Caseworker Role – Community (Cowgate office)**

- **1-Is:** Caseworker offers information, advice and guidance on all aspects of employability. CV production, disclosure letter, jobsearch advice.
- **Training:** Support accessing training, either in house or through third parties.
- **Education:** Student can access in-house SQA qualifications, or get support to re-enter FE/HE.
- **Work experience/volunteering:** Caseworker can help student a wide range of placements or voluntary opportunities.



Referral Routes

- **HMP Edinburgh** – prisoners are made aware of available support at their Core Screen. Links Centre referral forms are available in the halls for prisoners to self-refer at any time, or they can speak to their personal officer. Referrals from partner agency workers/SPS staff can be made directly to a Caseworker.
- **Living Skills course** – participants are selected from caseworker’s existing caseload, selected directly by SPS officers in the halls, or recommended by partner agency workers.
- **Community** – prison leavers can self-refer, or referrals can be made by exterior organisations/agencies including JCP, Social Work, Sacro, Lifetime, VOW (Police Scotland).



Case Study – RH

- RH identified as eligible for Passport and CJS whilst in HMP Edinburgh.
- RH had a history of offending, substance misuse, homelessness, and suffered from anxiety and low self-esteem.
- Put forward for opportunity as Peer Mentor with Action for Children, despite his initial reservations as to his suitability.
- Met several times for 1-1 interview coaching in HMP Edinburgh, and CV polishing following liberation.
- Performed well at interview, and was offered position.
- Initial difficulties with ID documentation and references resolved with Passport’s help.
- Started position September 2014, and we have been receiving regular updates from both him and his manager.
- Manager’s feedback has been glowing – praising his enthusiasm and highlighting that he provides a valuable bridge between their service users and Practitioners.
- As of last month, the manager reported that he has opened discussions with his superiors to look into the possibility of keeping RH on beyond the end of the six months CJS.


Key to Success - DWP

- 12 Week education and training programme for people on JSA/UC who have Criminal Convictions
- Opportunities for SAR report
- Attend 1:1 case work settings
- Attend focussed group work around Skill based training and progressions
- Progress on to work placements
- Gain employment

Key to Success


- Achievements 1st April – 31st December 2015

	DWP Annual Target	DWP Target	AI Annual Target	Target	Actual
Assessed/Starts	A	Action Plans	By Date	By Date	By Date
Skills Acquired:	133	98	100	72	105
Jobs (sustained 1 weeks)	47	35	110	8	7
Jobs (sustained 8 weeks)	28	21	6	4	3




What does Transition do?

- Client group: adults in recovery from drug/alcohol addiction
- Offer 1-1 support to address barriers to progression, focusing on employment, training and education
- Mini college project offering a menu of classes delivered by Edinburgh College tutors
- A variety of outreach at partner agencies such as Ritson Clinic, LEAP, NE Recovery Hub, SE Recovery Hub and Willow



What does Transition strive to achieve?

- Meaningful progression routes for students
- To build relationships with students in order to raise confidence and aspirations
- Maintain good reputation through delivery of quality service
- Measurable outcomes (and soft outcomes which may be harder to measure!)
- Strong and positive partnerships with other agencies



Achievement January-December 2015


- 119 new people engaged with Transition
- 120 employability training opportunities were taken up with 81 sustaining at 13 weeks
- 40 People progressed to college with 37 college places being sustained at 13 weeks
- 22 people progressed in to employment with 21 sustaining at 4 weeks and 13 sustaining employment at 13 weeks.
- 21 people undertook volunteering opportunities
- 125 Qualifications were achieved.

Offender Learning in Highland



Scottish Company: SC407011
Scottish Charity: SC042593

- ALNIS Report 2001 states that 23% of the Scottish population have difficulties to varying degrees with general literacies
- Although statistics vary the figure in the prison and offender population at large is much higher – up to 80% in some studies. We believe there is a definite link between low literacies ability and repeat re-offending.
- HMP Inverness is a small local prison set in the Crown area of Inverness. It has cell space for 98 prisoners with an agreed overcapacity and budget for 118 prisoners
- The PLLO's main remit is to engage with prisoners serving a sentence and encourage and motivate them to continue learning on liberation to the Highland community thus helping to reduce re-offending. This involves working in close partnership with other organisations in the prison Links Centre such as HC CJSW, NHS, Addictions Counsellors and of course SPS.
- Learning is about a deal more than reading, writing and numbers. It is also about emotional intelligence and attitudes to self and others which, if challenged and improved, can help to change lives and have significant soft outcomes as well as improved learning skills. It can help improve physical and mental well being. Adult Learning can play a key role in the rehabilitation and reintegration process – **Unlocking Potential and Transforming Lives**



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- At any one time 10% of the population of Portersfield might be engaging with learning and a similar number in the community
- HLH Adult Learning team promotes lifelong learning, develops critical awareness and self determination in a method that recognises literacies as a series of complex capabilities involving knowledge, skills and understanding – the Social Practice model of adult learning
- Chaotic lifestyles are endemic and many have multiple issues such as mental health, addictions, homelessness and general offending behaviour – as well as literacies. These issues are all connected and we need to be connected in our approach. To break the recidivist cycle relevant agencies must work in co-operation to support recently libbed prisoners. A holistic approach is most effective for supporting various issues and SPS and partners are working towards a hub in the community mirroring the work of the existing prison links centre

Challenges:

- The 'churn' in the prison system means that prisoners can be transferred or liberated with little or no notice to practitioners – frustrating when prisoners are engaging meaningfully and suddenly disappear
- Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs) such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD, autism etc are prevalent in the prison system – the PLLO has undergone specialist training to assess and support these learning differences also known as neuro-diversity

Social Practice

- The model sits well with client-centred practice employed by other agencies – real life uses of literacies
- Inclusive
- Lifelong learners, citizens, family members, workers
- Literacy and numeracy are complex capabilities rather than a simple set of basic skills
- Adult learners are more likely to develop and retain knowledge, skills and understanding if they see them as relevant to their own problems and challenges
- Encourages critical thinking
- Goals in LPs are life-centred – eg reading and writing as therapeutic processes
- Literacies support as part of Social Work action plans.
- NHS Care Programmes and Child Plan Case Conferences

SpLD in prison

'The Incidence of Hidden Disabilities in the Prison Population', 2005

- Approximately half the prison population experience some degree of literacy difficulty
- 40% of the above population show positive signs of dyslexia

The working hypothesis in this study is that dyslexia and related hidden disabilities, if not identified and addressed appropriately at school will, perhaps in combination with other factors, increase the risk of social exclusion and offending behaviour.

Transition from prison to Community

- Partnership working is essential to supporting prisoners being liberated from prison to community. For instance someone who has nowhere to stay is hardly going to turn up for an adult learning appointment.
- The PLLO can liaise and meet with the client at eg the jobcentre or a homeless hostel where he has to attend to meet vital needs.
- SPS have 2 full-time through care support officers who exchange information on liberated prisoners at regular meetings with agencies such as HLH Adult Learning. They will accompany a prisoner on release and take him to appointments through the first 6 weeks of community life.

The Way Forward?

- More awareness of Literacies issues as impacting on offenders' lives and behaviour
- Non-formal learning can be a hook for engagement
- Stronger more effective partnerships with agencies in non-formal learning
- Contextualised learning awareness training for front line staff and management
- Literacies questionnaire for Social Workers
- Multi-agency Community Links Centres where offenders are supported in all aspects including non-formal learning

Any Questions?

