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Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment: Next Steps

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Foreword

The Green Paper, *Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment*¹, published in December 2005, tackled a tough challenge. High levels of re-offending are very costly to society, both in economic and social terms. While punishment will always be a primary aim of the criminal justice system, we are determined to do more to turn offenders away from crime and into work, improving their skills, and encouraging them to lead productive lives in their communities.

This document sets out how we will realise the vision in the Green Paper. It reports on the good progress already being made, as well as setting an agenda of ambitious reform to take us into the next decade.

Many people who took part in the wide consultation on the proposals told us they are the right direction to take. This document sets out our proposals to drive forward with three priorities:

- engaging employers through the Reducing Re-offending Corporate Alliance;
- building on the new offender learning and skills service, including through the campus model;
- reinforcing the emphasis on skills and jobs in prisons and probation.

Change is happening in a challenging environment, not least with pressures on prison places and the task of establishing the new National Offender Management Service. None of this makes the focus on reducing re-offending less important, but it does strengthen the case for developing and thoroughly testing the ideas drawing on the expertise of the regional partnerships established to deliver the reducing re-offending strategies. This document describes our plans to appoint test bed regions to work with us to implement the vision in the most effective way.

Delivering this ambitious set of plans will support our aim to make a step change in the behaviour of those engaged in a repetitive cycle of criminal activity. It is clear that achieving our ambitions will require a strong partnership across Government. The Home Office and the Department for Education and Skills are leading a new Inter-Ministerial Group, to ensure that we maintain the direction and momentum needed to achieve our goals.

We have discussed these plans widely and know that we have an agenda endorsed by many working in the criminal justice system. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make a real difference to our communities.



Patricia Scotland

Patricia Scotland

The Rt Hon Baroness Scotland of Asthal, QC
Minister of State for Criminal Justice and Offender Management



Phil Hope

Phil Hope

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills



Jim Murphy

Jim Murphy

Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform

Introduction

“...the strong focus on jobs and employer engagement is a crucial step towards improving outcomes for this challenging group.”

(Cay Stratton, Director of the National Employment Panel)

- 1 In December 2005, the Government set out its strategy for improving skills and employment outcomes for offenders, in the Green Paper *Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment*. The strategy placed the reduction of re-offending – alongside protecting the public – at the heart of the work of prisons and probation services, with a new focus on training offenders and helping them get jobs. This area of activity had been low profile, and the Green Paper set out an ambitious plan of reform.
 - 2 The Government’s approach to reducing re-offending has at its heart the need to protect citizens from crime, and to take action against those who break the law. Those who commit crime must expect to be punished, with sentences robustly and efficiently enforced. But punishment and deterrence alone are not enough: we can also protect the public by helping offenders become more productive members of society. It is clear that an important way of doing that is to tackle the
 - low skills and worklessness that can be major obstacles to an offender living free of crime.
 - 3 In consultation, the strategy attracted broad support, along with a number of practical suggestions for implementation. This document sets out how the strategy is being taken forward, with some important next steps. (A summary of consultation responses can be found at www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning.)
 - 4 Delivering on the promise of improving offenders’ skills and employability remains a priority because it supports several important government objectives:
- ### Reducing Re-offending
- 4.1 The heavy financial and social cost of the failure to stop re-offending is well-known. The Green Paper said: “A former prisoner who re-offends costs the criminal justice system an average of £65,000 up to the point of re-imprisonment, and, after that, as much as £37,500 each year in prison. Re-offending

also costs society dearly; the total cost of recorded crime committed by ex-prisoners is estimated at around £11 billion per year.” Alongside this are the personal costs of crime, especially the impact on victims. We want the plans set out in this document to make our communities safer, save them money and get offenders out of crime and into jobs.

4.2 The Home Office, in its report *Criminal Justice Service Review: Rebalancing the criminal justice system in favour of the law-abiding majority*² highlighted the need for the entire criminal justice system to take responsibility for reducing re-offending, from the police, through sentencers, to prison and probation. The Home Office is considering whether it should make its objective to reduce re-offending a target that is shared across the criminal justice system with its key partners. The report says “Reducing re-offending should be everyone’s business – to maximise what different sectors and groups have to offer to help ex-offenders reintegrate into society and get them engaged in purposeful activities in the local community. The role of skills and employment is one of the key pathways helping to meet this need.”

4.3 The cross Government Plan to reduce re-offending was revised and updated in November 2005; a new Inter-Ministerial Group led by the Home Office and the Department for Education and Skills was established in July 2006 to give new leadership to the agenda. In each English region the key organisations have come together in partnerships to implement their plans.

Eradicating Child Poverty

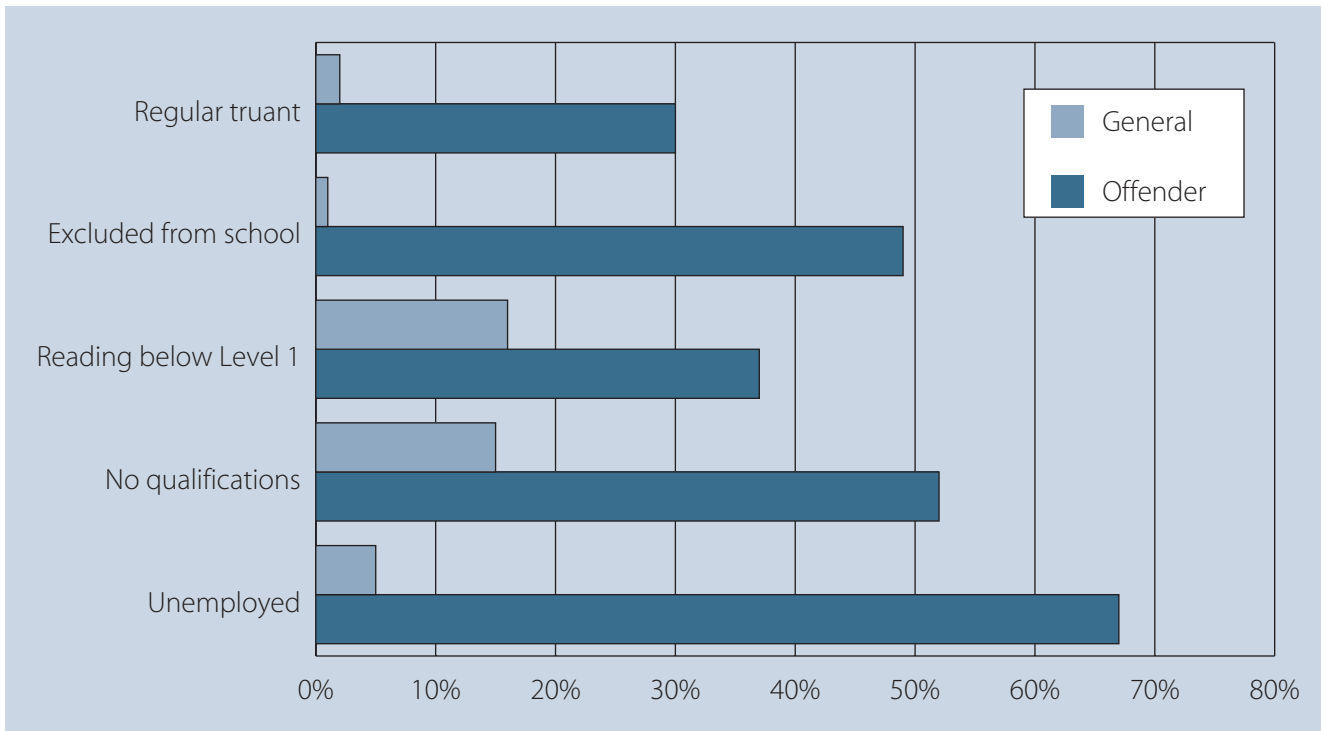
4.4 The Government’s strategy for tackling child poverty is set out in *Opportunity for All*³ and in the July 2004 *Child Poverty Review*⁴. The Review was published alongside the 2004 Spending Review White Paper, with a strategy to raise employment as one of four key elements, because a job remains the most sustainable route out of poverty. Breaking the cycle of deprivation and helping offenders support their children through work will make an important contribution.

Improving Productivity

4.5 The final report of the Leitch review of skills, *Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills*⁵, set out the increasing importance of skill levels for competing in the global economy. Even if the UK’s current challenging policies were successful, we would still fall behind the performance of our competitors by 2020. The Leitch report also highlighted the impact that poor skills have on social welfare. Some of the figures are stark:

- over one third of adults in the UK do not have a basic school-leaving qualification – double the proportion of Canada or Germany;
- five million people have no qualifications at all; and
- one in six do not have the literacy skills expected of an 11 year old and half do not have the comparable levels of functional numeracy.

Figure 1: The offender learner challenge⁶



4.6 These facts apply to the general population but offenders often suffer the multiple effects of such under-achievement (see fig 1). Tackling offenders' low skills is accordingly an important part of the ambition to improve the UK's skills profile.

Please note that, except where stated otherwise, proposals in this paper relate to offenders in England.

Making it happen: Looking forward to 2010

"...plans for a prisoner's rehabilitation should be set into motion from their very first day in custody, if not before. Encouraging prisoners into education and training can be pivotal to a crime-free future..."

(Frances Crook, the Howard League for Penal Reform)

- 5 Our ambitious agenda for change has been widely welcomed and many elements of the strategy are already well under way. The Learning and Skills Council rolled out its new offender learning and skills service nationally from July 2006. This is the first step to integrating offender learning and skills with wider post-16 training. Through the introduction of regional offender managers, there is a new regional focus on providing the right balance of services to tackle the issues stopping more offenders turning away from crime. This includes a new co-commissioning role between regional offender managers and the regional directors of the Learning and Skills Council. And there are already many examples of good practice across the prison and probation services reinforcing the proposals set out in the Green Paper, illustrated by case studies in this document.
- 6 Other elements of the strategy are in their very early stages, such as the new job developer role. And big challenges remain, not least the need to foster a new emphasis on offender skills and employment in prisons and probation services at a time of significant operational pressure and change, without compromising security and control.
7. Against this background we need to press on with a reform agenda taking us into the next decade, building an effective model for offender skills and employment. This section of the document sets out how we propose to take forward implementation of key parts of the strategy, in particular through establishing two English regions as test beds to develop and implement significant changes between now and 2009. Subsequent sections provide more detail on progress in taking forward the main areas of action in the Green Paper.

Three Priorities for Action

- 8 We will take forward three important strands of work:
- a strong drive to **engage employers** through the Reducing Re-offending Corporate Alliance, linked to the Skills Strategy and the outcome of the Leitch review of skills. Working with employers to design and implement new models of training and preparation for jobs;
 - building on the new offender learning and skills service through the **development of a campus model**, which has among its key features:
 - a focus on employers' needs;
 - an employability contract as part of the sentence plan, to motivate offenders and focus resources where they will have most impact;
 - more flexible access to skills and employment support, with effective use of ICT.
 - using the new commissioning role of the regional offender managers to build a **new emphasis on skills and jobs in prisons and probation**, using unpaid work in the community and work opportunities in prisons, with a particular focus on developing the workforce to deliver this.

Leading Reform and Spreading Good Practice

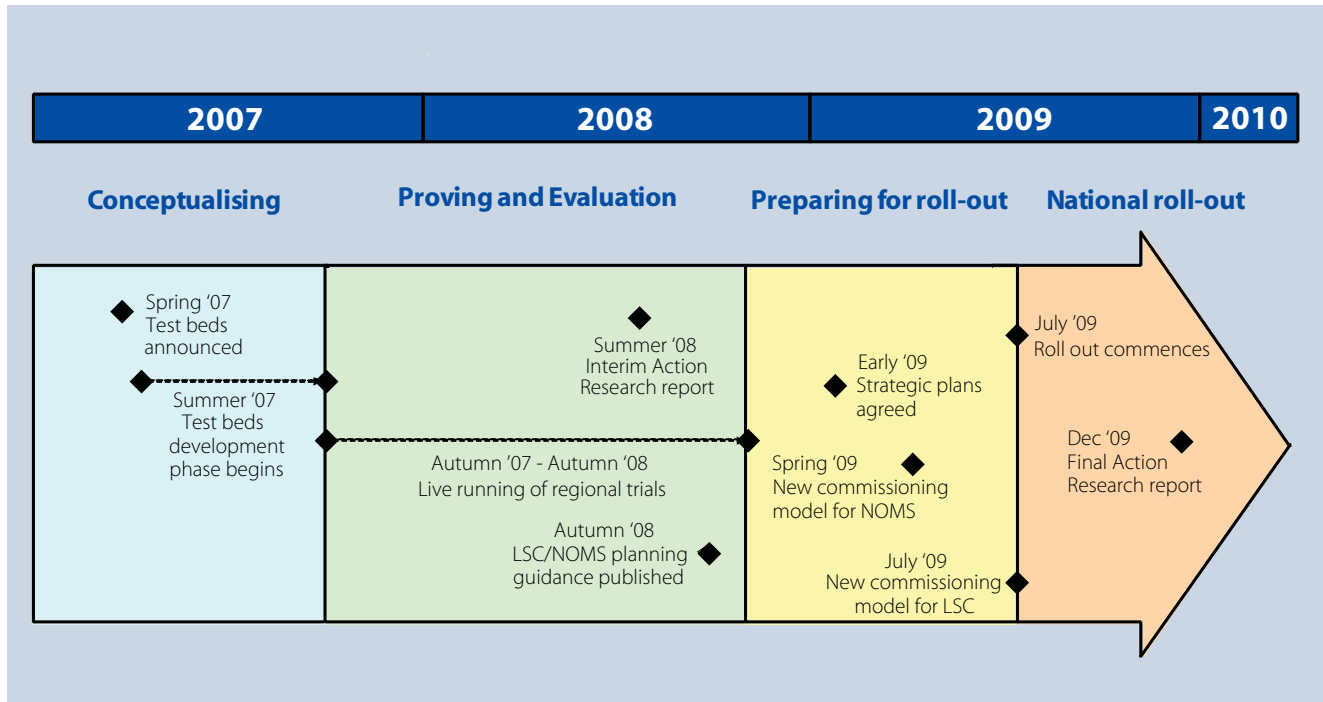
- 9 A new cross-Government Ministerial group is leading the Reducing Re-offending Strategy and will oversee the proposals set out here. There is much good practice in place and we are undertaking an audit to ensure that we learn from that practice and

pass it on systematically throughout the criminal justice system. The Local Criminal Justice Boards have an important role to play in promoting effective practice and we will work with them to find the most effective way of achieving this. This will give new momentum to reform, drawing together the different strands of the strategy in a practical way.

Two Regional Test Beds

- 10 In addition to spreading good practice across all nine regions, we will press forward implementation of the three priorities for action through test beds in two English regions. Reforming delivery of offender learning showed the importance of working in partnership right through the delivery chain and involving front line staff in design and implementation. Accordingly, we want to take a systematic approach, initially within two regions, to testing the development of our key proposals.
- 11 Using the expertise of the new regional partnerships, we will run a short competition to identify the test bed regions. We will call for bids early in the new year with a view to appointing the regions in the spring of 2007. Bids will need to have the clear support of the reducing re-offending partnership boards, demonstrating regional and local endorsement. The overall process for development, including timescales is set out at figure 2 (overleaf).
- 12 The successful regions will receive a modest amount of development funding to meet the extra costs of establishing and running a test bed. We do not expect

Figure 2: Offender Skills and Employment Programme



development funding to be needed by other regions as they adopt the new approaches once the models have been developed and tested.

International Partnership

13 We also want to consider the scope in the test bed regions to draw on developments in other countries. In particular, we have looked at initiatives in Sweden and Norway to improve the delivery of skills and employment through the use of ICT. Both nations are keen to work with us to build on their work, and learn from our new focus on improving skills and employment outcomes for offenders. We will want to work with the test bed regions to establish this trans-national partnership to our mutual benefit. We will provide more detail when we call for expressions of interest.

Into work and away from crime

“Setting out the business case to employers is fundamental. So is providing reassurance about the potential risk of taking on an ex-offender emphasising that being in work is the best single antidote to (re)offending, a fact that employers may not already know.”

(Nacro)

We will:

- **engage employers through the Reducing Re-offending Corporate Alliance and provide advice and services promoting the benefits of employing offenders;**
- **introduce Job Developers initially in six locations;**
- **explore the use of different forms of work from Work Trials to self-employment packages, in partnership with the test bed regions and the development of the campus model.**

The Green Paper described ...

- 14 A new focus on helping offenders get work, with an ambition to *“develop new approaches to intensive, work-focused support for offenders, building on our existing strategy and aiming to engage employers in designing and delivering programmes so that offenders gain skills and experience to meet employers’ needs.”*

- 15 Although the consultation showed broad support for that approach, it also identified some barriers. Many employers said they would consider employing offenders providing there was rigorous preparation for employment and good support mechanisms if things go wrong.

Next Steps ...

... ENGAGING EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE REDUCING RE-OFFENDING CORPORATE ALLIANCE

- 16 The Reducing Re-offending Corporate Alliance is the umbrella under which we are promoting the employment of offenders, particularly in sectors with recruitment difficulties and skills shortages. The Alliance will also be the ‘brand’ under which we promote the role of mentoring in supporting employers and offenders, as well as producing materials and providing funding to implement regional strategies. We want to help employers to work together to share experience and good

Wiltan Limited is a small company, employing about 50 people, specialising in the manufacture of magnetic components. Alison Itani, a director, is a supporter of the Corporate Alliance.

"We share, in common with most employers, a recurring problem of recruiting and retaining suitable employees. We have had to learn to think beyond the traditional recruitment routes. Through our links with Jobcentre Plus I became aware of the potentially large pool of prospective employees within the prison population who receive training whilst serving their sentences and who are being supported via resettlement programmes to aid their reintegration back into the community. All the employees we have taken on from prison have been appointed on their merit; the supervisors have no knowledge of the candidate's personal circumstances until selected for interview.

Prisoners who come to us on temporary licence from prison have been accepted by the other staff with whom they have built up supportive relationships that have continued after their release and during their on-going employment with the company. This has helped them cope with the many pressures they experience after their release. We have found the experience of recruiting from the prison population a satisfactory and rewarding one. We will continue to exploit this pool of labour and encourage other employers to do the same."

practice. We know it is crucial to signpost and coordinate services for employers more effectively, and we will work with other agencies and partners to join up activities. This will be particularly important in the context of the work led by the Learning and Skills Council through programmes such as Train to Gain and the new partnerships developing with Jobcentre Plus in the context of the Cities Strategy pathfinders and the fledgling Employment and Skills Boards announced in the Local Government White Paper⁷.

17 Good practice and experience already exists and we need to promote it. The National Offender Management Service is working with employers of all sizes, in the public and private sector, as well as the voluntary and community sector and the regional boards, supported by regional offender managers, are building relationships with employers. There is also a mapping exercise underway to ensure that we capitalise on existing links between employers and prisons and probation areas.

The Howard League for Penal Reform established a social enterprise within HMP Coldingley in 2005. Six prisoners are employed on the national minimum wage, with normal tax and national insurance deductions made. They are employed on the same terms and conditions as the Howard League's other staff and qualify for the same pension payments.

The six staff spent six months being trained as graphic designers, and the business went live in March 2006, undertaking commissions from voluntary organisations and the National Offender Management Service. On release, the offenders (long termers) will have job skills and real work experience, as well as some savings and the beginnings of a pension package.

18 The needs of offenders vary considerably. Some need little support to find work at the end of their sentence, particularly where they had a job previously. Others need more help, with an introduction to work through alternative forms of employment such as social enterprises in prisons being particularly valuable.

... WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS TO IDENTIFY JOBS FOR OFFENDERS

19 We are developing a menu of options for employing and supporting offenders. It will propose different levels of engagement for employers, from offering advice and mentoring for offenders looking for work, through to running work trials and providing permanent jobs. It will be particularly important to look at how this work, led by the regional reducing re-offending boards, can add value to the skills strategy led by regional Learning and Skills Councils.

20 The Department for Work and Pensions, through the National Employment Panel, is establishing Job Developers to improve job outcomes for offenders. Six pilots will be established, providing employers with a new, individualised service and working to break down real and perceived barriers to employing offenders. The pilots will offer offenders access to training programmes designed to meet the needs of employers.

21 The Job Developers will advise Jobcentre Plus and Reducing Re-offending Corporate Alliance partners and providers on employer engagement. Job Developers will provide a new focus for relationships with employers, alongside new pre- and post-

placement support services for those who employ offenders.

22 The prototype of the Job Developer model was introduced in Merseyside in November 2006, with up to five more locations planned for the pilot in early 2007. The other locations proposed are Birmingham, Doncaster, London, Manchester and Newcastle. These locations have been selected from the ten Employer Coalitions through a process which included considering those prisons with the highest number of locally released prisoners and those on community sentences. We also considered where there is the highest level of support from Jobcentre Plus through its Employment and Benefit Surgeries, building on the current arrangements for job search.

HMP Liverpool has seconded a prison officer to find employment for offenders on release. He has secured 33 employment places for offenders since April 2006 and is tracking them for up to six months after release to test the effectiveness of sustainable employment on reducing re-offending. Support is offered to the employer and the client during the tracking period.

... EXPLORING AND PROMOTING DIFFERENT FORMS OF WORK

23 The campus model, detailed below (**paragraphs 28–36**), will open the way to engaging employers in the design and delivery of work-related skills programmes, including the most effective ways of providing the underlying key skills for work

including punctuality, attendance, teamwork and communication.

- 24 We expect to make earliest progress through the test bed regions and are particularly keen to test the following options:
- **Work Trials**, where offenders are employed on temporary contracts with the offer of a permanent job after a successful trial period. We want to expand the current opportunities for Work Trials;
 - customised '**recruit, train and guaranteed interview**' packages, delivered through partnerships of providers and employers as part of the campus model and under the banner of the Reducing Re-offending Corporate Alliance. There will be a role for Job Developers, where they exist;
 - a greater focus on **self-employment**, with access to finance, advice and skills development. As part of this package, we will investigate the possibility of a 'business incubator/enterprise rehearsal' for those looking to start up a business. This will build on the work of the *Business in Prisons* project.
- 25 The Department for Work and Pensions and the Prison Service are cooperating on booking interviews with Jobcentre Plus before release. With prisoners' consent the Department for Work and Pensions have started using the data they hold to track employment outcomes. Building on this, we will work with the regional test beds to establish a baseline from which to measure the impact of the Green Paper proposals and consider a new achievement target for employment outcomes.

Gaining skills and improving employability

"The campus should support regional employer forums to empower students to develop truly marketable skills by shaping the curriculum according to local economic needs, and helping to design and deliver training. The goal of education for employment should be given central priority."

(Mark Campbell, LogicaCMG & Unlock)

We will:

- **continue to improve the planning, organisation and funding of learning and skills, building on the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service reforms, and forging stronger links with mainstream services in the post-16 sector;**
- **sharpen accountabilities to underpin integrated services for offenders, in the light of new powers for regional offender managers;**
- **design and develop a new offender campus in partnership with the test bed regions, considering wider adoption from 2009 when the initial Offenders' Learning and Skills Service contracts expire.**

The Green Paper described ...

- 25 Plans for a new, integrated and higher quality learning and skills service, with offenders featuring as a priority group in

the plans of the Learning and Skills Council and the new Quality Improvement Agency.

Next Steps ...

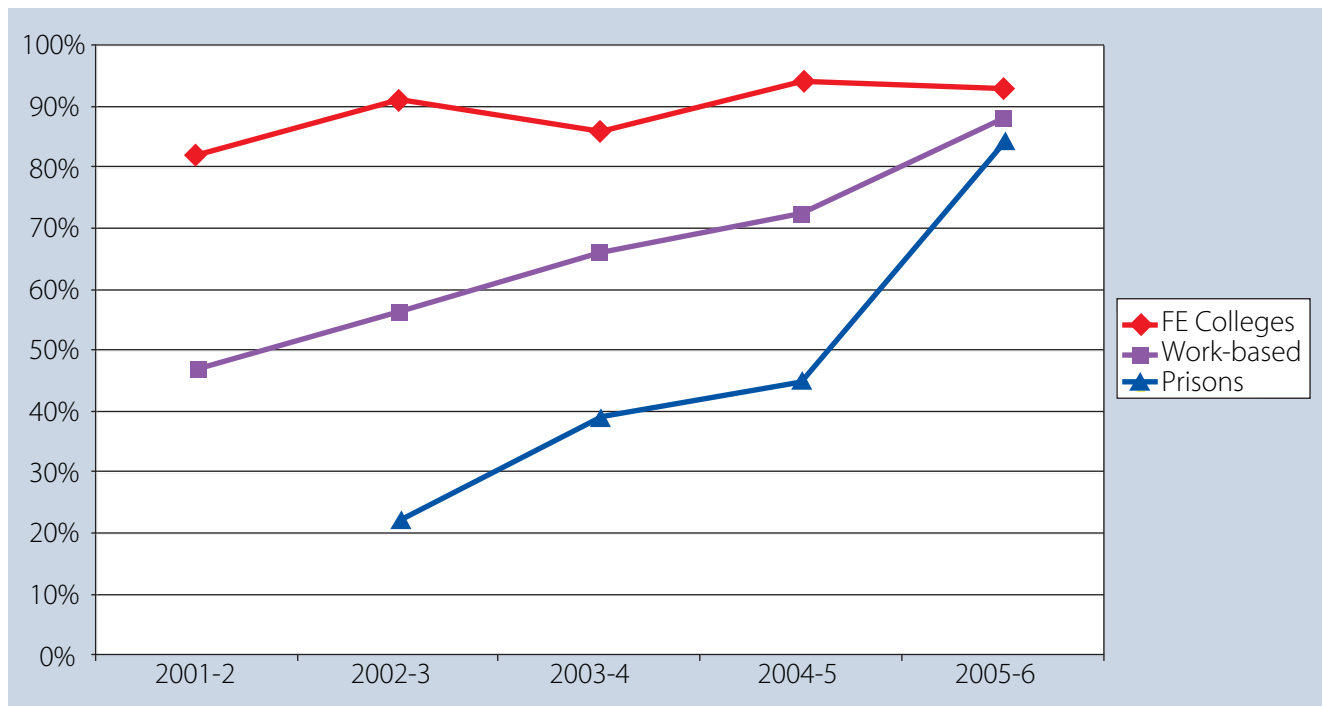
... IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE

- 26 As Figure 3 (overleaf) shows, the Government's investment in and reform of offender learning and skills has begun to have an impact in significantly improving the quality of learning and skills in adult prisons.

- 27 We want to build on this foundation to produce a transformed service for offender learners, with a strong focus on skills for employment. We will press ahead to:

- **develop the Accountabilities Framework** to provide a sharper focus on learning and skills alongside other interventions in the sentence plan and consolidating the co-commissioning roles

Figure 3: Proportion of providers passing ALI inspections⁸



in the light of new regional offender manager powers;

- **tackle long-standing weaknesses in the transfer of learning data** as an offender moves into, through and out of custody. The Learning and Skills Council will introduce a new Offender Learning Database during 2007, rolling out progressively over the lifetime of the initial Offenders' Learning and Skills Service contracts. Discussions are in progress about plans to link up with the new National Offender Management Service offender management system from 2010 onwards, with a view to bringing together, and making readily accessible, all information about an offender's learning and skills needs;
- **plan, organise and prioritise the delivery of learning more effectively.** The Learning and Skills Council will consult on plans to reform the learning offered to offenders in both prison and community.

We want increasingly to find ways to target resources in order to have the greatest impact on reducing re-offending. The aim will be to equip offenders with the skills and qualifications they need to secure and sustain employment, where this appears likely to help them live crime-free. The nature of the training offered will be determined by factors such as the needs of the labour market within the resettlement area, the individual's sentence length and the place they are undertaking their learning. We need to establish a 'core offer' but also to differentiate that offer according to individual need. Local prisons and remand wings should increasingly focus on assessment and initial support, allowing training prisons to develop vocational specialisms, advised by the Learning and Skills Council and aligned with the appropriate local labour market;

- **develop new funding protocols from August 2009**, flowing from the stronger focus on the planning and organisation of

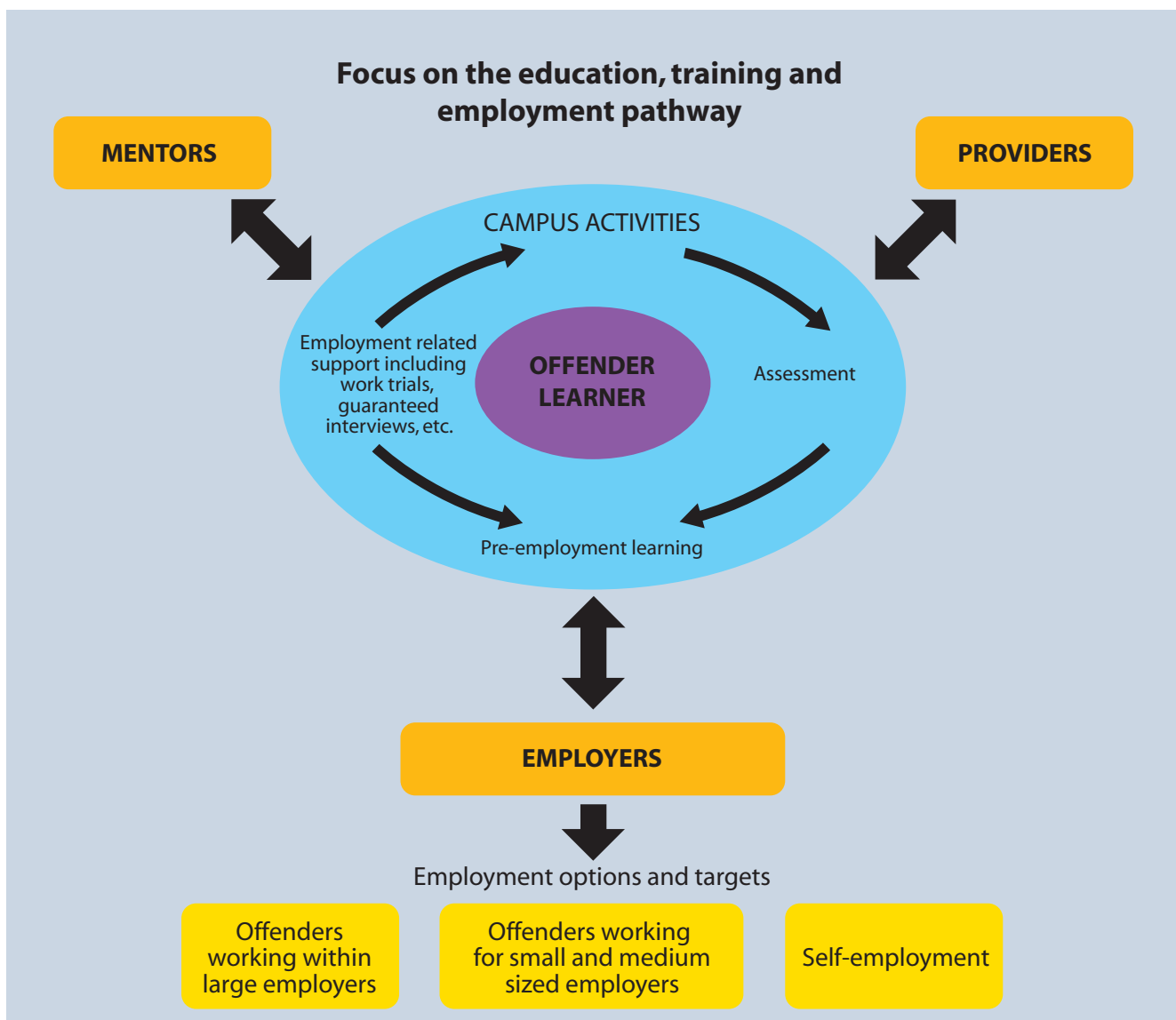
learning provision. We intend that greater planning and coherence will ultimately lead to a more effective distribution of funds to meet offender needs;

- **introduce new arrangements for higher education in April 2007** for offenders in custody. We intend to offer access to a broader range of opportunities with a variety of higher education providers, while recognising that security constraints will make some courses inappropriate for some offenders.

... DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING A NEW CAMPUS MODEL

- 28 There was strong support for the Green Paper proposal to develop a campus model. We intend, in partnership with the test bed regions, to push forward with its design and development. In the light of evaluation, the model will be considered for wider adoption beyond July 2009 when the initial Offenders' Learning and Skills Service contracts expire.
- 29 Figure 4 illustrates how the campus model (underpinned by the proposals for employability contracts described in paragraphs 41–43) could sharpen the

Figure 4: The campus model



focus on skills and employment programmes to reduce re-offending.

- 30 The process will be:
- skills assessment of offenders to identify those who would benefit from a programme of employment-focused learning and skills. This will need to be flexible to enable other interventions to work in tandem with it;
 - offenders assessed as being most likely to benefit from employment-focused education and skills training would agree their employment goal and an individual learning and employment plan;
 - offenders would be assigned a personal mentor, possibly from a pool of volunteers to support them in their learning programme and through their early months of employment. The mentors will work closely with offender managers.

The Campus Curriculum

- 31 The campus could include a wide range of elements, and be focused on providing more personalised learning, including for example:
- information, advice and guidance with assessment to identify capabilities, work aspirations and skills needs;
 - a range of skills training, including attitude and behaviour, disclosure skills training, and life and financial literacy skills;
 - literacy, language and numeracy skills and vocational skills led by employers;
 - enterprise and self-employment training;
 - work trials, work experience and voluntary work with skills training.

Rights and Responsibilities

- 32 On signing up as a participant in the campus, an offender would choose from a menu of options leading to a specific employment goal. This would focus the offender on their employment aim in the context of their sentence plan, rather than offering them the 'right' to have access to any particular provision. The offender's plan would identify responsibilities, including attendance, achievement goals and standards of behaviour. These rights and responsibilities would be articulated through a range of rewards and penalties.
- 33 We will consider further with the test beds the right package of rewards and penalties. Rewards could include a guaranteed interview with an employer or a work trial. Penalties could include withdrawing the right to enhanced employment options and the more resource-intensive learning programmes. Offenders in custody might be denied access to privileges.

Strong Links to Jobs

- 34 Consultation suggested that the key barriers to employers recruiting offenders were concerns about offenders as a group. Employers appear more likely to recruit offenders if they have the right attitudes, skills and qualifications and if they are given a guarantee that offenders with particular offending backgrounds will not be presented for employment. Employers also value continuing support for those they recruit.
- 35 The campus needs to offer employers:
- involvement in shaping the training offenders receive;

- an active role in the selection of offenders;
- the chance to test offenders' suitability through work trials, along with pre-employment support, and continuing advice and longer employment trials, perhaps through an agency that could take back those who proved unsuitable.

36 We will learn from the new employment support offered through the Job Developer as the campus model is developed. This will include looking at how it can be aligned with the offender manager model, a key link in ensuring that suitable offenders are available.

Motivated to work – skilled for employment

“The redesigning of the prison regime provides a tremendous opportunity to instil a work-discipline in individuals who have little or no formal work history.”

(Jennifer Byrne, Working Links)

We will:

- **develop an employability contract in tandem with the campus model, with a balance of rights and responsibilities, targeted on offenders best able to benefit from employment preparation;**
- **strengthen the emphasis on providing work with skills development in custody and community, using the new regional offender manager powers;**
- **consider the better design of the prison day to support a stronger focus on skills and employment, including the possibility of developing a ‘Prison Train to Gain’.**

The Green Paper described ...

37 The new regional offender managers provide opportunities to give greater emphasis to skills and employment and to place reduced re-offending at the heart of prisons and probation. Training and work experience can offer pathways into employment, strengthened by a rights and

responsibilities-based ‘employability contract’ within sentence plans. A new emphasis on skills and employment in prisons and probation could include better design of the prison day, better use of prison facilities, with skills development built into other workshop activities, and using unpaid work in the community to improve skills for paid work.

Next Steps ...

- 38** Consultation revealed significant support for developing a package rewarding positive engagement with training and employment . A lot is already being done to engage offenders in programmes to change their behaviour and improve their prospects of a life free of crime.
- 39** The changes described above, to transform learning and skills for offenders and strengthen the focus on jobs and involvement of employers, will help a great deal to equip offenders to live crime-free lives. But the impact of such reforms will be greatly increased by the extent to which

Staffordshire Probation has developed a model of embedding vocational skills within Unpaid Work. Thirteen areas are developing nationally accredited vocational skills in Unpaid Work and several are doing so within accredited offending programmes using European Equal funding. Fifteen probation areas, including both the smallest rural area Warwickshire and London the largest metropolitan region, are taking part in a European funded project to facilitate skills acquisition and employment outcomes for offenders in the community.

prisons and probation services are able to re-focus their work with offenders on improving skills and job outcomes. Excellent examples already exist of prisons and probation services placing learning and skills at the heart of their work.

- 40 We intend to build on this in the following ways:

... DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYABILITY CONTRACT

- 41 Increasingly, we want to target investment on those who sign up to a rights and responsibilities deal that will lead them to stop offending. We are keen to find ways in which we can provide a basic entitlement for everyone, to 'Skills for Life' qualifications

for example, while focusing more intensive support on those who commit to skills programmes designed to tackle their barriers to employment and end their offending behaviour.

- 42 We want to develop customised packages of interventions to help more offenders develop marketable skills and get into sustainable jobs. In return for more support, participating offenders will need to commit to actions and standards of behaviour, expressed in an employability contract. Eligibility will not be universal, but a privilege to be earned, and based in part on the offender's potential to benefit and the likelihood of their staying the course. It

HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall opened a Pallet Repair Workshop in 2004 to provide work-related skills and training to help young adult offenders secure employment on release.

The workshop takes in damaged wooden pallets from Whirlowdale (a major UK provider of pallets and packaging solutions), repairs them and ships them out for resale. The workshop provides a working environment akin to what would be found in a commercial pallet repair organisation, within the constraints of a secure environment, with industry-standard processes and tools in use.

Specialist skills in stripping down and repairing pallets are augmented by study towards a City and Guilds qualification in Performing Manufacturing Operations. This qualification applies in a wide range of manufacturing environments and improves employment prospects across a range of industries. Learners' literacy and numeracy needs are addressed as part of the workshop's activity, and prisoners trained as learner mentors play a significant part in this process.

Some six learners a year secure employment in the pallet repair industry on release, with offenders signposted to Whirlowdale companies in their resettlement areas.

is not envisaged that the contract will be part of the sentence, but will be introduced as appropriate as part of an offender's sentence plan.

- 43 Offender managers, with support from offender supervisors in custody, will assess suitability for the employability contract and, with input from learning and skills experts, negotiate the contract. This will include agreeing the package of measures offered, the targets and standards to be achieved, and the associated incentives and penalties. We will trial this development in the regional test beds, to ensure integration with the overall sentence plan and manageability in the broader offender management context, and to assess the resource implications.

...NEW TARGETS FOCUSED ON JOB OUTCOMES

- 44 From April 2007 we will introduce a national target for the probation service based on the numbers in employment for at least four weeks. We will change the existing prisons target to cover both those employed directly on release, and those

who find employment through Jobcentre Plus.

... USING THE NEW REGIONAL OFFENDER MANAGER COMMISSIONING POWERS TO TAILOR TRAINING TO THE OFFENDER'S NEEDS

- 45 There are inevitably limitations on the extent to which many prisons can focus their regime more strongly on skills and employment because of the need to provide a balanced regime supporting good control and discipline. But the long term aspiration is for prison regimes progressively to develop more realistic workplaces with training to support employment on release.
- 46 Through the test bed regions we will work with regional offender managers to develop and commission regimes in custody that meet the skills and employability needs of the offender population. This could include increasing work-related training, preferably sponsored by local business, where offenders can learn the skills necessary to get jobs in their local community.

HMP Wolds (GSL UK Ltd)

HMP Wolds has entered into a partnership with Trackwork Ltd to provide accredited training to enable offenders to obtain employment on release. One hundred and twenty feet of railway track, including a small branch with points, has been laid inside the prison using additional funding from the National Offender Management Service.

During the 10-week training programme, offenders are taught how to use a range of tools and equipment involved in the laying, maintenance, repair and replacement of railway track. They also obtain the necessary 'safety passport' required for anyone seeking employment in the industry.

The course leads to an NVQ Level 2 award in Permanent Way Maintenance and Repair and also includes CV and letter writing and preparation for interview. To date, Trackwork has a 96 per cent success rate for successful candidates obtaining employment in the rail industry.

47 This new emphasis will increasingly make many prisons places of work and learning and open up access to wider funding available in the mainstream. We will look at ways to achieve a better design of the prison day to support this. For example, we will investigate the possibility of developing a 'Prison Train to Gain' model using employers inside prisons to set up and run training programmes modelled on those available in the community. This sort of change will be key to the offer to employers described earlier.

48 Other ways in which we will press forward this agenda include:

- **prison regimes providing more flexible learning facilities**, including increased access to fully secure ICT systems to support the implementation of the sentence plan and skills and employment outcomes. The interim Leitch report *Skills in the UK: The long term challenge*⁹ highlighted the changing nature of employment, particularly in relation to ICT skills, which are now a core requirement for most jobs. Under-achievement among offenders, largely through lack of access, is much higher than for the general workforce. This makes it a pressing priority to improve the use of technology in delivering teaching and learning, as well as offering more widespread access to ICT qualifications;

The National Offender Management Service in London are putting new infrastructure into prisons to support offender learning and resettlement. The aim is to install a secure, managed network of computers with access to approved websites. If the project is successful, the National Offender Management Service will consider roll out to all prisons. The National Offender Management Service also plans to trial a system to provide email to offenders in HMP Wandsworth.

- wherever practicable, **addressing the employability needs of offenders as part of the allocation process** that determines where an offender will serve his or her prison sentence. As resources and operational constraints allow, offenders should serve their sentence where they are best able to address their skills and employment needs;
- **reviewing incentives to prisoners, including pay**, through the development of the campus model and the employability contract, to ensure those who want to improve their skills and employability do not suffer financial disincentives compared with others.

... making better use of sentences

49 Risk will always be the determining factor in decisions on Home Detention Curfew, but we will explore in the test bed regions how far Home Detention Curfew might reasonably be used to support training and employment. Prison governors will be encouraged to take into account the opportunities for training and employment when considering Home Detention Curfew

applications and setting appropriate licence conditions.

- 50 Similarly, arrangements for release on temporary licence should increasingly support opportunities for training and employment, including mainstream education. Where it would not compromise security and control, we will minimise the disruption to prisoners caused by transfer to another prison in cases where employers have agreed to offer an offender a job and have put them through some initial training. Piloting of the campus model will allow engagement of employers in designing opportunities to go with enhanced temporary release arrangements.
- 51 We are also testing new models of unpaid work in the community to ensure they offer the opportunity to develop relevant skills where appropriate. Through the Learning and Skills Council we will increasingly look at how this fits with the Safer and Stronger Communities work

being delivered through Local Area Agreements. Within disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and communities with high concentrations of offenders, we shall look for closer cooperation between the police, probation areas, local authorities, the Learning and Skills Council and Jobcentre Plus, to ensure that funding and services are targeted in the most effective way to reduce re-offending.

... DEVELOPING THE WORKFORCE

- 52 The Government will keep under review the evolving role of prison heads of learning and skills. Heads of learning and skills have provided a focus at local level for integrating learning and skills into the delivery of the whole regime and have played a key part in the recent improvement in quality. With a new generation of providers in place, focused on offering an integrated service, we need to consider how the role of heads of learning and skills might evolve. This will be informed by the wider Adult Learning

In Hartlepool, offenders completing a programme of unpaid work in the community have received guaranteed job interviews with the local authority in consultation with the Learning and Skills Council.

Offenders may be sentenced to perform unpaid work in the community for between 40 and 300 hours. Most unpaid work projects directly benefit the local community. Some of the work undertaken will be in groups supervised by probation staff while some will be undertaken by individuals who are supervised by staff from the organisation providing the work. In all cases, probation staff will ensure that the work meets rigorous standards and is strictly enforced. Examples of current unpaid work schemes include rejuvenating run-down areas for the public's leisure use; decorating village halls and youth clubs or assisting charities in delivering services to those in need.

Twenty per cent of the hours can be used for basic skills and employment-related training. About 6.5 million hours of unpaid work were undertaken in 2005, offering an excellent opportunity to engage the offender learner, with potential for them to achieve accredited qualifications.

Dave is a serving prison officer who needed support with his dyslexia. He had received one session of testing for his dyslexia and was waiting for more. His Prison Officer Association Union Learning representative advised him to attend the union learning centre at Albany Prison. Nine months later he had passed the JSAC exam for promotion to senior officer (one of only three people to pass out of over twenty officers who took the exam in the area). He has also completed two literacy learndirect courses, been promoted to drug treatment manager and started a management course. He has found that he can significantly motivate offenders to learn by using his personal example of overcoming dyslexia to improve his skills and life chances during his Drug Treatment and other training courses.

Inspectorate-led review of the leadership and management of learning and skills in prisons, due to report early in 2007. In partnership with Skills for Justice, we will introduce plans to develop other staff to gain commitment to the skills and employment agenda, for example by extending the network of Union Learning representatives, building on the work currently underway by the Prison Officers Association.

- 53** We will work with the Quality Improvement Agency and Lifelong Learning UK to scope the initial and in-service training needs of staff in the offender learning and skills sector. The radical workforce reforms set out in *Equipping our Teachers for the Future*¹⁰ will take effect from September 2007 and will pave the way for all teachers in offender learning being properly qualified and having a licence to practise.

Young People

"The impact of work-related learning must be acknowledged as a key driver in engaging many disengaged young people."

(Matt Vaughan, City of Nottingham Children's Services)

We will:

- **use Children's Trusts, Local Area Agreements and 14-19 partnerships to plan and develop education services to meet the needs of young offenders;**
- **pilot 14-19 reforms for young offenders;**
- **consult early in 2007 on the issues and barriers to education participation, progression and achievement for school age offenders.**

The Green Paper described ...

54 Most young offenders understand that qualifications, skills and jobs can help them break the cycle of crime, but many face multiple barriers to living crime-free. Proposals to strengthen support for young offenders to gain skills and enter employment included:

- better cross-agency working to draw young offenders back into training or work, with a new curriculum, developed in line with 14-19 reforms and with a work focus;

- a review of funding, to expand the range of opportunities on offer;
- greater access to Entry to Employment programmes, with a review of procedures for release on temporary licence, to increase training and job placements for young offenders in custody; and
- action to improve education for offenders below working age.

Next Steps ...

55 Consultation revealed support for greater emphasis on vocational learning to help motivate disaffected young people. Respondents recognised that the greater flexibility and choice in the new 14-19 curriculum could be immensely helpful in this respect. There was also support for greater use of work experience and community volunteering programmes to instil a sense of responsibility and provide structure to the lives of young offenders.

56 As to next steps, it is clear that 16 and 17 year olds should benefit from the broad range of proposals in this document. That is particularly true of developments aimed at increasing flexibility in the system to support training and job placements for those in custody. Encouraging progress is being made in other areas, including wider education reforms which can be expected to strengthen the service for young people.

Multi-agency working and a curriculum to meet the needs of disaffected young people...

57 Reforms to children's and youth services are placing young people and their needs at the heart of local services. Directors of Children and Learners in each Government Office are now directly accountable for the outcomes for vulnerable and 'at risk' young people in their areas. These new mechanisms offer increased scope to align multi-agency youth offending services more closely with local children and young people's agendas.

58 Local Area Agreements will also provide mechanisms to support the joint planning and commissioning of services to meet the needs of young people in the youth justice system. The Youth Justice Board has

already begun to encourage regional and local youth justice services to work with partners in developing Local Area Agreements to support the achievement of the Youth Justice Board's employment, training and education performance indicator.

59 Implementation of the 14-19 reforms will provide new local partnership arrangements for planning and delivering education to meet the needs of all young people. This has the potential to improve the choices and opportunities for young people in the criminal justice system, to encourage them to re-engage and progress in mainstream education and training. The new Foundation Learning Tier and Functional Skills qualifications and Diplomas at levels 1, 2 and 3 provide the opportunity to develop transferable skills needed for progression to further education and training. They will also offer more flexible and relevant learning programmes, combining practical and theoretical learning to meet employers' needs. In order to address the challenges in offering these opportunities to young people in the youth justice system, the Department for Education and Skills and its partners will work closely with youth justice

Many local authorities have developed area targets relating to education for young offenders, for example:

- **Kensington and Chelsea Local Authority** – a target for the percentage of 16-18 year olds leaving custody who take part in full-time education, training or employment;
- **Lambeth Local Authority** – a target for the number of young prolific and persistent offenders achieving grade A*-G GCSEs; and
- **Barnet Local Authority** – a local target to reduce the percentage of young people, supervised by Youth Offending Teams, who are not in education, training or employment.

services on developing and piloting new approaches in the roll-out of the 14-19 curriculum offer.

Funding and expanding opportunities...

- 60 In 2006-07, the Department for Education and Skills has provided an additional £3 million to the Youth Justice Board to provide support such as mentoring and link workers and to improve participation levels for young people not in education, training or employment. This expansion of the *Keeping Young People Engaged Project*¹¹ has been delivered through the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service as part of the developing Learning and Skills Council/ Youth Justice Board partnership. As part of any wider Offenders' Learning and Skills Service evaluation, we will look at the impact of the new service on young offenders.
- 61 Looking further ahead, within the development of the Government's new approach to 'targeted support', we will consider how intensive mentoring and targeted support programmes can best operate within the context of the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service, the youth justice system and Children's Trusts. We will ensure that lessons learned from the Youth Justice Board's *Keeping Young People Engaged Project* can inform the changes to the learning offered and the better targeting of resources set out in paragraph 27.
- 62 There is an opportunity to develop better access and incentives for young offenders to improve their skills and employment outcomes. We will review, with our partners, the success of financial incentives

for participation with young offenders, including Education Maintenance Allowances, to ensure that incentives have the right impact for young people in the youth justice system.

Improving education for offenders of school age...

- 63 We are reviewing education arrangements for children of compulsory school age who are in the youth justice system, both in custody and the community. This will take account of the recommendations made by the October 2004 Public Accounts Committee report *Youth offending: the delivery of community and custodial sentences*.¹²
- 64 This is a challenging area and the needs of this group are complex and difficult to meet, but the benefits of successful outcomes are potentially great. We want to stimulate debate across the sector and build consensus on the right focus for action. We will consult on the issues early in 2007 and publish plans for reform later in the year. Early analysis suggests a number of key areas for consideration:
- **clarifying accountability:** the education delivery landscape for young offenders is complex. It is therefore critical that national, regional and local stakeholders are clear on roles and responsibilities for planning and delivering education and for raising standards of teaching and learning;
 - **ensuring participation:** there is more to do to ensure that young offenders leaving custody and those serving community sentences participate in full-time education and training. This could include fostering

stronger links between youth offending services and mainstream education providers;

- **a suitable curriculum:** an engaging and tailored curriculum is critical to meeting the needs of young offenders and employers. We want to provide opportunities to learn and achieve in the 'basics', to progress in personalised pathways (whether academic or vocational) and to develop softer skills valued by employers;
- **workforce development:** having a qualified and professional workforce, appropriately supported through continuous professional development, will help raise the quality of teaching and learning for young offenders. We want to ensure that we have appropriate mechanisms in place to support the youth justice sector workforce to assist them in planning and delivering effective educational outcomes.

65 Progress has already been made to ensure improved access to mainstream education for young offenders. From September 2006, a change in school registration means that young people in the youth justice system may not necessarily lose their school place. From September 2007 local authorities must ensure suitable full-time education (whether at another school or elsewhere) from the sixth day of a permanent exclusion.

Conclusion

- 66** This document reflects a balance between setting out the substantial programme of reform already underway through the new offender learning and skills service and the establishment of the National Offender Management Service, and building on it with further reform into the next decade to improve skills and employment for offenders in order to turn them away from crime.
- 67** We have set out three main priorities:
- a strong drive to engage employers through the Reducing Re-offending Corporate Alliance;
 - building on the new offender learning and skills service through the campus model;
 - building on the new emphasis on skills and jobs in prisons and probation.
- 68** This document is a progress report on the implementation of the Green Paper strategy, setting a direction to take us beyond 2010. The main thrust of the proposals is to work with two test bed regions to model ways of delivering some of the more ambitious Green Paper proposals, taking advantage of the expertise of the new regional partnerships.
- 69** There is however a wider challenge for all who are engaged in offender learning, skills and employment, and offender management. That is to build on the positive responses stimulated by the Green Paper, and on the many constructive steps already being taken across the sector, with a concerted programme of action to bring about a step change in skills and employment for offenders. The Green Paper provided a new framework, one that has been widely welcomed. The regional test beds will push implementation further. But much of this agenda does not need to wait: the key partners are already in position and able to work together with a renewed focus on reducing re-offending, bringing safer communities and finding more effective ways of turning people away from crime.

Glossary of terms

CHILDREN'S TRUSTS

Children's trusts bring together key agencies which deliver services for children, young people and their families underpinned by the Children Act 2004 duty to cooperate. Children's trusts represent a new way of working which puts the child at the centre of planning and delivery of services.

CITIES STRATEGY

Local providers and partners working together in a single consortium to provide solutions to the specific problems that prevent people joining the labour market.

C-NOMIS

End-to-end offender management system.

EDUCATION MAINTENANCE ALLOWANCE (EMA)

Means-tested payment for 16, 17 and 18-year-olds in full-time education.

EMPLOYER COALITIONS

The Employer Coalitions form a network of ten local employer groups with well over a thousand members. Their purpose is to bring a business perspective to the design and delivery of the welfare-to-work delivery system.

HOME DETENTION CURFEWS

Prisoners released early subject to a curfew which requires them to be electronically tagged for a minimum of nine hours a day.

KEEPING YOUNG PEOPLE ENGAGED PROJECT

Partnership between Youth Justice Board and Connexions to get more young offenders into education, training or employment.

LIFELONG LEARNING UK

Sector Skills Council for professional development of those working in FE, Higher Education and learning.

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

A Local Area Agreement is a three year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central government, represented by the Government Office, and a local area, represented by local authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships and other key partners at local level. The primary objective of a Local Area Agreement is to deliver better outcomes for local people.

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PANEL (NEP)

Employer-led organisation which advises Government on labour market policies and performance.

NATIONAL LEARNER PANEL

FE student-led consortium directly involving learners in local and national agencies.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AGENCY (QIA)

Agency working across the learning and skills sector to improve performance.

REDUCING RE-OFFENDING CORPORATE ALLIANCE

Organisation bringing together employers of all sizes from the public, private and voluntary sectors to find ways of increasing the number of offenders getting into jobs.

TRAIN TO GAIN

Learning and Skills Council led service offering free training for employees up to a first full Level 2.

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