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Prison Education

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Oral and written evidence

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The Education and Skills Committee

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Witnesses

Wednesday 17 November 2004

Monday 6 December 2004

Tuesday 8 February 2005

List of written evidence

List of unprinted written evidence

Additional papers have been received from the following and have been reported to the House but to save printing costs they have not been printed and copies have been placed in the House of Commons library where they may be inspected by members. Other copies are in the Record Office, House of Lords and are available to the public for inspection. Requests for inspection should be addressed to the Record Office, House of Lords, London SW1. (Tel 020 7219 3074) hours of inspection are from 9:30am to 5:00pm on Mondays to Fridays.

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Public and Commercial Services Union

National Foundation for Educational Research

VT International Services Limited

Business Enterprise Support Limited

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VT Education

Oral evidence

Taken before the Education and Skills Committee

on Wednesday 30 June 2004

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Jeff Ennis	Mr Kerry Pollard
Mr Nick Gibb	Jonathan Shaw
Helen Jones	Mr Andrew Turner

Memorandum from the Forum on Prisoner Education

INTRODUCTION

1. The Forum on Prisoner Education was founded in 2000 to "increase the quality, availability and consistency of education and training within the criminal justice system". We believe that education in prisons should be centred on the needs of the individual prisoner, for whom it can hold the key to living without crime by building self-esteem, encouraging self-motivation, and providing new opportunities after release.

2. The Forum on Prisoner Education is a membership organisation, with members drawn from a range of backgrounds. A significant number work in prisoner education; others include campaigners and members of the voluntary sector, academics, parliamentarians, and current and former prisoners.

3. We welcome the attention to be given to this important issue by the Committee. Whilst we have limited our evidence to the specific issues identified as being of interest to the Committee, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspect of prisoner education relevant to the Committee's work.

THE ASSESSMENT OF PRISONERS' NEEDS ON CONVICTION

4. National Standards for Pre-Sentence Reports have, since 2000, required that each report will "contain an offender assessment which shall state the offender's status in relation to literacy and numeracy". We welcome this new importance being attached to education, and recognition of its central role in sentencing practice.

5. Soon after reception into prison, the new prisoner will undergo an educational assessment. The Forum on Prisoner Education has expressed significant concern over these assessments (copies of which are available from the Forum)[1], in that they test ability only up to Basic Skills Level 1. We believe that the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit at the DfES should implement a range of assessments to enable prison education tutors to accurately gauge any learning needs the prisoner may have.

6. Contractors and education staff and management have expressed significant concern over the funding of the assessment process. For example, High Down prison in Surrey can receive as many as 267 new prisoners each month. Their budget only allows for 500 hours of education induction, leaving prisoners with a 10 minute induction period. This is clearly unacceptable, especially in the case of prisoners with complex educational needs.

7. When talking of "needs", we need to consider motivation. Very many prisoners have had negative experiences of formal education, and simply shutting them in a classroom is unlikely to have any positive effect. In assessing "needs", an assessment should be made of the styles of learning likely to work for that prisoner. For prisoners with negative experiences of education, distance and flexible learning (such as in-cell) can offer an effective means of learning and we believe that more should be done to explore and encourage non-traditional learning methods in prisons. A great deal of success has been achieved by literate prisoners teaching other prisoners to read and write—through schemes such as *Toe by Toe* run by The Shannon Trust. Learning is best achieved through personal experiences and thus workshops and education should be linked. Much in the way of communication and mathematics can be achieved through activities in the workshop.

8. Allied to motivation, we need to recognise that may prisoners' lives have been chaotic and disruptive. Very low self-esteem is common, and education must be "sold" to many of these prisoners. Prisoners need to be encouraged to learn, and shown that they can learn, and can change and enrich their lives through learning.

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[1] Contact details are at the end of this memorandum.

9. Educational needs cannot—and should not—be separated from a wider needs assessment. A significant number of prisoners have a history of substance misuse; many have mental health problems; and few have a job or home to go to on release. Education must be an integral part of an holistic approach to assessing and resolving prisoners' needs.

The Effectiveness of Local Contracting Arrangements

10. Since its creation in 2000, the Forum on Prisoner Education has consistently questioned the value of the contracting out of prison education services. Whilst we are opposed to the contracting out of prison education, we are at the same time practical and therefore seek ways to move forward with contractors under present arrangements.

11. Our first objection to contracting out of prison education is that we cannot see any visible benefit to prisoners from education being contracted out. Whilst we do not suggest that prison education is worse than it was before 1993 (when contracts were first issued), we do not see any significant improvement, and believe that local education services could provide the same services equally as well.

12. Our second objection relates to staffing. With a five-yearly cycle of competitive tendering, prison education staff understandably become concerned over their job security. The Forum on Prisoner Education joins with NATFHE (the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education) in expressing these concerns. Successful prison education can only take place when those responsible for delivery are contented in their work and feel a sense of security. We pay tribute to the incredibly hard work undertaken by prison educators, in what can often be challenging and even hostile environments.

13. Our third, and final, objection is a fundamental moral opposition to contracting out on the basis that it leads to a profit/loss, business-led approach to prisoner education. We do not believe that private contracting should feature in any aspect of imprisonment or punishment, as profit from punishment is, we believe, immoral.

14. In January 2004, after the latest round of tendering (under "Project REX") was due to start, the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit at the DfES announced that contracts were being automatically extended. This is believed to be due to uncertainty over the shape of offender education within the framework of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). The government minister responsible for prison education, Mr Ivan Lewis MP, told a Forum on Prisoner Education evening reception in May 2004 that the decision to abandon the tendering process was a "courageous step", taken because his department was "unhappy with the general direction of travel". The cost of the abandoned exercise was £346,000. Whatever the reason behind the abandoning of "Project REX", this further illustrates the problems and uncertainty faced by prison education staff, and we urge the government to clarify the future position urgently.

15. Our understanding is that, under NOMS, offender education (both community-based and in custody) will be organised on a regional basis with one contractor serving each region. The thinking behind this is that it will allow an offender to complete an educational course in the community after release from custody. This is an excellent idea, but we fear that it is destined to fail. A significant proportion of prisoners are held in prisons more than 50 miles from home, and are likely to return to a different region to that in which they are imprisoned. Unless there is to be a consistent educational programme throughout England and Wales, a large number of prisoners will not benefit from this "flow-through".

16. Information on contractual arrangements for the delivery of prisoner and offender education is often unavailable, on the basis that the information is "commercially confidential". We believe that this is a significant barrier to allowing greater transparency in terms of budgets, cost and performance. Contractors should be encouraged to share information to make their provision truly competitive.

17. Targets are set by the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit at the DfES on the number of basic skills awards gained by prisoners each year. However, no targets are set beyond Level 2, and information on the number of awards and qualifications is difficult to obtain. The OLSU and prison service should begin recording achievement in these higher-level qualifications and awards as a matter of urgency. It is equally important that the targets set reflect the complexities of the prison environment, and do not merely reflect targets set in educational institutions in the community.

The Provision of Appropriate Training Facilities within Prisons

18. The Forum on Prisoner Education acknowledges that a majority of prisoners have basic skills needs, and we welcome the government's attention in this area. We do have concerns over the *quality* of basic skills provision, with deficiencies frequently highlighted by the various inspection agencies.

19. Basic skills education is undeniably the focus of all prison education departments, largely due to these departments having targets set by the DfES and prison service. However, this unremitting diet of basic skills is to the detriment of prisoners capable of higher levels of study and we would like to see a greater emphasis on GCSE, A-Level, HND, undergraduate and postgraduate study as an expansion of the curriculum.

20. We have welcomed significant capital investment in prison education buildings in recent years, but argue that the government needs to go much further. At North Sea Camp prison in Lincolnshire, some classes take place in temporary buildings such as "Portakabins", although having been in place for decades they are far from "temporary". In the summer they are stiflingly hot; in the winter bitterly cold. These are far from ideal learning conditions. In her most recent Annual Report, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons told of one prison holding school-age children, but which only had space for 20% of the prisoners held there. It is clear that further significant investment is required as a matter of some urgency.

21. The wider prison regime can sometimes work against effective education. In many prisons, for example, two sessions run each day, in the morning from 9.00 am to 11.30 am and in the afternoon from 1.45 pm to 4.15 pm. We would not expect schoolchildren to spent $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours in one lesson, and progress must be made in breaking up these sessions to avoid boredom.

22. The Forum on Prisoner Education encourages the provision and support for prisoners wishing to undertake distance learning courses. Currently, prisoners studying for such a course are expected to undertake their study in-cell, with some spending a little time in the education department. We would like to see prison education departments, and prisons as a whole, offer space for quiet study for prisoners on distance learning and other courses.

23. In-cell study is often not easy. With the spiralling prison population, many prisoners are now expected to share a cell with another prisoner, who might not appreciate his cell-mate's need for quiet study. We would encourage prison education managers, the Heads of Learning and Skills, and others on the prison's Senior Management Team to consider prioritising single-cell requests for prisoners who wish to study.

24. However, prison wings are also very noisy places, with steel doors banging, loud music and televisions, and heavy footsteps on metal walkways. We urge caution in viewing in-cell study as a panacea to the problems of space in education departments. Ideally, we would like to see a trial of a prison wing being devoted entirely to student-prisoners who wish to study in-cell. In the meantime, we would welcome prisons offering a quiet area for evening study, perhaps in the library or in a wing classroom.

25. Many distance learning courses now require internet access, either for research, examinations, or liaison with course tutors. This presents a major problem in prisons, where internet access is not available due to "security considerations". The Forum on Prisoner Education believes that this shows a lack of determination and imagination on the part of HM Prison Service. Secure internet access could be provided with relative ease, by using existing software similar to that used by parents to block websites they deem unsuitable for their children. This would open up a whole new resource, not only for education, but also in terms of resettlement. Exeter University conducted an evaluation of a pilot of the *Learndirect* programme in five prisons, and concluded "that the benefits to [prisoners] of the presence of *Learndirect* facilities are significant". The continuing denial of access to the internet also further excludes prisoners from the labour market, where knowledge and experience of using the internet is often now required. The Forum on Prisoner Education is currently planning to set up a Working Group to examine this area in more detail, with a view to publishing a policy paper in due course.

26. Prison libraries are often a haven for the student prisoner. Operated by local authorities, prison libraries usually offer the full range of services (such as book ordering) available in community libraries. Sadly, however, prison libraries often stand unused for large parts of the day, and in some cases prisoners have access only once every two weeks. We would like to see prison libraries further integrated with educational provision, with more titles being made available with relevance to the educational curriculum. We would also like to see prison libraries offer books which allow prisoners to take control of their own learning, without necessarily coming into contact with the education department—an example might be a self-teach foreign language course.

27. Under the *Prison Rules* (a statutory instrument), prisoners are entitled to make telephone calls to legal advisors at public expense. We believe that, for prisoners on distance learning courses, a similar provision should be made available for contact with tutors and educational institutions. Without email, prisoners often have no means of making urgent contact with these people and agencies.

28. Finally, and also in relation to distance learning courses, we are concerned about the effects that "volumetric control" (where the amount of personal belongings a prisoner may hold in his or her cell is controlled—all personal belongings should fit inside one box) may have on prisoners undertaking distance learning—particularly higher education—who might have several books and other learning material which would ordinarily exceed the limits set by volumetric control. Prisons should make allowances for prisoners in this respect.

The Role of Prison Staff in Supporting Educational Activities

29. Prison staff—from governors through to officers and operational support grade staff—have a pivotal role in supporting educational activities. Whilst the Forum on Prisoner Education acknowledges that attitudes towards prisoner education have improved over recent years, we are still aware of some staff who are unsupportive and sometimes even downright dismissive of prisoner education. Furthermore, many prison officers have allowed a culture of dismissiveness to grow amongst the prisoner population. This is counterproductive to positive achievement.

30. Research by NATFHE and the Association of Colleges found that 45% of governors and 43% of education managers said that "conflict with other regime areas hindered education in their establishment". In addition 34% of both groups reported uniformed staff lacked commitment to prison education.

31. The Forum on Prisoner Education believes that education should be at the heart of the prison regime, with prisons embracing the role of a learning institution. We believe that the purpose of prison as a learning institution is to encourage education amongst all who spend time there. Prison staff, including officers, civilian staff and governors should all take the learning ethic on board, and educational courses should be available to all. An investment in staff education and development would, we feel, pay dividends to a prison service with chronic staffing problems, particularly in terms of retention.

32. Education, as the central focus of the prison regime, should be designed to feed into other regime areas such as work and the delivery of offending behaviour programmes. Vocational education in prison rarely offers the skills needed in today's labour market, and incorporating education with work could overcome some of these problems.

Links with Employers and Employer-led Initiatives

33. The stated aim of the prison service is to assist prisoners in leading a "law-abiding life after release". This means equipping prisoners with the skills and abilities to be able to meet that aim. Education can—and very often does—meet the needs of more than half of prisoners who are, through poor skills, ineligible for the vast majority of jobs. However, we believe that in preparing prisoners for release and employment, much more needs to be done.

34. Vocational education in prison is often centred either on kitchens, cleaning, gardening or maintenance (including painting and decorating). These can be valuable and transferable skills which may enable an ex-prisoner to move on from crime, but in many of these cases into only low-skilled and therefore low-paid jobs. Prisoners need to be equipped for a much wider spectrum of employment.

35. Some prison work can be menial, and largely useless in the outside world. Prisoners at Swaleside prison in Kent have spent time counting and weighing nails and screws for a major DIY store. In aiming to increase ex-prisoner's employability and skills, such work is useless.

36. We admire and pay tribute to the work of companies such as Transco, who have recognised the potential of the prison population as future employees and spend time running workshops and training prisoners, before employing them after release. At another level, companies such as Toyota have funded mechanics' workshops in prisons. In the voluntary sector, the Howard League for Penal Reform is currently setting up a printshop within The Mount prison, to be managed and run by the charity as a "normal" company, seeking business from outside. Such projects and initiatives are undoubtedly the way forward in vocational education in prisons.

37. The Forum on Prisoner Education would encourage private sector employers to come into prisons and explore ways in which they can work with the prison and prisoners to their mutual advantage, although prisons must be mindful that they should not be used as a source of potential cheap labour. We would urge the government to explore ways in which this private sector involvement could be encouraged, with private sector employers making positive statements about the employment of ex-offenders.

Continuing Support and Guidance on Release, Including Co-ordination with Local Providers

38. Prisoners serving short sentences often face one of two problems: the education department might not offer a course which can be completed within the timescale of the sentence; or if they do begin a course, they might not be able to complete it after release. Only 6% of prisoners continue with some form of education and training upon release. Flow-through, from custody to community, is one of the biggest challenges in prisoner education today—but we do not believe it is insurmountable.

39. Prison education departments are encouraged to explore avenues for prisoners nearing release to continue their education in the community. Due to workloads, and other priorities within the prison, education staff often do not have the time or resources to be able to do this. Education currently has a place in the sentence planning process, and we would like to see the resettlement element tied in with the educational aspects to ensure that community education can be explored as part of pre-release resettlement work.

40. The creation of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will significantly change the landscape of provision for offenders in almost all areas. At the time of writing, with the planned June launch having been postponed until September, it is unclear how the creation of NOMS will impact upon offender education.

41. It is clear that the length of sentence ought not to be a barrier to learning. Prisoners should be able to begin courses that they will be able to continue and complete after release. The problem currently experienced by many ex-prisoners is that the course they were taking in prison is either not available in the community, or is available but that they are coming in at a different time of year and therefore place in the course schedule. Understandably, many prisoners then lose interest and do not pursue their education.

42. A framework and system of records transfer should be created and instituted as a matter of urgency to allow educational records to come into prison with the prisoner, and then leave with him/her upon release. No such system currently exists on a statutory basis. Each prisoner should have the facility to keep a record of his/her achievements as well as a copy of the courses being followed. Far too many records are "lost in transit".

43. If NOMS is to have an impact upon education, then it should work to ensure that, as far as possible, prisoners leaving custody can continue their course in the community at any time of the year. Prison education courses should mirror those available in the community, leading to nationally recognised and accredited qualifications.

44. In an increasingly budget-driven and business-minded further education sector, local providers such as colleges should be encouraged to see ex-prisoners as an important group of potential students. Colleges' inclusion policies and widening participation units should be encouraged to examine how they might best work to attract more ex-prisoners to enrol.

45. A number of colleges and universities discriminate against ex-prisoners. We have recently become aware of a "new" university withdrawing an unconditional offer from an ex-prisoner who was due to begin a law degree, for the reason that he was an ex-prisoner. In another example, an ex-prisoner sentenced for shoplifting was told by her college that she could enrol only if she agreed (and signed an agreement to that effect) not to walk down the corridor in her college on which the shop was located. The Forum on Prisoner Education is currently planning a research project to determine the extent of this discrimination and work towards a model policy for adoption by colleges and universities.

Education, Training and Support for those on Probation

46. Whilst we are the Forum on *Prisoner* Education, our charitable aim is to "improve the quality, availability and consistency of education and training within the criminal justice system". This therefore includes probation and community penalties.

47. Whereas prisoners who do not take part in education are three times more likely to be reconvicted as those that do, for offenders under probation supervision, the effects of education can be just as important.

48. The current government has largely rebuilt the penal system, and since 1997 has introduced a wide range of community-based penalties, some of which (such as the Drug Treatment and Testing Order, and the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme) have been shown to have positive effects. We welcome and applaud the government for their sustained attention to non-custodial sentences.

49. However, within the framework of most community penalties, as presently constituted, the maximum time an offender may spend on education as part of a community penalty is 10% of the total sentence (excluding the Community Punishment Order). And whilst prison education has a budget of some £122 million in 2004–05, the budget for community offender education is just £10 million. We believe that this shows a lack of foresight in the design of community penalties.

50. We are concerned also at the growing tendency to "sentence" an offender to education. Making education a compulsory and integral part of punishment and supervision regimes can reinforce the negative feelings that many offenders will have of education. We are fundamentally opposed to *compulsion* in offender education, and believe that it must remain an *option*.

51. The Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU) at the DfES has overseen the creation of the role of "Head of Learning and Skills" in all prisons in England and Wales, the intention being to firmly root education within prison management. We believe that the OLSU needs to work with the Regional Offender Managers (yet to be appointed) within NOMS to create a similar post within NOMS regions.

52. Probation officers—or "offender managers" as they are to become—should be made fully aware of the educational facilities available to their clients, and undertake a scoping exercise with each client to determine whether an educational programme is appropriate. An educational record from the prison (see paragraph 42, above) would assist greatly in this process.

53. Effort should be made in ensuring that when an offender completes his community-based order, he can complete any ongoing educational programme and is encouraged to do so. NOMS Regional Offender Managers should consider appointing an education professional to offer continued guidance to those offenders who have completed their community programme, to bypass the rigidity of sentence length by which probation officers are currently constrained.

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June 2004

Witnesses: **Professor Andrew Coyle,** Director, International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College London, and **Professor David Wilson,** Chair, Forum on Prisoner Education and Professor of Criminology, University of Central England, examined.

Q1 Chairman: Good morning. Could I welcome Professor David Wilson and Professor Andrew Coyle to our proceedings and say we are delighted they were able to come because we have just started our inquiry into prison education. The Home Affairs Select Committee has recently looked at the resettlement of prisoners and what we are doing, I think, is concurrent with their inquiry. Could I welcome you and say that we are just starting the inquiry and we have just been to Reading Prison to look at some very interesting innovations there in terms of training of young prisoners and we are about to go to Andrew Turner's constituency on the Isle of Wight to look at three prisons there on Monday. So this comes at a very good time for us. We are seeking to learn. If these inquiries do not add value then they are not worth doing and we do not want to just go charging off with some sort of prejudice already in our minds about what the role of education is in prisons and how effective it is. So we are really seeking to learn this morning from both of you. Both of you have been prison governors and you know the whole system inside-out. Could I say to both of you, would you like to say anything to get us started or do you want to go straight into questions?

Professor Coyle: Could I make an overarching comment, if I may, Chairman? In terms of context, the Prison Service historically has created structures which parallel those which exist in society. I am thinking, for example, of the Prison Health Service run separate from the National Health Service. There were departments like, for example, prison chaplaincy, which were separate, similarly psychology and a number of other functions which arguably should have been making use of the organisation situations which existed in society rather than being separate. One exception to that arrangement traditionally has been education. Until, I suppose, about twelve years ago education in prisons was provided through local channels and I think that was a very healthy arrangement. I remember when I became Governor of Brixton at the beginning of the 1990s one of my first calls was on the chief executive of Lambeth, who met me with his director of education to discuss education in Brixton Prison and how we could tie the provision in the prison in with what was being provided in the borough. That, as I say, was very healthy. That arrangement changed about twelve years or so ago when contracting out began and those of us who were involved at the time were concerned about the break of that local link, which indeed in some instances did happen where we have subsequently had one college or organisation providing prison education across a very wide geographical area so that it is no longer linked, or the local link is a very tenuous one. I think that has been an unfortunate move. One links that, I think, in general terms to much of what is going on in the Prison Service at the moment and the weakening of local links because prisoners come from local communities, they commit their offences in local communities, the victims come from local communities and prisoners will return to local communities, and if we are going to achieve anything in terms of rehabilitation and reintegration then the initiatives need to be locally based. I think there is a danger with much of what is going on at the moment that we are reducing that local link and also that the Prison Service or the Criminal Justice Service (through what is to be called NOMS from now on) is working in a bubble rather than with very close community links and that is where education is, I think, at its most successful and strongest and those are the general principles which you may want to consider in the course of your inquiry.

Q2 Chairman: That is very useful. Of course, as I understand it, as the Committee has been informed from a seminar we held on this subject before we set sail, I do not think even when you say there was a local link prison education came under the Department for Education and Skills, or its predecessor, and so we were unable to look at prison education because it was not part of your departmental link. So it is only recently that the Department has had responsibility for prison education. Ofsted now inspects prison education and of course our writ now runs into the prison education system.

Professor Coyle: I think, having said what I just said, one should recognise the strides which have been made in recent years in terms, for example, of prison health, which now comes directly under the Department of Health, and the more recent move to the Department for Education and Skills is a very healthy one. Looking at things from the sidelines, it does seem as though the moves on prison health, bringing it into the mainstream, are much further advanced for a variety of reasons than has been the case with prison education and the Department for Education and Skills. I think there are lessons to be learned from the experience of prison health and how it has been brought into the mainstream, but the principle of that is an excellent one.

Q3 Chairman: David, do you want to say anything?

Professor Wilson: Just two things, I think, from me. Firstly, I think it is important to say that prison education has been around for a very long time. The first specialist education provision was put in jails in 1908. Prison education has therefore been a component of the prison regime for a very long time and prison educators have quite specialist skills and that is very important, I think, in looking at contracts. It is not like you can suddenly just pluck somebody who has been teaching maths in the community and put them in a jail and hope they will teach maths in a jail. There has been a real reluctance, I think, historically to recognise the very specialist skills that educators in jails have. That would be the first thing I would like to say. Prison education has been around for a long time and prison educators have particular skills. The second thing, as Andrew was alluding to, we were both still

in the Prison Service during the contracting out process and we were both, I think, very marked by that process in terms of believing in some of the local education, the local issues that Andrew has alluded to, and indeed in Andrew's autobiography, which he was writing in 1993, he said, "In ten years' time we will look at the contracting out process to see if everything that has been promised that was going to happen as a result of this contracting out process has delivered something better to prisoners." Well, frankly, ten years on, I do not think any of us who knows anything about this subject would say that there has been something better delivered. There is something different delivered, but I would still question whether we could answer Andrew's question in the affirmative.

Q4 Chairman: Okay. That is very useful and something that we will be pursuing. Could we start from sort of the ground floor. Some of our constituents might say, "What is the point of educating people in prison? They're in prison. They've done something wrong. They've been sentenced to prison and what is the point? Not only what is the point of providing an education for prisoners, but does it work? Is there convincing evidence?" Most of us, I suspect, on this Committee, would absolutely think that if you pile on the education skills you would get a better citizen coming out, someone who is more likely not to offend again, and so on. Is that true? Some of my constituents would disagree with that, but some of the academic experts might say there is not a really clear link between the amount of education and skills that a prisoner receives and his or her behaviour when they leave prison.

Professor Wilson: There are various ways of answering that. I think the first is to say that if nothing positive is provided in terms of what happens to prisoners once they are in jail, my gosh, will they learn, but they will learn from each other in ways which are particularly negative. It was one of Mr Turner's predecessors who said that prison could be an expensive way of making bad people worse. If you watch what happens, how prisoners transmit information to each other about criminogenic skills, you realise that if you simply abandon prisoners in this kind of vacuum in which nothing positive will happen then you clearly are going to be dealing with some difficult issues down the line. The second thing is that quite clearly prisoners come from some of the most marginalised sections of our community in which frankly very few of them have level 1 educational achievement, i.e. they have not got the skills of an eleven-year-old in terms of reading and writing. That clearly does affect their chances of being able to gain employment once they are released back into those communities. So if you can actually use prison as a positive experience to counteract some of the very negative schooling experiences they have and therefore factor in one of my earlier points about the specialist skills that prison educators often need, so much the better. My third point to you is that empirically there is evidence. That evidence is not particularly well-known because this has often been an area which has been neglected. People have not been particularly interested in prison education. But there is evidence. Most of that evidence comes from Canada, and in particular the five years in which the Simon Fraser ran education courses in British Columbia at five jails, and over the course of the number of years that education programme was running there were some 650 prisoners went through the educational programme and the evaluation that was done by Professor Polson from Canada and Professor Dogood from Canada, who looked at the cohort that had achieved in education to see what the predicted rates of re-offending were when they entered jail and then measured that against what had happened when they were released from jail and the predicted rate of re-offending had been reduced by over 30%. So there is indeed evidence to suggest that if you engage prisoners with education you are likely to affect their re-offending when they are released back into the community. I think not only constituents want there to be less re-offending in the community, all of us want less re-offending in the community, and education could be a tool for achieving that objective.

Professor Coyle: Following on from David's point about what would happen if you did not, I think there is an argument saying we should provide prison education because it is the right thing to do. I think that is an important starting point, not just in terms of education but in terms of what goes on in prison. It is the right thing to do. That passes an important message to a variety of people. From my practical experience and subsequent experience, I am a reductionism in terms of the use of imprisonment and indeed of criminal justice. I think there has been a tendency, particularly in this country over the last decade or so, to be expansionist about the role of criminal justice in society and about the role of prison in society and the danger that one then expects prison to deliver much more than it actually can do. However, having made that context, I think it is incumbent on us to make the experience of imprisonment for those who have to be deprived of their liberty as positive as possible. I think where both the Department for Education and Skills and the Prison Service have been successful in recent years has been in focusing on particular skills which might help prisoners once they are released. I think for a period the pendulum swung too far to the purist approach. I think it is coming back now and that we do see more use of creative activities in prisons. If we helped to develop the prisoner as a person then I think we will reduce the likelihood of that person continuing to commit crime. I think one of the things we need to be cautious of at the moment—and again NOMS will inevitably come up in the course of our discussion this morning—to focus on these people as offenders without taking account of all the other facets, I think, of their humanity is giving a very narrow focus which is not actually going to help us in the long term. So provided one sees these people as individuals, I think

the answer to your constituents is that people who are more roundly developed are actually more likely to become honest citizens.

Q5 Chairman: When you say that the pendulum has swung too far in one direction, which direction is that?
Professor Coyle: There was a period, I think, five years ago when there was an over-focus on giving prisoners skills which, in theory at least, would help them to find employment and I am not sure that it was the lack of new skills which actually made it difficult for prisoners to find employment. The reason, I think, that prisoners found it difficult to get employment was the fact that they were ex-prisoners, regardless of their skills, and I think that is recognised now and the Prison Service is returning, as I understand it, to a more rounded view of education, as I say, taking in more creative and other developmental focuses.

Q6 Chairman: There is an argument that we have picked up already on our first visit to a prison that a lot of the young people in the Reading Young Offenders Prison had rejected basic skills time and time again right throughout their school history and to try and replicate a kind of school education but in prison was not what was necessary, you actually had to wrap the basic skills up in practical learning of some kind. That is what seemed to be the secret of the success of the Transco operation in Reading.
Professor Coyle: I think that is correct. That is something, I imagine, which your Committee must come across in its inquiries into so many other areas of education. People who are in prison are no different from some of their cohorts elsewhere in society and the actual packaging of these tools is extremely important. There is, I think, also another thing which the Prison Service does not seem to be doing terribly well at the moment, which is reading across from some of the successes of the Youth Justice Board. I think some of the things that the Youth Justice Board has done in managing children in prison give a number of lessons which can be read across to the management of adult prisoners and I am not sure that that has been picked up on yet.
Chairman: That is going to be useful for us to look at.
Mr Pollard: I have learnt a new word this morning; criminogenic. I think I know what it means. Perhaps you will tell me afterwards. I visited a few prisons when I was a magistrate some years ago and more recently. What struck me was that there is a sort of pecking order of management in prisons and the educator is sort of last in the pecking order. I wonder if, if we are serious about education in prisons, we might reverse that where the educator was as important and seen to be as important as any other part of the management system, in fact perhaps more important than most—if we are serious about this. I wonder if you have got a view about that. Secondly, there are two partners in education, there are the educators—and David mentioned the special skills required about teaching mathematics in prison is different to teaching it in the general population—but we also need to make sure that the prisoners themselves recognise the value of education, and I am not sure from my visits that that is always the case. For example, are incentives needed? How do we ensure that prisoners do value education and see that as a way out in every sense?

Q7 Chairman: Could we take those in order.
Professor Wilson: Yes. Promoting education firstly, you are quite right to have picked up that prisons operate both as formal hierarchies and informal hierarchies and there are certain people in jails who will be seen by different groups as being more important than others, and I think you are quite right to say the prison education comes well down the bottom of that list. I would actually broaden that and say that part of the reason for that is, to go back to the very first question the Chairman asked, because prison education is something often people are rather embarrassed about talking about. Andrew and I were joking about the fact that one of the questions we would often be asked as prison governors would be, "Governor, why should the prisoners have access to computers when my kids don't have access to computers in their schools?" So there has always been rather a reluctance to actually trumpet the success of what education can do. Three hundred people graduated from The Open University last year in prison. I do not think any of you would ever have seen that in the broadsheet press or the tabloid press, but it is something to be proud of. So until broadly we start promoting what education can do in jail then I think that hierarchy where the educator is seen at the bottom will continue. Therefore, it is about being far more proactive about what prison education can do for the wide community once those prisoners are released. You mentioned specialist skills and it goes back to a statement the Chairman made about Transco and wrapping things up. These are people who by and large have been excluded from school. The idea of keeping them in a class for two and a half hours in a jail was exactly why they failed and were school-excluded in the community. So actually you have got to engage with them so that young people in particular are engaged through their own personal needs. Education has to be more person, prisoner-centred. At the minute, prison education is more centred on the needs of the institution to meet key performance targets. Those targets might have nothing to do with those young people who need to be engaged, who are engaged if they are approached by some of the good education provision in jails but are not engaged if it is simply a question of making sure that they achieve key skills level 1 so as to allow the prison to tick the box which says they have achieved their target. Young people do identify, it seems to me. My most recent research is with the Children's Society, with young black kids in jail, and my gosh, do they value education. They just do not tell you they evaluate it in the way we expect to hear it, but they all want to go in education despite the fact they are often paid less for doing so. They value

education because actually education is for many of them a passport out of the criminogenic circumstances they have found themselves in.

Q8 Chairman: Andrew, do you want to add to that?
Professor Coyle: The hierarchy in prison is very important. Prison is a hierarchical place. Traditionally one's place in the hierarchy was indicated by the number of one's key. The governor usually had key number 1. Either the chaplain or the medical officer had key number 2 and the other had key number 3 and they were the triumvirate of the prison. The education officer used to be pretty high up the list. I suspect he or she has probably fallen down the list and I think partly that is an organisational thing because of the contracting out, that these people are no longer seen as being central. But there is this ambivalence, I think, about the place of education in prison. If one takes a reductionist view of prison, that people should only be sent to prison as punishment when there is no other punishment appropriate, then it is inevitable that education comes within that context. What we do not want is people being sent to prison in order to get education, and that is presumably something that your Committee will look at elsewhere. We do not want magistrates or judges saying, "I know you will get good training in Reading Prison or at Reading Young Offenders, so I am going to send you there for a training course." So there is this continual tension and what we need to make sure of is that that tension is constructive rather than destructive.

Q9 Mr Pollard: You mentioned children being chucked out of school and that is the past way. As a magistrate for years we were always trying to intervene to stop people going to prison. Should education be changed so that those who are pre-prison are singled out for special education? I meant in the sense of different from what the norm is, otherwise they would not be where they are. Is that something we should think about?
Professor Wilson: I think that is a much wider issue. Most of the kids I have been working with are actually in Birmingham, it is a Birmingham based project I have been looking at, and it does seem extraordinary—and it is particularly young black children I have been working with—that they achieve remarkably well in primary school and then suddenly there is a problem in the secondary school. I do not think it is necessarily about giving them special education, I think it is working out what have been the structural components that have led them to succeed in one educational environment but fail in another, and I think that is a much broader question, to be honest, Mr Pollard.

Q10 Chairman: Yes. We did cover quite a lot of that territory when we looked at pupil achievement fairly recently in terms of that kind of achievement. Before we leave this section and go on to the next, one question which has not been asked which we should cover is, it is all very well having education in prison but what if the facility for continuing that education is not provided when the prisoner leaves? Is it not the full package? People keep saying to us already informally that what really matters is the full package on release; not that you have got a job, but what about housing, what about support? They keep talking about the "full package". I suppose that is common parlance?
Professor Wilson: It is common parlance and there are various organisations which are providing resettlement advice in relation to that full package, but what tends to happen is if one part of that package falls down then the whole house of cards fails. With some prisoners, education might be the most important thing that they want, or housing might be the most important thing that they want. The real problem that I identify and the Forum on Prisoner Education has identified is the discrimination which exists against prison education qualifications in the community. It is very difficult at one level if you say your bricklaying skills or your typing skills come from HMP Wellingborough and you take that to an employer because that immediately identifies you as an ex-offender. At the other level, we have been fighting on behalf of a number of prisoners and one, for example, I can talk about because he mentioned this publicly. One of the people in our Forum was accepted to read law. He had an unconditional offer to read law at Oxford Brookes University, he had three As, and he was rejected once they discovered the fact that he had a sentence. So there is a lot of discrimination still being faced by prisoners as they want to go back into the community and use the qualifications they have achieved whilst in jail.
Professor Coyle: Your question about the "whole package" is an important one and that goes back to what was being said earlier about seeing the person as more than an offender, about looking at the whole person, and one could apply the same question, for example, to drug treatment in prison, to health care in prison and to many of the other issues which go on in prison. If you simply approach them as the offender's need rather than the person's need then one is left with a problem and there are good examples from other countries where the role of what we would call the probation officer (which is not necessarily how they would describe that person) is to make sure that the person who is in prison or the offender on probation in the community plugs into the resources which exist in the community, whether they be housing, whether they be employment, whether they be drug treatment and whether they be education, and you use the time in prison to create a foundation which will carry on in the public sphere rather than to operate in a vacuum.
Professor Wilson: If I could just use Andrew's point there to make another which we have talked about earlier, which is that that is why it is so difficult, at a time of prison expansion with the numbers so high where prisoners are moved so very far away from where they live or where they will return to, to plug into those local services when you are actually 150 miles away from where you are going to return to live. So the kind of numbers has a broad impact throughout many of these issues that we have been talking about.

Chairman: That is very interesting. We will come back to that and look at the mobility of prisoners later. I would like to move now to how to measure the effectiveness of prison education and Jonathan is going to lead us through this.

Q11 Jonathan Shaw: I would just like to ask you if you could tell us a little more about your assessment of the contracting out because that certainly came up during our visit to Reading Prison and in the seminar that we organised. Professor Wilson, you have preferred to Professor Coyle's autobiography.
Professor Wilson: That was because I was crawling, to be honest!
Chairman: Mutual admiration!

Q12 Jonathan Shaw: Have you an autobiography?
Professor Wilson: I am hoping he is going to refer to some of my work later!

Q13 Jonathan Shaw: Sadly, it is not being televised. Could you tell us what made you write that and perhaps you could give us your assessment of that decade which has now taken place in the contracting out?
Professor Coyle: The comment was informed by my particular experience at that moment, which was as Governor of Brixton, as I have already referred to, where Brixton was and remains, I think, typical of many of our prisons, a large, urban prison, known in the trade as a "local prison" with prisoners coming by and large from the locality, returning to the locality. I was at that point very clear that the prison should be, for better or worse, a part of its community just as much as the school should be or the hospital should be. Clearly it is not an exact parallel, but it is a recognition that the prisoners are local. The vast majority of the prisoners in Brixton at that point came from Brixton or Lambeth or south London and would return to that area, to those communities, and for that period they were standing still, as it were, in Brixton Prison, perhaps for the first time standing still, and one of the things that we could do was to make use of that captive time to build in networks which they could make use of after they were released. One way of doing that was in respect of education in the broadest sense at that time was delivered in Brixton by Lambeth Education Department. We had a contract with them, paid them an amount of money and they employed the teachers who worked in the prison. They were by and large local teachers employed by the local authority who worked in the prison and were aware, I think, of what loomed large in the lives of the people from Lambeth who happened to be in Brixton Prison at that time and very much the attempt was to provide a spectrum of education which would either help them once they were released or which would create a framework which they could make use of so that they could have continuing access to the education in the community. Now, that was weakened by the arrangements which were brought in in the early 1990s.

Q14 Jonathan Shaw: It was weakened. Looking back to how things were then when you were the governor at Brixton and how things are now, are prisoners less equipped to be able to secure employment, etc, after release today then they were? Some of the statistics we have been provided with are 46,000 qualifications in literacy, language, numeracy, and 110,000 qualifications in work-related skills before people are released. You have described the local relationships, local prisons for local people, but overall are prisoners getting a worse or a better deal in terms of assisting them to reintegrate? What works, I suppose? If I could say that a cosy local relationship sounds great but what is more important to society is what works.
Professor Coyle: The short answer to what works is, not much. That goes back to my earlier point about a reductionist view of imprisonment. I think one should not look for the prison system to provide overmuch, or rather what the Prison Service can do best is to plug into the resources which are going to help the former prisoner to resettle in the community and one of these indeed is education. We have already touched on the fact that it is not sufficient to get the 46,000 qualifications if the fact that this is an ex-prisoner is going to mean that he is not going to get employment anyway. So what one needs to be doing all the time is trying to reinforce links with the local community. We are doing quite a bit of work at the moment with the Local Government Association, getting them involved through their crime reduction strategy, the Crime Disorder Act, trying to get them to take on their responsibility for resettling offenders. So all the time what one is trying to do and it seems to me what one has to do is to break out of the tramlines of the prison world of criminal justice into the wide world, which will make it more likely that former prisoners will become honest citizens again.

Q15 Jonathan Shaw: Do you think we should not be looking at this then?
Professor Coyle: No. Absolutely I think you should. Absolutely. There are so many, I think, healthy developments going on at the moment. The more the Department for Education and Skills, and therefore your Committee, shines the spotlight—what you must do, it seems to me, is use the same measurement as you use everywhere else within the prison setting. That is a message which I think one passes frequently because prisons create a mystique about themselves, "We are different from other places. If only you knew what we know you would understand how difficult it is," and it is that sort of mystique—

Q16 Jonathan Shaw: They are not unique in institutions.
Professor Coyle: Indeed. Absolutely. But they are a bit better at it than many because by definition they are secret places and if you can shine the spotlight of normality, ask the naïve question, the why question, that is absolutely important.

Q17 Jonathan Shaw: Oh, there is no end of those.
Professor Wilson: I wanted to come back specifically to that question and a way of answering it, as far as I am concerned, is that prior to the contracting out period what has changed since 1993 is that contractors are now paid on the basis of the number of teaching hours that are delivered. So there is no time and no payment in the contract therefore for lesson preparation, for curriculum development, for marking, for any other kind of pastoral interest in the person who is in the education department and prior to 1993 one of the best things about the prison educators was the interest they took in the prisoners as people. Under contractual arrangements all that is interested in is how many hours were taught that particular week—

Q18 Jonathan Shaw: And ensuring that they were. Professor Wilson, if you were redesigning the prison education programme, taking in what you have said about contracting out, taking in what you have said about the existing targets, would you bring it back in-house, would you put any targets in, and if so what those targets would be?
Professor Wilson: Oh, what a nice question. The first thing that I would do is recognise that the world that used to exist is not going to be created and I have taken very much an approach that contractors are here to stay, contracts are here to stay. It is about actually working with contractors to say what is good and what has benefit. Specifically in terms of targets, I would certainly be looking at targets beyond basic skills. I would be looking at targets at levels 2, 3 and 4. The reality of that is that because there are no targets in relation to those levels, or there are fewer targets in relation to those levels, prison education regimes do fundamentally get altered because the prison governor is quite instrumental about what is going to be delivered. A specific example is Channings Wood Prison in the south-west. I do not know if any of you have a south-west constituency here, but Channings Wood in the south-west has one of the best records about getting prisoners into further education. There are some five prisoners studying for masters, twenty prisoners studying for degrees. The tutor who has been coordinating that programme at Channings Wood is being made redundant to make way for a brick-laying instructor because there are no targets for levels 2, 3 or 4. So that would be one of the things if I was being given this blank sheet of paper. The second thing I would do with my blank sheet of paper is actually say it is not beyond the wit of the Prison Service to be able to deal with some of these issues far more creatively. At the end of the day I visit, as Andrew visits many more than myself, but I visit many, many prisons in Canada and the United States. Many educational programmes are delivered through Intranet provision. Now, you just have to say "the Internet" in an English and Welsh penal context and people immediately faint at the idea that this could possibly be delivered. You mentioned, Mr Shaw, that there were 46,000 achievements in basic skills. Actually, 200,000 prisoners go through prison each year. The vast majority of them are short-timers. So we are actually only hitting about 25% because there is not space in prison education departments to take everybody who might benefit from education in jails. It seems to me that one of the ways that I saw in America, Sun Microsystems does it in America, in the United States, and I saw education programmes being delivered through a secure Intranet. Now, why can that not be one of the things that is looked at. The third thing I would do with my blank sheet of paper, and then I will shut up, is that I would look again at the role of the OLSU. There is a great deal of confusion about what the OLSU is—

Q19 Chairman: What is the OLSU?
Professor Wilson: The Offenders Learning and Skills Unit.

Q20 Chairman: We are grateful for that. We are new to this area and some of the acronyms we are about to learn, obviously.
Professor Wilson: Okay. Are they inspectors? Do they inspect prisons? Do they lead prisons at the minute? What is the guidance that is going to come from OLSU? At the moment I can tell you from the various talk shops that the Forum has hosted, most recently in Taunton, that there is a great deal of confusion about what they have done, what they are doing, and that confusion seems to have been intensified as a result of NOMS. So with my blank sheet of paper I would try to do some of those three things.

Q21 Mr Gibb: Could you give some figures for the proportion of prisoners who cannot read properly and have problems with reading?
Professor Wilson: The figures we have got—I am looking at Steve Taylor from the Forum and he will give me the chapter and verse—come from the Social Exclusion Unit and actually the figures have never really been tested empirically, so I am anxious about suggesting what those might be. I think what we could say is that it is significant, but I could not put my hand on heart and give you an actual figure. I do not know if Andrew knows.[1]

Q22 Mr Gibb: So what does the Social Exclusion Unit say?
Professor Wilson: I thought it was 75%; 75% of prisoners going in could not reach skills level 1.[2]

Q23 Mr Gibb: In reading?
Professor Wilson: That includes reading. They do not have the skills to read or write, or cannot, that an eleven-year-old would have.

Q24 Mr Gibb: Right. I am slightly concerned that prison academics do not know these figures. That implies that the prisons themselves are not testing prisoners when they enter prison for these kinds of skills?

[1] Also see Ev 24.
[2] Also see Ev 24.

Professor Wilson: Oh, no, they are testing them constantly for those types of skills. What you are reflecting, quite rightly, and I will take the slap on the wrist, is that there has been very little academic attention being given to prison education in the past.

Q25 Mr Gibb: Sure. I was not slapping you on the wrist, it was whether prisons take reading seriously and whether they bother to test the prisoners as they come in for their reading skills. They do?
Professor Wilson: They do.

Q26 Mr Gibb: So those figures should be available then?
Professor Wilson: Those figures are available, but can I give you an example there? When these tests are done is during the initial assessment and reception to prison. So you have got some problems there immediately because often the new receptions will be confused, will be high on drugs, will be coming down, will be anxious, depressed, whatever range of human emotions exist when they are initially entering jail and therefore that makes some of the figures difficult. Secondly, often what one will find is that in some prisons like Highdown in Surrey they have over 275 new receptions per month and an initial assessment, therefore, under the contracting arrangements might be no longer than ten minutes. So again that places some stress on some of the figures they will get.

Q27 Mr Gibb: So how do they know then? Do they have a further assessment later on? How do they know whether a prisoner really should be given remedial reading tuition?
Professor Wilson: Every time a prisoner moves he will be given that initial assessment again. Some of them have done the initial assessment twelve times. Some of them are improving as a result; they know the initial assessment inside-out. Some people with degrees are given the initial assessment. So they will be constantly tested but only on the basis of what the key performance target is in relation to what the prison is expected to achieve in relation to prison education.

Q28 Mr Gibb: So you are saying we need some improvements in those assessments?
Professor Wilson: Absolutely, and not to be used constantly.

Q29 Mr Gibb: Yes. What proportion of those that are diagnosed with having problems with reading then go on to take educational courses as opposed to working in the workshops?
Professor Wilson: Well, again it will depend on the amount of space that is available in that particular jail. I think as a rough and ready rule of thumb, which I have always used, about a quarter is the short answer to your question. However, there are different pressures in different jails, not just in terms of space, not just in terms of the image that prison education might have amongst the inmate population or the prison officer population, there are also difficulties in relation to how prisoners are paid. If they go on to the workshop they might earn four times as much as they would earn if they went into education. So if actually the difference between being able to make contact through buying two extra phone cards is that you go and work in the workshop as opposed to doing remedial reading then what you do is you go and work in the workshop.

Q30 Mr Gibb: We have the situation where three-quarters of our prison population cannot read to an acceptable level. Of that, only a quarter then go on to take educational courses. Is this not where the problem lies in our prison education system and that that is where the focus should be, not on trying to get twenty-five people on to university degree level?
Professor Wilson: Oh, I would want many more people to go on to university degree level. I do not agree with that statement. One of the things we have been doing at the moment is simply talking about the throughput of prisoners who are serving incredibly short sentences where much of the continuing problem about people being under-skilled in terms of reading and writing emerges. What we have also got to remember is that there are 6,000 prisoners currently serving ten years or longer in the prison population and there are some 4,500 lifers. So there is a core 10,500 people who quite clearly have gone through basic skills and should be doing something more with their time.

Q31 Mr Gibb: But there are 70,000 other prisoners. I am just trying to work out how we deal with this reading problem. Should it become compulsory for all prisoners?
Professor Wilson: No, no, and it was very nice of Lord Archer to suggest that as well, but actually if we treat this seriously what we have got to say is you cannot force people to become educated, you actually have to offer them the opportunity to do so and you have to make that opportunity the same as the opportunities they might have if they were to engage in bricklaying or painting and decorating, but if you pay up to four times more for them to go on to bricklaying than you would to get them to learn to read and write then they are going to choose the former, not the latter.

Q32 Mr Gibb: So you recommend that that should be equalised?
Professor Wilson: I think the pay system would be one of the things I would really ask this Committee to look at.

Q33 Mr Gibb: Very good. Finally, could you just tell us something about the specialist nature of teaching adults to read in a prison. Give me a typical way that it is done.
Professor Wilson: The best example at the moment again for the Committee is to look at something which is peer-led. The Shannon Trust has a wonderful system called Toe by Toe, in which it trains prisoners to teach other prisoners how to read and write. That was set up by Christopher Morgan and Tom Shannon, who is a life sentence prisoner,

and they had a correspondence with each other and out of that correspondence grew the Shannon Trust and out of the Shannon Trust has grown Toe by Toe. So the first thing is to actually counteract the culture that Mr Pollard was talking about where education is denigrated, it is at the bottom of the hierarchy, and find ways of putting it to the top of the hierarchy. Peer systems, getting other prisoners to endorse prison education, is certainly one way. But you asked a more specific question, Mr Gibb, which was the specialist skills and qualities of the prison educators. The first thing is, these are people who understand the nature of working in a total institution. They understand the pressures, the institutional pressures that are brought to bear on that person who enters the classroom. They understand that that person's experience of dealing with the classroom environment has in the past been absolutely awful and appalling. They understand that to teach a class is actually to teach a group of individuals rather than trying to impart information as if it was all the same. They have to be far more centred on the individual needs of the prisoners who engage in prison education. Some of the greatest unsung heroes in our criminal justice system are some of those prison educators who dug in during the contracting out process, often with no knowledge if they were going to be paid at one stage. If you remember, at one stage during that process they dug in and have kept going and they really are some of the most extraordinary people.

Q34 Mr Pollard: Just going back to the initial testing, I have been to dozens of prisons, but nowhere near as many as you have dealt with, both of you, in your time, and one of the things they said to me was there was almost a pride in appearing thick and it was cool to appear thick and therefore I question the initial testing, whether it is as bad as it is being portrayed, that 75% of them reach the reading age of eleven. Have you any comments on that and what is your experience of that?
Professor Wilson: Well, that is true. There are some people who would say that and say that they have deliberately flunked the test, but often in terms of the cool masculinity, particularly in young offender institutions, they are often appearing to say that to mask the fact that they were not able to do the test in the first place.

Q35 Mr Pollard: A double bluff?
Professor Wilson: So there is a double bluff going on. It is a very, very complicated set of cultural pressures that are brought to bear on the initial assessment. However, one of the things in the initial assessment you should look at is the number of people who have degrees who are asked to do that initial assessment just to make sure the prison reaches its target. I think is was the former Chief Inspector of Prisons who uncovered that at Ford Prison.
Professor Coyle: If I could return to the other question. The Prison Service has made, I think, tremendous strides both in terms of testing and in terms of trying to deal with the lack of basic skills, but I think it would be important for your Committee to remember the context of all of this. We have gone from a situation where twelve years ago there were about 43,000 prisoners to the one today where there are 75,000 prisoners with some increase in resources but not a proportionate increase in resources. I think the Prison Service has not done itself great favours by masking the pressures it has been under. The Prison Service has taken pride and the Prisons Board has taken pride in being able to cope and I do not think that has done itself and I am not sure it has done society many favours. The reality of life in prisons, and we are talking primarily about the 70,000, those who are in the local prisons, who are there for a short period, who are churning over (the phrase which the Director General uses is "the churn of prisoners"), who are not only going in and out of the prison system but who are actually moving from one prison to another so that the governor of Brixton is phoning the headquarters each night to say, "I've got ten prisoners coming in. I've got nowhere to put them," and he is told, "We've got ten places in Swansea. Send them down to Swansea," or "Send them up to Liverpool," and so it goes round. That is the context within which both the assessment is taking place in the local prisons and the training and I think it is very important always to keep this at the front of one's mind.

Q36 Jonathan Shaw: I just want to pick up, Professor Wilson, on the fact that you were criticising a prison in the south-west for firing the education director who had successfully got people through university degrees, BAs and MAs, to employ someone to do bricklaying. Everything that we have heard is that you have got a fast turnover of prisoners, the programme needs to be directed at these particular people, so if you were a governor of a prison, as you have been, is that not what you would do because the bricklaying actually incorporates the basic skills?
Professor Wilson: No, not in that prison. It is a training prison and therefore the reason why the person ended up being made redundant was because there was no target that the Government could measure him or herself against in relation to what he was providing, whether the need was there or not. This goes back to one of those fundamental issues of who is it who owns the education in prison? Is it the prison and NOMS that own the education and therefore you can force the prisoner to do things, as Mr Gibb was suggesting, we could make it compulsory, or is education a tool for living that becomes a tool for living because it is owned by the prisoner? And if the prisoner owns the education and actually he has got the basic skills and wants to do degree level and if it is centred on his or her needs therefore you have to look at what the need is in that particular jail at that particular point. In the training prison that I mentioned, the reason why he was made redundant was because actually there is no target there at all to say, "Right, we can tick the box that we're doing well."

Chairman: This is very interesting stuff and we could go on in each section a great deal, but let us move on now to the practical barriers to effective education in prisons.

Q37 Helen Jones: I was very struck, Professor Coyle, by what you said in your opening remarks about what had happened in the Prison Health Service because that was something I did a lot of work on when I was first in Parliament. I think the one thing we learned from that exercise was that the key to getting any service right in prison was getting the staffing right and getting the links to outside organisations right so that we could attract good staff and staff had the opportunity to develop and grow themselves and therefore were more likely to remain within the service. Bearing that in mind, how do you think the contracting out system has affected the staff recruitment to prison education? Is there any evidence that good staff are leaving, that it is difficult to attract staff? Is there any research on that at all?

Professor Coyle: I should say immediately that I am not an expert in this particular field and my knowledge is less up to date than David's about the specifics. You are absolutely right to draw the parallel, I think, with prison health. What I think we can see is that the commitment which we referred to earlier is made more difficult by the present structure. Having said that, I think one would want to pay tribute to the staff who do work in prisons and the commitment that they have. Many of them have stayed there through the last decade and more when they have been through all of this organisational upheaval because they do see it as a vocation, as something which they want to do, but I think their commitment to that has been made much more difficult by the contacting arrangements. The question was asked earlier, would you turn the clock back or if you had a blank sheet of paper, and of course prison education does not exist in a vacuum and over the last dozen years or more education, particularly adult education, has changed significantly and that therefore affects the way it can be delivered locally. But I think there is room, drawing the parallel with health, for much more involvement, I would assume it would be through local education and skills councils, than perhaps there has been up until now. I am trying to make the parallel with what has happened in healthcare.

Q38 Helen Jones: Professor Wilson, have you anything to add to that?

Professor Wilson: Well, I set up the Forum on Prisoner Education in the year 2000 with Trish Smith. She was the co-founder and she was the education manager at Wandsworth and then at Brixton and she has just left. She has decided that she is no longer prepared to put up with the constant turmoil that seems to exist in this particular area. The turmoil, more broadly, is in relation to the cancellation of Project Rex, the extension of the contracts, what is going to happen now that NOMS exists, will OLSU exist under NOMS, will there be regional arrangements, local arrangements, national arrangements? So Trish Smith's approach in terms of getting out of this field, one of the most skilled of the specialists I mentioned earlier, is really the tip of the iceberg because there are lots of people at our talk shops who come along, who are prison educators, who say, "I don't know if I'm going to be employed next year. I don't know if I have any stable basis on which to bring up my family if this is the job that I'm going to have. Is this job going to exist? Given that's the case, why don't I just throw in the towel and go off and work somewhere else?" So her experience, I am afraid, is all too common. Perhaps the difference with her is that she was able to find another job more quickly in an area where she was living.

Q39 Helen Jones: Am I right in thinking that as the contract only pays for hours taught, that there is no way that there is built into the contract at the moment incentives for staff to keep up to date with developments in their area, to improve their own skills? As Professor Coyle said, rightly, education is changing very rapidly. What would you do to resolve that problem, because if we do not resolve it prison education is likely to get further and further behind the education we offer elsewhere, is it not?

Professor Wilson: You are right. The premise of your question is absolutely right. People, colleges and contractors are paid on the basis of the numbers of hours taught, but the good contactors recognise that they have got to encourage their staff to develop and will invest time and money in allowing that to happen, and there are some very good contractors who will do that. Strode College is an example, Matthew Boulton College would be another example and the City College Norwich is another example of contractors who I would say invest time in their staff. However, the bottom line is often for the contractor, they are paid on the basis of the numbers of hours taught. I think, therefore, more broadly it goes back again to some of the questions placed earlier about the value that we have in people who teach in the specialist environment, and therefore that broadens out again to people being prepared to say that this is worthy of our attention and we should reward people who do this accordingly. The Forum has just set up for the first time ever an award for prison educationalists. Since 1908 there has been no specialist recognition of the work that they do. We have just set up a journal of offender education because we are trying to encourage people to engage with this vehicle, and we are a pressure group and a charity.

Q40 Helen Jones: Yes. What about the other barriers to delivering effective education in prisons? One is clearly what we have encountered in the visit that we have made already, the physical barrier of simply not having enough space. I wondered if you have made any assessments of that, either of you, and the problems. The other is the mobility of the prison population. Do we have, in your view, an effective national system for tracking prisoners through the system—I suspect I know the answer—

so that they do not go from one prison to another and have to start all over again with their education, and if not how could we put one in place?

Professor Wilson: Okay. You have mentioned there is not enough space. That is one part of the issue. The second issue related to the space is how often inappropriate the space is that is actually being used and filled. Some of Wandsworth's education department has no windows. North Sea Camp, their education is so-called temporary portakabins which have actually been there for forty years. So sometimes the space is not appropriate as well, which is certainly a barrier to learning, but there are other barriers to learning as well. To do distance learning in cell, cells often are noisy, shared spaces, so again just simply getting quiet to do learning is sometimes a barrier. There is the culture of the prison itself, whether it values prison education. There is a great deal of research on that. Dr Jackie Worrall of NACRO—I supervised her PhD, which is why I can refer to it—her PhD was called Barriers to Learning in Young Offender Institutions, in which she talked quite extensively about the various barriers that exist. So there is quite a great deal of work done on that particular subject matter through her PhD. You then finally mentioned a system of reliable records of transfer. Well, there is none. That is one of the urgent things which needs to be put in place without any doubt at all. Then, I suppose the thing I have said once before but I really would like to keep flagging up, is that there is a barrier in that prisoners are not allowed access to the Internet. There are only 31 prisoners allowed out of the 75,000 access to the internet, 31. That surely is a barrier to learning. All of us here are internet literate.

Helen Jones: I would not take that for granted!

Chairman: Well, I do not know who Helen is speaking on behalf of!

Q41 Helen Jones: I just want to ask one other question, if I may. Do you have any comment on the way the culture amongst other prison staff functions with regard to education? We have talked about the prison culture generally and I ask this because I know there is a problem sometimes in delivering effective healthcare. Is it also a problem in delivering effective education, and if so can you suggest any ways forward? How can we set about altering it?

Professor Coyle: I think by definition the prison environment does not lend itself, obviously, to the sorts of things that we have been discussing today. In many respects what it achieves it achieves despite its environment. Prison is a coercive environment. People who are there do not want to be there. They are given very few choices in their daily lives and therefore it is not surprising that when they are given choices they may well make their own choice. I think one has to see all of the positive activities which go on in prison within this overall context. That is an issue of principle. There is the pragmatic fact, which has been referred to a number of times, that prisons at the moment are running very, very fast just to stand still. The priority of prison staff and prison governors is to make sure that everyone has got a bed. I visit a number of countries where prisoners do not have bed, prisoners have to share beds. Now, that has not yet happened in this country but some prisons really have to focus on that to make sure that the basics of feeding and watering (if one can describe it in those ways) are met. I think it was no accident that a few years ago the prisons moved away from the requirement which is in all the international instruments like the European Prison Rules that prisoners should have one hour's exercise a day. The Prison Service has moved away from that in this country and now says they should have a reasonable amount, however one describes "a reasonable amount", and I think this is all indicative of the pressure which the prison system is under. You translate that further down, I think, to the staff who are in the prison, the prison officers, who are there on a daily basis making sure that it works. Success in the prison setting by and large is measured by absence of failure, "Let's not get it wrong," and you have got to make sure that people do not escape, you have got to make sure that there is not disorder, you have got to make sure that there is not a ministerial question, of whatever, and that is really what drives people. There is another element which has been there for many years, which is that prison officers see themselves as having to do the hard, difficult part and other people come in and do the nice part. I think, in fairness again, the Prison Service has been working hard to bring the disciplines and the skills together, but that is made more difficult when the people who are delivering this are actually not part of the system, they are coming from elsewhere. The prison officers know what their priorities are. They know what is going to lead to a black mark on their record and it is not primarily about education.

Professor Wilson: My window into some of this, and I would suggest it to you when you do your visits, is that I always look at the prison library and how long is the prison library open for and who is running it. Libraries are often the ignored issue in prison education, which can sometimes be absolutely appalling and in other places one of the most civilising influences within the jail. Andrew is quite right. The stereotype of a prison officer is a stereotype which in part is true, but the good prison officers recognise the value in having prisoners going to libraries and engaging in education. There is research being done at the moment by Julia Braggins with the POA about prison education and the role to be played by the POA in encouraging the development of a more positive culture.

Helen Jones: Thank you for that. We need to look at that.

Q42 Mr Turner: Professor Coyle, you spoke about the need for local links. I am not very clear how many local prisons there are. I know there is one in my constituency but only less than 20% of the prisoners are local. Why are local links so important when so many prisoners and prisons are not local?

Professor Coyle: The answer to that question is, as I indicated before, that offenders commit their crimes locally, they come from local communities, the victims are in local communities and the solution of

the problems will be found in the local communities. You are asking a wider question about the prison estate (as it is known). Prisons are in the wrong places. Presumably the people of the Isle of Wight do not actually need three prisons to deal with the offenders on the Isle of Wight!
Mr Turner: That is correct.

Q43 Chairman: Is there any research on this?
Professor Coyle: But prisons historically are places of exile. Dartmoor was built for the Napoleonic prisoners and the Isle of Wight prisons, as you know, were built for the long-term prisoners. When I worked in Brixton, for example, the Prison Service was divided into areas and Brixton was in the London south area. The London south included the prisons in the south of London and the three prisons on the Isle of Wight because that was the lung where we could send prisoners because they were not needed for the local people.

Q44 Mr Turner: So are you saying that Lambeth Council should deliver education services in Camp Hill?
Professor Coyle: I think there is a variety of answers to that question. No, I am not saying that and of course they no longer deliver in south London either. I think what you are flagging up, quite rightly, is the problem. I have no doubt at all—the evidence is all there—that the solution to many of these problems lies in the local community. The reality is that many prisoners are not in their local community and many prisons are not in their local communities, but the big inner-city prisons that we have referred to before, the Brixtons, the Liverpools, the Manchesters, the Leeds are and I suspect you will need a different strategy for dealing with the three prisons on the Isle of Wight and the prisoners who are there.

Q45 Chairman: Why are you so pessimistic about the possibility of change? If there has been an evaluation in the time since you have been a prison governor, and you both seem to saying that this contracting out process has not really improved prison education, in fact it has deteriorated, why are you so pessimistic that an enlightened Government looking at this might say, "Well, let's go back to something totally different with a local solution"? There is a kind of subtext of pessimism about any change.
Professor Coyle: No, I do not think it is pessimism, Chairman, I think it is a realism. I think the Prison Service, as I indicated, has not helped itself in recent years by making greater claims than it could deliver and I do not think that your Committee should ever think that prison education or indeed any initiatives which go on within the prison setting are actually going to be significant contributors, first of all to a reduction in re-offending (as it is now described; we used to call it rehabilitation) or indeed reduction in crime, which is quite a different thing. I think the function of the prison is actually quite different. That is not, I think, to be totally pessimistic because one can say that within the prison setting one can achieve things but one is much more likely to achieve these things if they are linked to the local resources and the local initiatives, but I do not think that one should over-claim what prison education can achieve.
Professor Wilson: I get the impression so often that the "enlightened Government" you mentioned try to do good by stealth. It is about actually talking directly and saying honestly the message that Andrew has given that prison actually has been expanded, and works worst when it is expanded, it works best when it has been reduced and then works best after it has been reduced with positive things filling it, of which prison education is clearly one of the things I believe in passionately. However, that message often does not go down very well and therefore the good by stealth approach seems to dominate and actually I want people to be far more on the front foot rather than the back foot, far more proactive rather than reactive, and frankly I have not seen that in the past.
Chairman: Andrew, I am sorry, I cut across your question.

Q46 Mr Turner: Actually, Chairman, I do not think our witnesses said things were deteriorating. What they said was that things are not getting better. Am I correct?
Professor Wilson: That is right.

Q47 Mr Turner: So they are not deteriorating?
Professor Wilson: There can be no doubt that the concentration on basic skills for those people who are able to access basic skills is a significant achievement. There can be no doubt about that.
Professor Coyle: I think, Chairman, it is quite clear the processes have improved. How things are done has improved. What you really want to look at is what is being done. If you are doing the wrong thing first of all, then doing the wrong thing better is not necessarily going to improve things. We are back to this issue of an expansionist prison system and an expansionist criminal justice system. The big question, I would think, which may or may not interest this Committee is could the £2 billion plus of taxpayers' money which is currently spent on the prison system be better spent on education or elsewhere and would that lead to a reduction of the offending, rather than focusing within the bubble of the prison service? That is really the big question. You certainly have to look at making the processes better but you also have to look more clearly, I think, at what is actually being done.

Q48 Mr Turner: You seem to be saying two different things about basic skills. Given the figures which Nick Gibb quoted, I think it was Professor Wilson who said there is an over-focus on the skills required to find prisoners jobs?
Professor Wilson: It was a combination of both of us saying that.

Q49 Mr Turner: You both believe there is an over-focus on those skills?

Professor Wilson: I certainly do. I think this concentration constantly on basic skills is to the detriment of those prisoners who enter jail and stay there for a very long time who are effectively denied education because what is being measured is what counts and what counts in terms of that measurement are basic skills.
Chairman: Andrew, could we just tease out there, though, the difference between basic skills—you asked about vocational training. I thought you were pursuing this chap who no longer could teach people to degree level but was replaced by someone teaching bricklaying.
Mr Turner: I confess I was confusing the two.

Q50 Chairman: I want it to be relatively clear we are talking about basic skills, which I take it is basic numeracy, literacy and so on, and vocational skills to give you a practical job when you get out like the Transco scheme in Reading.
Professor Wilson: And there clearly is a difference. There is a connection, a bridge between the two because some of those vocational skills need basic reading and writing to be able to use those vocational skills.

Q51 Mr Turner: But there is an over-focus on them? That is what I have written down.
Professor Wilson: I am happy to stand by that. I think that one of the key stabilising influences in the prison population are over 10,000 prisoners who are serving life sentences of over ten years.

Q52 Mr Turner: Yes, but most of those are not in Brixton, are they?
Professor Coyle: No. I think we tend to see prisoners as a homogenous group and in fact they are not. David has a great interest in long-term prisoners and the needs of long-term prisoners and I suspect that some of the things he has been talking about have dealt specifically with them, and I think their needs to be dealt with, but the majority of prisoners, as I think Mr Gibb said, are actually short-term prisoners serving very short sentences. The point that I keep coming back to is that for people serving very short sentences, as the majority are, the Prison Service itself cannot deliver even, I think, the basic skills. What it should be doing is making sure that the resources, which should exist—and you might tell me they do not exist any more in the local community, but I know that the attempts which are made in other countries is that when you have got the prisoners for this short period standing still in captivity, literally a captive audience, what you do is you use that period to set up structures which will help them after release.

Q53 Mr Turner: That seems to me to be disagreeing with the view that there is an over-focus on skills required to find them jobs. You are saying, Professor Coyle, that there may not be enough resources but the Prison Service should be, especially with these shorter term prisoners, focusing on the skills they need in the short-term?
Professor Coyle: Again, I bow to David because he is more of an expert on this specific area than I am. I think the best the Prison Service can do in the short period is to identify the need. I do not think it can meet the need. I think what it should then do is identify where these needs can be met so that there is the continuity. I imagine that one of the intentions of setting up a National Offender Management Service is that there will be this facility to make use of the resources.

Q54 Mr Turner: A six week course like that we saw at Reading, you are saying that cannot generally be delivered?
Professor Coyle: I do not have immediate knowledge of the Reading course. I imagine it can, in the Reading setting where you have a number of prisoners, presumably who are held. Reading, I imagine, can organise itself in such a way as to hold—I do not know how many prisoners are on this course, but to hold that number of prisoners, which is probably quite a small number, I suspect, whilst the rest of the world swirls around them.

Q55 Mr Turner: I accept that there is a dearth of courses, there is a dearth of provision, but what I think I have got from you is that you do not think there is an over-focus on skills required to find them jobs. What you are saying is that there are not enough courses. I think you are also saying, though, that the Prison Service cannot deliver, all it can do is identify need and find someone to deliver, presumably after the sentence is complete, is that correct?
Professor Coyle: What I am saying is that that might be a better use of the limited resources. Clearly it is not either/or, there has to be a facility for both and if you find a model of good practice in Reading then let us support that but recognise that that is all it is. With someone who is in for six weeks it is probably going to take a month or certainly several weeks before he actually settles in the prison he is in. In order for someone to get beyond a six weeks course he is probably going to have to be serving a significantly longer period of time than that. So you have to run both in parallel, but I am not sure that the best use of prison resources—and it is not just in education—is simply to say that we are going to put people through X number of courses or X number of programmes. That is what I mean about concentrating on process rather than on outcome, and in focusing on the outcome if there are resources existing in the community then the short period that the prisoner is in prison would be best used by identifying where those needs can be met once he is released, and obviously that would be much more difficult in, say, the Isle of Wight prisons where the people are geographically far away from the place they are going to settle on release.
Mr Turner: I am concerned that you feel there is so little that even with the resources prisons could do—I am not sure what we mean by a "short sentence"—for those on say six months or shorter sentences.

Q56 Chairman: What is a short sentence, in your view?
Professor Coyle: The Council of Europe has set up a committee to look at long-term prisoners and it had great difficulty in getting that committee running because the Swedes thought that a long-term sentence was anything more than six months and the Russians thought it was anything more than ten years! I suppose we are somewhere in the middle. Traditionally in England and Wales we have said the short sentence is below the parole threshold, which means four years. The reality is that in many prisons it will be much lower than that. I think for practical terms one is probably talking about twelve months or less in fact.

Q57 Mr Turner: So you are saying that although the prisons could identify the need within twelve months, they cannot deliver anything that is of particular value?
Professor Coyle: No, I am not saying it can never do it. Remember, with a twelve month sentence the prisoner may have spent six months on remand, so he is only going to serve six months anyway, so he is immediately out. There are actually many layers in all of this. If we are saying, to phrase it another way, someone who will serve six months in prison, let us be clear I am not saying either/or. I think the Prison Service is to be encouraged to have things like the Reading initiative (if I can call it that), but I think in the wider terms—and most prisoners are going through the large inner-city prisons—the best use of the resources is to identify and link to what exists in the community.

Q58 Mr Turner: Thank you very much. Could I now focus just for a moment on the practical barriers which I was supposed to be asking questions about in the first place. What are the reporting lines in prison education, because prisons have an education officer and they have a contractor and the contract, it appears, is a very simple one—I would be interested to know if there are more complex contracts—which simply talks about delivery of a certain number of hours? What influence does the prison education officer have on the delivery of that contract and how much delivery is actually done by prison officers, not by contractors, because we heard again in Reading that prison officers do a lot of the training or teaching, whatever you call it?
Professor Wilson: The caveat for all these things is that every prison almost works in its own particular way and I am sure if you actually took Transco out of Reading and tried to put it in Huntercombe it would work in a completely different way as well. So with that caveat in mind, the education manager (who we used to call education officer) has a responsibility to the contractor and there will be somebody who manages the contract in the college, but the education manager will also have responsibilities to the prison and in particular to whom we used to call the head of inmate activities (now called the head of learning and skills). So the education manager will be pulled internally and also externally, but often will not necessarily sit on some of the key committees which exist in prisons which would allow the education manager to develop the contract in a way that he or she might see fit. Some of the tensions that you might find is that the heads of learning and skills, who are usually junior governor grades (what we used to call governor fives but they have probably changed that again), sometimes think that they are managing the contract and they might try to interfere and say, "You should be doing this, as opposed to that," but actually they do not. That is actually a misunderstanding of the contractual arrangements which currently exist. Now, thankfully, you are looking confused because the great news is everybody else is too! So what I have tried to do is to give a situation which has confusion built into it some semblance of understanding or clarity, but if you go to any of our talk shops what educationalists working in prison will say is that they often do not know who is responsible for whatever it is they are supposed to be doing but they know that this one writes their annual staff report (or whatever it is now called) and that is really all they care about, or take a very instrumental approach to that matter.

Q59 Mr Turner: The reason I was looking confused is because in most contracts the contractor is responsible to the client and you said the education manager is responsible to the contractor.
Professor Wilson: Because they are employed by the contractor.

Q60 Mr Turner: So to whom is the contractor responsible?
Professor Wilson: The contractor would be responsible to the head of learning and skills, who is part of the management structure of the prison.

Q61 Mr Turner: So why is it so offensive that he or she should try to influence the conduct of the contract?
Professor Wilson: Because that person will not be employing those people who are delivering prison education directly. The employer is the contractor, which is the college or whoever it is.

Q62 Mr Turner: In other words, she should not be managing the employees but she should be managing the contract?
Professor Wilson: And they will say—and this would often be a debate—"I would like such and such to happen because we can now identify that need." Therefore, the head of learning and skills might say that to the education manager, who is on the ground, as it were, in that prison, but that education manager cannot then just simply deliver that because then they have to speak to the contractor who employs them to have the contract renegotiated.

Q63 Mr Turner: Yes. Fair enough. Finally, Professor Coyle, one of the great objections that comes from the POA that they say is an obstacle to effective education is the need to accompany prisoners. If there are not enough prison officers they cannot get them to education. How serious is that

practical barrier in comparison with the others which have been cited like mobility, space, lack of computer facilities, and so on?

Professor Coyle: It is a significant local barrier. Again concentrating more on local prisons, I think there is more flexibility probably in what are called training prisons, but it is a significant problem in the majority of prisons which are local prisons. If you remember, I talked earlier on about success in prisons being absence of failure and someone mentioned earlier on the need to bring prison officers on board in all of these initiatives and I think the Prison Service could have done more in recent years to bring the prison officers themselves into these initiatives. If they are on the margins then they see the priority as making sure that the prisoners are there for all other activities and education is not the key activity. So if the operations manager, or whoever is the responsible person is, for example, short of two members of staff or if a prisoner has to be escorted to hospital or outside for whatever reason, then the soft area to look for is education, where the prison officer is. That does lead, I think, to another question about the need for prison officers to be present in every situation and some prisons take a more flexible approach than others. It is difficult to criticise those who take a much more rigid approach in insisting the prison officer should be there at all times because the contractor, the teacher, does not have any responsibility for security issues and if anything were to go wrong then it would be the prison officer who would be held responsible, the uniform staff rather than the teachers. So I think you are right to focus on the role of the prison officer in this. One way of coping with that and one way that used to be done traditionally was to involve the prison officer more directly in what was going on in the education unit either through identifying particular staff who were interested or through some other mechanism. The prison staff who were in the education unit would be more than simply guards, they actually would have some role to play in what was happening. Now, that is more difficult to do when you have got the contractual arrangement because the contribution of the prison officer is not written into the contract.

Professor Wilson: I wonder if I could add to what Andrew was saying there, Mr Turner. One of the things that prison educationalists would do to encourage the prison officers to be involved with education is they would put on classes to help the prison officer pass the senior officer's exam. That was one key way that suddenly education could be seen as of value because it allowed the officer to think, "Well, yeah, if I keep going to educational they will structure me to get through the senior officer's exam," which was the first rung of their promotion. I was always amazed that I could never get prison officers because the staff were not available to accompany prisoners to classrooms, but if I said on that day when I was being told there were no officers around that I needed eight staff to do control and restraint training I would almost be knocked down in the rush! So it is sometimes about the culture and the place that education has. It is not seen as a particularly sexy thing in some jails to be engaged with and that is very unfortunate, it seems to me.

Mr Turner: It did seem clear at Reading that it was prison officers who were delivering the kitchen instruction training and also—

Chairman: There were outside contractors there.

Mr Turner: Were there, as well?

Chairman: Yes, there were consultants, but there were some people working within the prison as well, yes.

Q64 Mr Turner: To what extent are prison officers still involved in delivering training?

Professor Coyle: Again, I defer to David on the detail, but the skill in all of this is where the contractor is flexible enough to move outside the boundaries or where you have, in the case of Reading, a particular member of staff doing a particular job who is determined to be interested and who will cross the boundaries, as it were. Where that happens, then it is much more likely to be successful because it then becomes seen as an integral part of what goes on in the prison rather than as a peripheral thing, "This is education, it is different from what prison is really about," and I suspect that has been one of the successes of Reading, that it has brought this, "This is what we do at Reading." Reading is proud of this. It is proud that you are coming to see what they are doing so they are going to make it work.

Mr Turner: Thank you very much.

Q65 Chairman: Professor Coyle, you said, which I thought was very good advice, that we should treat this inquiry like any other inquiry and judge the Prison Service and education on the same criteria as we use when we look at other things. If that is the case, I suppose what I would say to you is that we will try to judge any institution on whether it has a genuine commitment to be a learning environment. You were talking about culture with Andrew. In any other organisation you look at, if you perhaps looked at IBM and how IBM views itself as a learning company and the way it looked at the fact that only 28% of women worked in IBM at senior levels, and so on, and totally changed. They banned the whole notion of part-time working, everyone, both men and women, do flexible training and they really turned the company around in terms of its attitude to learning. If you applied that to a prison, how would it work? Would you not have to change how the prison officers were trained or viewed training of themselves? Have you got two parallel worlds, one where you are trying to produce a learning environment for prisoners, but what has been the progress in making a learning environment for prison staff?

Professor Coyle: I think there are things going on at several levels. I suggested before that the Prison Service almost by definition could not be a learning environment, it is a coercive environment. Having said that, the Prison Service, I think, has made significant strides over recent years in improving the process, which I think is the way I described it

earlier, rather than necessarily the content. The Prison Service is a people organisation. It is about locking up 75,000 prisoners with 40,000 staff looking after them. Therefore, successes and failures, I think, are to be measured in terms of those human dynamics. The key people in prisons remain uniformed prison officers. There are more of them than anyone else for a start, but they are also the people who unlock the prisoners in the morning and who lock them up at night and who deal with them most times in between, who see them at highs and lows and at weekends. They are the key to a successfully managed prison and I think, again using my international experience, we have one of the shortest and most basic forms of training for prison staff of any country, certainly in Western Europe. The initial training of prison staff was recently within the last year or so reduced from something like eleven weeks down to eight or nine weeks now. So we take someone in off the street, we give them eight or nine weeks' basic training and then we ask them to go to deal with young offenders, to deal with high security prisoners or to deal with women, or to deal with long-term prisoners. Now, that passes a message about what our priorities are and what we expect of our staff. The staff, I think, in reality deliver much more than we are entitled to expect and one could contrast that with a number of other countries in Western Europe where the training of prison officers equates to the training of a nurse or a teacher, a two or three year course, because if that is really what we want the staff to deliver then we have to give them proper training. So while the Prison Service has, I think, made significant improvements in the processes, there are these basic underlying needs which do not contribute to what you call a learning environment. Most prisons are not learning environments.

Q66 Chairman: Why has the training period for prison officers been reduced? Why did they do that?
Professor Coyle: Well, it is not for me to speak for the Prison Service, but I think it is related to what I said earlier about the Prison Service being its own worst enemy in being able to cope over recent years. The increase in prison numbers up to the current level of 75,000 has had a number of consequences.

Q67 Chairman: I am taking you back. Judge this inquiry like other inquiries. If we were looking at any other area, pre-school, life-long learning, any other specific, further education, and someone said to us, "Well, they've cut the amount of training you need in this particular job," we would be surprised to say the very least, and you are saying that for prison officers fairly recently the decision was taken to give less training—
Professor Coyle: From a very low base initially, it is now less.

Q68 Chairman: From a low base it is even less?
Professor Coyle: Yes. Chairman, I would think that my presence here today has been thoroughly justified if you go away with this notion. We will apply the normal rules of engagement, as it were, and there are these underlying issues. It is the only way the Prison Service has been able to cope, I think.

Q69 Chairman: Prison officers would have obviously threatened to strike or do something dramatic if they had their training cut. Was there a big row about this?
Professor Coyle: Not at all, not that I am aware of; I do not know what went on behind the scenes. Of course, when one talks about cutting back—and David mentioned what is called control and restraint training, which is training to help teach prison officers how to restrain a violent prisoner—the elements which will have been cut back in the basic training will have been the sort of work that we have been talking about today. They will not have cut back in the control and restraint and the security side of the training.

Q70 Chairman: So when they advertise for prison officers what basic qualifications do they ask for?
Professor Wilson: It is five GCSEs now. It is similar to the Scottish system and it is local recruitment. If it is helpful, I used to be head of prison officer training and also head of the C&R schools and I was made head of prison officer training to implement changes to the basic training programme as a result of the escapes from Whitemoor and Parkhurst and that training and that training course, therefore, was redeveloped so as to reflect the particular pressures that were being placed externally on the Prison Service at that time. Therefore the training course that was developed implemented Learmont and Woodcock. It therefore concentrated on security, security, security, and in the same way that Andrew has been reflecting that it has been reduced, that is in a sense to reflect the external pressures that have been placed on the Prison Service at a time of expansion where prison officer numbers are needed. Could I say, Chairman, I slightly disagree for the first time with Andrew Coyle because he was saying the key person is the prison officer. I think the key person in prisons is the prisoner because prisons are only governed with the consent of the prisoners. There are never enough prison officers, there are never enough prison governors to actually cope with prisoners if they withdraw their consent, and by and large prisoners overwhelmingly give their consent to be governed because they see the exercise of power that prison officers and prison governors have as being legitimate and one of the ways that it is legitimised is through the provision of things like education, facilities to worship, and so forth. If prisoners withdraw their consent, as we found at Strangeways, it is because they no longer believe the power that is being exercised over them to be fair, to be reasonable, to be legitimate.

Q71 Chairman: That is very interesting, David. I am not undermining the answer in any way, but could we maintain just on the training of prison officers at the moment because I am still trying to get this notion. You are in charge of prison officer training?

Professor Wilson: I left the Prison Service in 1997, so—

Q72 Chairman: But if we are going to produce a learning environment in prisons, it just seems to me that how you educate and train all the staff in the prison is pretty vital, is it not?
Professor Wilson: I am not disagreeing with that, and to create the learning environment that you started with when you were discussing that, one of the things I immediately noted down, Chairman, was "external and internal audiences". So the prison officer is one of the internal audiences in relation to creating this learning environment. You encourage them to believe that what they are doing has some kind of positive force for good; it can change. By the way they approach prisoners they can change what that prisoner will be like when he or she leaves the jail. A learning environment, therefore, has a variety of internal audiences, not just the prison officer but the prisoners themselves. The other key issue is the external audience that resists prisons from being seen as a learning environment because some of those external audiences do not want prisons to be a learning environment, they want them to be rather cruel and coercive and a short, sharp shock and lock them up and throw away the key. You have heard Andrew several times, supported by myself, saying there are some people like us who do not want prisons to be characterised as a learning environment just in case people start saying, "Well, we should send more people there rather than keep them in the community because if we send them to jail they can get a good vocational training and they can get an Open University degree."

Q73 Chairman: I take that point, but let us come back to the quality of the prison officer training. During their career as prison officers is their progression in the job dependent upon further skills, increasing skills, developing their skills? How is that done?
Professor Wilson: In terms of promotion from the basic grade to the senior officer grade, they have to pass a written exam and then go through a board or an assessment centre. So there are two hurdles they have to overcome. Both of us have sat on promotion boards, I imagine, *ad nauseam* at one point in our careers and prison officers would get asked a range of questions to test their knowledge about various issues related to their management of prisoners within a total institution. Prison education might feature in that, but it would often be about very technical things in relation to what to do if there was a suicide, what to do in terms of escorting a prisoner to court, what to do in a hostage situation. The officer would progress through his or her career by being able to demonstrate a competence, certainly at the time that I was in the Prison Service, by their knowledge of security procedures.

Q74 Chairman: Could we turn to a couple of practicalities before I call Jeff into the next section. It is all right being reasonably vague about this, but you say if someone goes into the workshop and works he gets paid four times as much as the person going into education.
Professor Wilson: He can be.

Q75 Chairman: How much do prisoners get paid?
Professor Wilson: A good average figure would be £8 per week.

Q76 Chairman: So how much do they get if they are doing education?
Professor Wilson: No, that is if they are doing education. If they go into the workshop, depending on the prison, depending on the workshop, they might be able to earn up to four times as much.

Q77 Chairman: Why?
Professor Wilson: Because often the specific workshop—Transco is not a good example but it would be interesting to ask how much they were getting paid—is a contract and therefore the prison can pay more than exists in their pay budget to people who go into that particular workshop.

Q78 Chairman: When you say "workshop" that is not a training environment, it is actually turning out something?
Professor Wilson: It could be nuts and bolts.

Q79 Mr Pollard: Mailbags?
Professor Wilson: Well, it is not mailbags any more, but it could be nuts and bolts. I have got some examples somewhere in my notes.

Q80 Chairman: So are you saying to this Committee that there should be better incentives for people to do education rather than going into non-training environments in workshops?
Professor Wilson: Well, I would not call them non-training environments. One simply might be in a workshop putting letters in envelopes. So it is not necessarily a training environment but if the prisoner has been contracted to fulfil that—Featherstone would be a good example where there are lots of external contracts—you can be paid much more by going into those environments than you would be in going to education and that certainly is something that should be put right. You should not be penalised for wanting to gain an education.

Q81 Jeff Ennis: You have both been quite scathing about the contracting out scheme for a variety of reasons, which all seem very obvious to me and I am sure to the rest of the Committee, but how much is the current contracting out system a straitjacket to making the prison education service more learner-centred, which I am sure we would all agree is the way it should be going?
Professor Wilson: I do not think it is learner-centred at all, Mr Ennis. I think what the contracting out process has done is simply become really contract-orientated. It is no longer about the individual needs of that particular prisoner in terms of how he or she might need to learn skills or gain qualifications, it is

simply about pile it high, sell it cheap. That is where education has gone to, if I am being really cynical, through the contracting process.

Professor Coyle: I suspect that when the time comes the National Offender Management Service will tell you that one of the reasons they have been set up is to deal with this issue and one assumes that was one of the reasons why the new five year roll-out contract was postponed earlier this year. One of the issues in dealing with the prison system in this way is that the sum is always greater than the parts and if you say, "Well, this bit is education and this bit is work," or whatever, and put all of those together the actual prison environment is much more than those parts, and the discussion we have just been having about the role of the prison officer identifies that.

Q82 Jeff Ennis: Are you telling me then that the current contracting out system is not flexible enough to allow it to become more learner-centred?

Professor Wilson: I am certainly saying that. The contracts as they currently exist are based on the number of hours taught. That is where the pounds, shillings and pence goes to. It is not about curriculum development, it is not about marking, it is not about the educationalists themselves learning more, developing themselves. All that is paid to the contractor is for those number of hours that are taught and those number of hours taught are through the Prison Service and will be through NOMS, determined by targets that are set by the Prison Service, and the current targets are over-focused on basic skills.

Q83 Jeff Ennis: A lot of the people in prison—and we have got the statistics to back this up—lack basic skills and they were failures within the normal education system. What we have tried to do in mainstream education now is to promote mentoring programmes specifically for children who have problems in the normal school environment. I assume it is very important to have a good mentoring system in prison because of the type of climate you are dealing with. What are the mentoring arrangements on average in prisons and are they effective enough?

Professor Wilson: Well, the key one at the moment in terms of the specific area that you are interested in is Toe by Toe, which I mentioned earlier, which is a mentoring arrangement in terms of helping people who cannot read or write to be able to do so. Again, that is provided by charity. There are other mentoring arrangements, though, in jails which have proven to be very successful. The best that we could point to, I imagine, is the listener scheme whereby prisoners who are trained by the Samaritans will sit with, talk to, share a cell with in some cases, those prisoners who are feeling suicidal and again that mentoring system has been very, very successful.

Professor Coyle: I referred earlier to the fact that prisoners were not a homogenous group and that they themselves have many skills, and I think what we have failed to do by and large up until now is to make use of the skills which some prisoners have to help other prisoners. I think if you tried to see education within a narrow box then that will be much more difficult. We have traditionally in England and Wales shied away from involving prisoners in anything like this with the exception, as David said, of the listener scheme and I think we could look with some benefit to new initiatives where we might encourage prisoners who do have skills (and many of them do) to help other prisoners who do not, because very often prisoners will respond better to that sort of encouragement.

Q84 Jeff Ennis: We have already mentioned the Transco scheme, which obviously is very successful but on a small scale in Reading. How much can these sorts of projects expand within the prison setting? They are obviously not the panacea for all ills, but are they under-developed at the present time and just how far can they go in helping us adjust prisoners to outside life?

Professor Coyle: In a variety of areas the Prison Service is very bad at learning from its own successes and it has had a number of successes but tended to deal with them by marginalising them, I think, for example, at the prison level at a prison which David would know, Grendon Prison, which operates in a different sort of environment from the majority of prisons. But the way the Prison Service has coped with that over twenty or more years is to say, "Well, that's Grendon," and there is a danger of saying, "Well, Transco, that's Reading. It happens in Reading." I think there is a danger, as in any large organisation, of people reinventing the wheel, of not learning from past successes, for example such as may well happen now with the Offender Management Services, rather than looking at the pockets of excellence (and there are some pockets of excellence) and saying, "How do we convert that into the mainstream of the prison setting?" We have been very bad at that in the past.

Professor Wilson: You know, the high prison walls are designed to keep prisoners in but they also serve another function, which is that they keep the outside out and the Prison Service is very reluctant to allow people to go into it. Often what you will find is that some of the successes that Andrew was talking about there are driven by a particular member of staff, often the governor, who cares passionately about something happening in his or her jail and so often, therefore, because a governor's career will often only be for three years in that particular jail and he gains promotion by going to a different jail, what happens is that the scheme withers on the vine. Nick Leader is an excellent prison governor at Reading, but there was a similar scheme which I am sure you could find all about at Huntercombe, under a previous governor who has now left the Prison Service, with Nissan, which was training young people, giving them the skills qualifications to become car mechanics. I presented a television programme called Crime Squad for the BBC and I took them in to show the Nissan scheme working because I thought that was a wonderful example. But there is an awful tendency for these things to wither after they have flowered. Grendon, where I worked as a

prison governor for three years in my career, is still seen as an experiment. It was opened in 1963 but they are still describing it as an experimental prison.

Q85 Mr Pollard: Could I ask why you think Transco and Ford, who are in Feltham, for example, actually go into prisons doing this sort of work?
Professor Wilson: I only ever worked in the public sector and obviously I am now an academic, which is technically the public sector as well, I suppose, but in setting up the Forum I have obviously had to raise money and what has really encouraged me is that I go to companies, big business, and say, "Would you give us some money to be able to do some of these things?" and they do, and when you ask them why they say, "Well, we have an investment as well in making our society a safer place and if you can demonstrate that by doing this you do create a safer society why wouldn't we want that to happen?" and I have actually been very encouraged by that.

Q86 Mr Pollard: Purely philanthropic, do you believe?
Professor Wilson: Well, with the Nissan scheme one of the things I did pursue was clearly they have got intelligence. Andrew said, "Remember, prisoners are often a great resource." One of the things that Ford and Nissan were getting was a great deal of intelligence about car crime. That is fine, it seems to me. I do not want my car nicked and so if they can work out better systems to prevent it from being stolen, why should they not? So obviously there was some intelligence there as well.

Q87 Mr Pollard: They have difficulty, these companies, in recruiting people who want to mess about with car engines and have stuff falling in their face working underneath, for example, so do they not see it as people who might be quite likely to come out and work outside?
Professor Coyle: It is not just philanthropic. I think the reality is that many companies do have a sense of *pro bono* work, of commitment and they see they are getting benefits back. I think it is rather late in the day to throw in new examples but there is legislation in Turkey, for example, that every company with more than X number of employees has to give employment to a number of former prisoners. So you can build in all these sorts of initiatives. That is what I meant by getting out of the tramlines of the criminal justice system.

Q88 Mr Pollard: Currently we spend £1,185 on prison education, £2,600 on secondary education. If you added £1,000 to the prison education it is about £17 million and you could do a lot more with that money. Is the amount of money put into prison education adequate?
Professor Wilson: £122 million would be the figure, I would say, per year that is spent on prison education, which is a fraction of what is spent on security and actually the most secure prisons are the ones that tend to have the best regime provision available for prisoners. So often by looking only at the spending through the straitjacket of security has meant that other regimes provision has fallen, despite the fact that by improving that regime provision you might actually make a more secure jail. Of course, it is not just a question of throwing more money at things, it is a question of looking at some of the targets, looking at the cultural issues, looking at the various pressures that are placed on prisons. It is about trumpeting some of the successes of some of these educationalists.

Q89 Mr Pollard: Why are not Wormwood Scrubs and Brixton paragons of virtue so far as education is concerned—
Professor Wilson: Andrew used to be the governor of Brixton.

Q90 Mr Pollard: And Wormwood Scrubs?
Professor Coyle: Because they are not learning environments. It is not what these establishments are about.

Q91 Mr Pollard: Have you changed your view then since you left?
Professor Coyle: No, not at all. What I have been trying to do is give you the principles on which I think all of this discussion must be based. When you are actually working at the coal face you are actually trying to make this as positive and as changing an environment as possible but always you are fighting against the grain. The Brixtons and the Wandsworths are not teaching establishments, nor should they be.
Professor Wilson: How many governors have there been, Andrew, since you left Brixton, six, seven?
Professor Coyle: Six.
Mr Pollard: Chairman, thank you for your indulgence.

Q92 Chairman: Thank you, Kerry, for your questions. Could I say that because I have to keep my commitment to allow members of this Committee to get funds at Question Time we draw to a conclusion at a quarter to twelve at the latest. Could I say that you have really set us on a course of our inquiry. It has been an absolutely fantastic learning experience for us. We would hope we can remain in contact with both of you, if you would be interested in helping the Committee with our deliberations and making sure that we write a good report. If we could have a nod on that?
Professor Wilson: Of course.
Professor Coyle: Yes.
Chairman: Thank you very much. It has been a very interesting session.

Supplementary memorandum from the Forum on Prisoner Education

This Supplementary Evidence was submitted to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee following their examination of Professor David Wilson, Chair of the Forum on Prisoner Education on 30 June 2004. It provides supplementary evidence in relation to questions 21 and 22 of that session.

1. The Social Exclusion Report (*Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners*) provided statistics on levels of literacy and numeracy amongst the prison population, as follows:

> "Half of all prisoners are at or below Level 1 (the level expected of an 11-year-old) in reading, two-thirds in numeracy, and four-fifths in writing. These are the skills required for 96% of all jobs." (Page 44 of the report.)

2. The Forum on Prisoner Education acknowledges that a significant number of prisoners have a need for basic skills education. We do not, however, feel that the statistics quoted above are as accurate as they could be: the figures are based on routine assessments given to prisoners soon after reception into prison, raising the issues mentioned by Professor Wilson in his answer to questions 26 and 27 of the session.

3. In June 2003, the Irish Prison Service together with St Patrick's College Dublin and the Irish Department for Education and Science published results of the Prison Adult Literacy Survey. The Survey was based on a sample of 10% of the Irish prison population (currently 3,000) rather than any reception assessments, and therefore the likelihood of more accurate statistics is increased.

4. The Irish Prison Adult Literacy Survey found levels of literacy as follows:

	Males	*Females*	*All*
Below Level 1	22.7%	16.7%	22.0%
Level 1	30.1%	36.7%	30.8%
Level 2	18.0%	16.7%	17.8%
Level 3	14.1%	13.3%	14.0%
Level 4 and above	15.2%	16.7%	15.4%

5. We do not suggest that direct comparisons can easily be made, but these figures show that just over half (52.8%) of all adult prisoners in Irish prisons are at or below Level 1 which is broadly similar to the findings of the Social Exclusion Unit. However, the Survey also found that almost one-third (29.4%) of all adult prisoners are at or above Level 3.

6. The Irish Prison Adult Literacy Survey examined levels of literacy against other factors, such as types and frequency of offending, regularity of reading, and the prisoner's age. We would urge the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit to undertake a similar study in England and Wales.

12 July 2004

Wednesday 15 September 2004

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr David Chaytor	Paul Holmes
Valerie Davey	Mr Kerry Pollard
Mr Nick Gibb	Jonathan Shaw

Witnesses: **Professor Rod Morgan,** Chair, and **Mr Robert Newman,** Head of Policy for Education and Training, Youth Justice Board, examined.

Q93 Chairman: May I welcome our witnesses today, Professor Rod Morgan and Robert Newman, both from the Youth Justice Board. Professor Morgan and I go back quite a long way in one way or another, so it is very nice to have you here.
Professor Morgan: Thank you very much.

Q94 Chairman: We have, as you know, set a course on a proper review of prison education and training. It is relatively uncharted territory for this committee because, as you will be aware, it was not in our remit until fairly recently when the Department for Education and Skills took over responsibility for prison education. We got off to a good start and we have visited four prisons now, three on the Isle of Wight, and Reading, and we are about, in two weeks' time, to go to Finland and Norway to look at some of their establishments and to talk to some of their people, so we are taking this inquiry very seriously, but we do need the help of the sort of expertise that you represent, so this is really a fact-finding morning. Perhaps I could ask you, Professor Morgan, would you like to say anything to start us off or do you want to go straight into questions?
Professor Morgan: Well, I wonder, Chairman, whether you would find it helpful if I made a very brief statement setting out the role and responsibilities of the Youth Justice Board, so you can put subsequent statements and questions into some sort of context.

Q95 Chairman: Yes, that would be very helpful.
Professor Morgan: Well, I am the Chairman of the Board and I have been so since April of this year and Robert Newman is the Head of Education and Training within the Youth Justice Board which employs approximately 180–185 people, a proportion of whom are responsible for monitoring the delivery of services in both the closed estate and in the 155 youth offending teams in England and Wales. Under the powers of the 1998 Act, which created the Youth Justice Board, the Youth Justice Board is responsible for commissioning and purchasing the places that the courts implicitly require through their individual sentencing decisions, so we commission full custodial services and we pay for them. We work very closely with the Offenders' Skills and Learning Unit in the Department for Education and Skills over the provision of education within that framework. We have three providers for all juveniles that the courts currently place in custody: the Prison Service, which caters for 15- to 17-year-old males and 17-year-old girls; private contractors, who provide secure training centres of which there are now four; and the local authority secure homes. We currently use 15 young offender institutions, 14 of which are run by the Prison Service and one is our contracted-out establishment at Ashfield near Bristol. We have four secure training centres which provide, together with the local authority secure homes, 15 of whom we currently contract with, about 500 places, so the position is roughly this: that there are something of the order of 2,800 juveniles in custody at any one time at the moment and about 500 of them are in the local authority secure homes or the four STCs, and the remainder, that is the overwhelming majority, are within the 15 YOIs—

Q96 Chairman: Sorry, 15?
Professor Morgan: Young offender institutions.

Q97 Chairman: This is unfamiliar territory and so the acronyms are difficult.
Professor Morgan: I understand and I will try and take care so that I do not bombard you with acronyms from the criminal justice field with which I am fairly familiar, but I have to beg your forgiveness in advance that you may use acronyms from the educational field in which you are all expert and with which I would probably be less familiar. Therefore, if I try and summarise what I have just said, we are talking really about three roles: the Youth Justice Board, of which I act as Chair, which sets and monitors standards and commissions and purchases places; the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit in the Department for Education and Skills with whom we work very closely and who assist us to monitor what is delivered in the custodial establishments; and the Prison Service who provide the bulk of the places about which I suspect we are going to be talking today. We have a service-level agreement with the Prison Service which is renegotiated annually and which goes into the detail as to what we want by way of education and training. We currently spend approximately £16 million per annum on that provision and the bulk of that money comes from the Department for Education and Skills. Is that helpful just to set the scene?

Chairman: It is very helpful.

Q98 Paul Holmes: You said £16 million?
Professor Morgan: Yes, £16 million.

Q99 Chairman: Well, that is a good description of the Board and what it does and what it is responsible for. How do you evaluate the sort of quality of the product, what it has delivered to young offenders in our country? Are you happy with the quality of provision? Do you go to international conferences and brag that we are the leading innovators, that we are better than the Scandinavians or the Dutch? Is that what you say at international conferences or do we have some weaknesses and deficiencies? What is your evaluation of the quality of what we provide?
Professor Morgan: Let me start and say at a general level that when we took over these responsibilities we recognised that much more needed to be done to meet the often profound needs of young offenders in custody, the overwhelming majority of whom we know from a good deal of research now have literacy and numeracy levels of attainment well below their chronological age. The overwhelming majority of them do not meet the sort of standard which is judged necessary for basic employment in the community. We inherited a situation which needed substantial improvement and that was part of the purchaser/provider split, that was part of the rationale for having that split and involving us, so we have invested fairly heavily in trying to improve the facilities in custodial establishments, the staffing and also the amount of education and training that is provided. We think there is a long way to go, but we have made, and this is reflected in the inspection reports of the Prisons Inspectorate who, together with Ofsted, look at what is provided annually, so if you study those reports, you will see that we have made, a great deal of progress, but what is currently being provided is not up to the standard that we think it should be. Delivery is patchy and we need to establish a more consistent delivery of provision and to some extent it needs changing. We provide in the current service-level agreement with the Prison Service that every child in a Prison Service establishment should get 25 hours of education or training per week. That is divided roughly one-third, one-third, one-third between basic literacy and numeracy skills acquisition, one-third more technical vocational training, and I will come back to that, if I may, and one-third sort of arts-based and citizenship-type components. Now, one has to be frank that a very high proportion of young offenders in YOIs, young offender institutions, are not exactly turned on by the classroom. Their experience of it has been one of failure, humiliation and rejection. We know that a very high proportion of young offenders whom the courts send to custody have been either officially or unofficially excluded from school and I, going round all the institutions, talk to young offenders, as you will do, and their experience typically, in my experience and it is reflected in the data, is that they have not been attending school for one reason or another and quite often for prolonged periods, so trying to motivate them to try to get them to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills is a challenge. They do not like the classroom; it is not something that they associate themselves with. We think that just putting them in classrooms, therefore, is of itself not sufficient, that it is not likely to work, so it is part of what we ask to be provided, but what we are very keen for is that they gain motivation and one of the ways of doing this is that they start to engage in activities which they enjoy, which they find fun, which, if they are on vocational training, offer the prospect of some employment in the community which is essential and having gained some motivation, you then smuggle in the basic skills on the back of the motivation. We have evolved various techniques, various schemes that we can describe to you to try and achieve that end, but we need to do more of it. Once they have started to do something that they are interested in, which they think could be useful and they want to continue doing, you smuggle in the message that if they are really going to have any prospect of a job in that field, they have got to have some basic qualifications and they have got to be able to read a training manual, they have got to draw up a plan which will involve some figures, so they have got to be numerate and literate, so it is a combination punch really. We have got a lot more to do in this regard because we inherited a set of facilities and arrangements which fell far short of what we are now seeking to provide. Is that helpful?

Q100 Chairman: Very much so, but are we being held back or are you being held back in terms of making progress to where you want to be by a lack of government commitment, a lack of resources? What is holding you back from transforming it to what you want it to be?
Professor Morgan: I do not think we are being held back. There is always a problem of resources. We currently spend £16 million and we recover £11 million of that £16 million currently from the Department for Education and Skills. You may ask, "Well, why the gap?" It is partly that there is an overall problem of resources. We are spending more because our judgment and the judgment of my colleague and the experts and the monitors who look on a week-by-week basis at what is provided was that we needed to invest. A lot of the establishments we inherited, the arrangements we inherited from the provider lacked suitable classrooms, adequate classrooms, spaces within which you could undertake vocational training and so on, so we ploughed a good deal of money into trying to enhance those facilities, but we need to do more about that. We still have one or two establishments where what exists on site within which to undertake programmes fall short of that which we think is necessary, so we have spent more than we have been provided. The money is coming out of the Home Office and the Department for Education and Skills, but not all of the education and training spending is currently being recovered from that, but we negotiate that continuously. We do not think there is any lack of commitment. My meetings with Ministers, and I meet regularly with Margaret Hodge on one side and with Home Office Ministers

responsible for this area, suggest that they think this is a high-priority area. We think that access to mainstream services and, while we have got young offenders in custody, motivating them and starting them on this track with the hope of continuing it when they are released so that they are slotted into mainstream services is absolutely vital if we are going to reduce reoffending. This is not a task just for the criminal justice system; it is a task of accessing by young offenders mainstream services from which, frankly, they have often been excluded.
Chairman: Thank you for kicking us off on that set of questions. We would now like to look more specifically at the secure learning centre vision.

Q101 Jonathan Shaw: Just prior to some questions about the secure learning centre vision, could I just ask you a bit about the Children's Bill which is going through the House at the moment, Professor Morgan, and there has been some concern expressed about the Youth Justice Board being excluded from all those agencies, like social services, health, housing, et cetera, in having a duty to co-operate and promote welfare. I think that it does seem rather odd when you are placing youngsters in the secure estate and sometimes those placements could be inappropriate. The obvious one is the concern about Adam Rickwood who sadly lost his life and he was placed 100 miles from his family. So when you were meeting with Margaret Hodge, as you have described earlier, and Home Office Ministers and you were talking about this group of troubled youngsters, what was the discussion around the issue that the Youth Justice Board should not have a duty to co-operate and promote in the same way that other agencies do?
Professor Morgan: Whatever it says on the face of the Bill, we regard that as a prime duty, so I personally have no problem about us being nominated as an agency within the Bill.

Q102 Jonathan Shaw: But you are not at the moment?
Professor Morgan: We may not be at the moment, but I assure you that whatever it says on the face of the Bill, we will carry out that duty because we regard it as a fundamental duty which we honour in everything that we do. If I can deal with the second, we have a target that when a child is committed by the courts to custody, the child should be, to the best of our ability, within 50 miles of his or her community roots where his carers or his parents live. We are not able to achieve that and as of the end of last year we had got up to roughly 72–low 70% of all children in custody within 50 miles of home. If I can put it into context, the numbers of children in custody fell quite significantly in the 15 months through to the end of 2003 and it is the Youth Justice Board's aims that we should have fewer children in custody and we thought we were making fairly good progress because the numbers fell significantly to the end of last year. Coinciding with the public announcement of my appointment, and I hope there is no connection, this year the numbers have surged upwards so that by early summer, for the last two or three months the numbers have been fairly flat. In the first part of this year we lost much of the ground that we thought we had gained in the preceding 15 months. Now, the logical consequences of a rise in the number of children that the courts commit to custody I think are clear for all to see. If we have less room for manoeuvre, and we aim incidentally to have approximately 90–92% of the places that we purchase and commission occupied so that we have got room for manoeuvre, the places are never entirely suitable or in the right place, so we aim to place children in the most suitable location, institution or regime to meet their needs. However, if the numbers rise and that gap closes, and currently it is running at 95–96% of the places that we have purchased, then, by definition, the likelihood of us being able to place a child close to home is reduced, and that proportion has fallen since the beginning of this year from approximately 72% to 67–68% currently.

Q103 Jonathan Shaw: Another suggestion has been that the courts should have a duty to co-operate and promote welfare and if a situation arises where the court has determined a custodial sentence and you advise the court that this particular boy can only be placed 150 miles away from the community from which he comes, should they then take that into account and actually consider an alternative if they are to promote welfare and, given all the evidence we know, I wonder if you have got any comments on that?
Professor Morgan: I was a magistrate for 25 years, but I think I should not answer. We do not determine who goes to custody, nor incidentally do we undertake the assessments in individual cases which are made for the courts about the characteristics, needs and the offending behaviour of the young person. That is undertaken by the youth offending teams, of which there are 155 in England and Wales, so they prepare and they may refer to the sorts of issues that you are discussing, although they do not determine either where a young person will be. Frankly, there are some real dilemmas here and there are conflicting considerations. I, for example, do not argue, and I have never argued, that placing a child very close to home should be a paramount consideration. Equally important is that the child should be in an institution with a regime and facilities that meet his or her needs, so if, for example, you have a child who is older and who will normally go to a YOI run by the Prison Service, but our judgment is that that child is very vulnerable for a variety of reasons, may have a personality disorder, may be small of stature and may be, we think, rather vulnerable to bullying for some reason and we decide that that child has got to be placed in an STC or a local authority secure home, it might mean that in order to make that provision the child is further away from home than he would otherwise be in a YOI. Equally, and this is a dilemma, we cannot require the local authority secure homes to take particular children. Generally speaking, the local authority secures homes with whom we contract take the most difficult children that we ask

them to take, but sometimes they do not and that sometimes means that a child, who is very young, who has got profound difficulties and with whom there may be a history at that particular local authority secure home, has to be held in an establishment that is not close to home, so it is really striking a balance.

Q104 Jonathan Shaw: Or a prison?
Professor Morgan: Well, a young child will not go to a prison below the age of 15, but it might mean that we have to place that child in an establishment which is not on his parents' doorstep.

Q105 Jonathan Shaw: Coming on to the secure learning centre vision, so we will be talking about SLCs in the future, when do you think you will be getting to the position where you are seeing the vision that you have for these secure learning centres actually come into practice?
Professor Morgan: Well, we have, as a result of the investment programme that I referred to earlier, greatly enhanced not just the facilities, but the staffing so that within every young offender institution there is a head of learning and skills and there are learning and support assistants and other staff to move forward with the vision that we have. Precisely what the whole framework is called, they are still called "young offender institutions". Now, there are some of them, and you may have visited one of them, I do not know, who are keen on the use of a different terminology. I went to Wetherby the other day in fact to open one of the new education facilities which we have funded and which they have opened, and I am very pleased to see it. They are very keen to call their establishment, and they presented me with a photograph under which was this title, a "secure training college", so there are different views as to how titles might change. I have to say that our principal concern is to change what is provided. Now, I have to say, I have been around in this game for rather a long time and I have seen young offender institutions called a variety of things over the last half a century, and I am more concerned about changing what is happening within them than simply changing names, but if it will help to change cultures to change names on the grounds that it more appropriately signals what we are aiming at, then I am not opposed to that, but at the moment we are still talking about young offender institutions and that is what the Prison Service calls them.

Q106 Jonathan Shaw: What evidence base have you used in terms of setting out your vision? I think all would agree that education and training are essential if a young person is to have any likelihood of leaving custody and getting on the straight and narrow. That is the first part of the question. The second part is how do you marry that with short sentences? You talked about getting learning by stealth, but how do you do that with short sentences and the churn factor where you have already referred to the high level of placements that are currently being taken? We have met youngsters who have talked to us about being moved on and moved on, so how do you get all that, the vision, the short sentences and the churn?
Professor Morgan: I think I am going to ask my colleague, Robert, to answer part of that question, but perhaps I can just say one or two things generally. The first thing is that we are constantly talking to the courts, to sentencers, about the possibly counterproductive and unproductive use of short sentences and we have devoted a good deal of our effort to developing more intensive community-based sentences in an effort to persuade them not to use short detention training orders which can be for as short as four months. If they go for four months, they are going to be in an institution for two months and we agree with everything you say, that when they are first received, that may not be the trauma of being received if it is their first time, and the idea that you somehow within the first few days do a full educational assessment and start grappling with the issues and start a programme is not feasible, so what a lot of our staff say in the institutions is that we should discourage the use of very short sentences and we are doing our best.

Q107 Jonathan Shaw: Is it working?
Professor Morgan: Well, you may have seen the publicity yesterday because we published a major report on the intensive supervision and surveillance programme, a community-based alternative, which seeks to do in the community much of what we are trying to do—

Q108 Jonathan Shaw: It had a bit of a rough time on the *Today* programme.
Professor Morgan: It did, but actually we were rather pleased with the Mark Easton report on the *Today* programme, though the headline I was not too pleased with, but it is difficult. We are talking about very difficult and persistent serious offenders here whose most common offences are burglary and robbery for this ISSP Programme, so the headline rate of reconvictions is high, but in fact the results are rather promising in terms of reduced seriousness and frequency of offending. Within that framework we seek to provide as much education and training as possible, so that is one strand.

Q109 Jonathan Shaw: Do you think they were wrong to compare the group on the ISSP with other people on other programmes then?
Professor Morgan: Frankly, it is not a straightforward comparison because, by definition, the group with which they were comparing the courts have decided should not go on the ISSP and do not need it, so they probably had differences other than those statistically measured.

Q110 Jonathan Shaw: It is one of those dilemmas where you are unable get all of the detail. That happens to all of us.
Professor Morgan: It is not a straightforward comparison. The comparison I would draw to your attention is young offenders sentenced to custody who have got seven or more previous convictions

where from the prison statistics we know that 96% of them are reconvicted within two years, so we are talking about a pretty intractable population. Now, we have laid down our standards and within the service-level agreement we say how much we want provided and we now employ a field staff, a monitoring staff, who work alongside the staff that I referred to earlier from the DfES who monitor the quality and the quantity of what is being delivered, and we know what proportion of children in custody are receiving how many hours a week. The average at the moment is 24 hours a week, so it falls short of what we have in the SLA and I have to tell you that a minority of children get less than 15 and there are some difficulties here where some young offenders in custody do not want to go to the classroom and find ways of not going.

Q111 Jonathan Shaw: The below 15, is that the individual being resistant to the education programme or is that some institutions not being up to the mark?
Professor Morgan: It is a variety of factors.

Q112 Jonathan Shaw: So it is not just the youngsters.
Professor Morgan: It may be the individual and it may be more general.

Q113 Jonathan Shaw: The institution might create the problem as well?
Professor Morgan: Yes.
Mr Newman: There are some problems within institutions around staffing which often impact on the amount of education that is available. It is what I would characterise as one of the major barriers to progress in this area. It is getting the right number of well-qualified teachers into young offender institutions to work with these young people, so it is the case sometimes that lessons are cancelled where other substitution arrangements cannot be made and that reduces of course the exposure to learning that these youngsters have. There are also circumstances within a secure environment which often militate against youngsters going into classes. There are segregation occurrences occasionally where young people are segregated from their peers where their behaviour has been unmanageable for a while or where there are special risk factors and that makes it very difficult to provide education within the classroom or workshop environment, but I have to say that some establishments are very creative in how they make arrangements to deliver, if you like, work to youngsters who are not able to go to classes.

Q114 Chairman: Where do you get your teachers and instructors? Where do they come from?
Mr Newman: Education is delivered into young offender institutions under contract usually by further education colleges, so they recruit the staff and they are responsible for training the staff and for quality-assuring the service. It has to be said, I think, that within the juvenile sector there are specific circumstances around competition with other sectors for staff. There is, I believe, nationally a shortage of about 40,000 teachers in this country and faced with the prospect of working in a very challenging environment or working in the primary school down the road, a lot of teachers will take the easier option.

Q115 Chairman: Are there not training programmes, specific training programmes, and this is something which certainly I do not know as Chairman of this committee, for people with particular skills in this area? Is that the case?
Mr Newman: Yes, increasingly there are training programmes for teachers who want to work in the special needs field and there are also training programmes now being developed to help teachers work with young people with challenging behaviours. There is not, as far as I am aware, a specific training programme for teachers wanting to work in a secure environment, although most FE colleges will run an induction programme which actually familiarises the teachers with the environment and some of the immediate operating differences, if you like. One thing that we have done at the Youth Justice Board is that we have developed a training programme for learning support assistants in the custodial environment and that has been very successful and we have at the moment about 100 learning support assistants, who actually work with the teachers, now undergoing this specific Youth Justice Board training.

Q116 Jonathan Shaw: You have spoken about the 25 hours of training or education and training, but how far are you away, do you think, from achieving a position that you are going to be satisfied with? I am sure you always want to see improvements, but in terms of the current investment and the current progress, when will you be able to come back to this committee and say, "Every youngster in custody is getting 25 hours"?
Mr Newman: I would like to say that we could do that possibly within a year or two years. The determining factor, I think, will be the availability of classrooms and workshops.

Q117 Jonathan Shaw: So it is the capital investment?
Mr Newman: Yes, there is a capital investment issue there which we currently do not have the money to push forward with. Any capital investment programme is two to three years. If we were given the money today, I could say with some confidence that in two years' time we would be pretty much there.

Q118 Jonathan Shaw: How much money do you need?
Mr Newman: Well, these figures are difficult to nail down, but—

Q119 Jonathan Shaw: Well, you have presumably asked the Home Office.
Mr Newman: Our estimate, when we invested over the last two or three years £13 million, was that we possibly needed to treble that figure to provide the

sort of infrastructure we need to deliver that full-time package with the class sizes that we need and the sort of variety of activity that we need with a vocational emphasis.

Professor Morgan: If I could just add to that, perhaps I could just tell you a small anecdote. I went to a secure training centre the other day and while I was there, they asked me if I could distribute some certificates to children who had achieved certificates in basic skills while they had been there. I then chatted to the kids and I asked them, amongst other things, "What is it about this place that you would like to change if you had the power to do it?", and, to my astonishment, several of them said, "We would have classes on Saturdays". I said, "Did you go to school before you came here?", and they were all doing detention and training orders usually of an 18-month sort of period, and nearly all of them said no, they had not been to school and they talked very negatively about school. I said, "Why on earth do you want classes on a Saturday?", and they said, "Because it's the most fun thing we do in here and there isn't a lot to do at the weekend".

Q120 Jonathan Shaw: So they were bored at the weekends?

Professor Morgan: No, but it was fun and why was it fun? Because suddenly they had realised that learning was pleasurable and exciting because they had one-to-one provision. Within this establishment where we have a very high staff to inmate ratio, the motivational barrier, which I referred to earlier, had been crossed. Now, that is extremely encouraging, but we have got a hell of a long way to go before we can achieve that within the YOIs where units are much larger, where the staffing ratio is different and where the facilities are often much more meagre, so we can talk about global figures, but frankly, when you are trying to motivate kids and you are trying to get vocational training programmes inside under which you can sponsor, you are trying to change a culture as well as improve facilities, et cetera, and it is difficult to put pounds, shillings and pence on it.

Q121 Mr Gibb: I am interested that you talk about the majority of people falling below the level of literacy that is needed for employment, but can you be more precise about that? What proportion cannot read and do not reach Level 3?

Professor Morgan: Well, the CBI of course says that you should have five passes at GCSE. If you could take that sort of standard, the general figure that is bandied about is 80%. We actually calculate it slightly more finely and we think that it is 77%, almost 80%, in the case of the older adolescents that we are talking about, the 16- and 17-year-olds, and when you are looking at slightly younger ones, it is a bit lower, about 66%, so somewhere between two-thirds and three-quarters or four-fifths fall below any standard that you might want to apply about employability.

Q122 Mr Gibb: So that is a problem about not having five GCSEs at all of any sort?

Professor Morgan: Yes.

Q123 Mr Gibb: Do you have any idea about the reading standards?

Professor Morgan: Yes, 50% have literacy or numeracy scores six years below their chronological age, which is a very substantial deficit.

Q124 Mr Gibb: Do you test them when they arrive in an institution?

Professor Morgan: Yes, this is a multi-stage process. When a child is going to come before the youth court, the youth offending team does a general needs risk assessment which is called an "ASSET" and that is a universal tool used throughout the country and that covers everything, so it says something a bit about the involvement in education and attainment, but it is quite superficial because it covers everything. That ASSET form should go to a custodial establishment if the court commits the person to custody and it should be received fairly quickly, although there is a slight gap there. Now, if there is any evidence of special educational need, there is then a full assessment within the institution, so it is a sort of multi-stage process and there is a more detailed educational assessment within the custodial establishment which is on top of the ASSET which will have been undertaken preparatory to a report to the court.

Q125 Mr Gibb: I wonder if Mr Newman can tell us a little bit more about this PLUS literacy and numeracy strategy that you are planning.

Mr Newman: Yes, it is now about two and a half years into its evolution, so it is not just something we are planning, but it is under constant development and it is now actually out in young offender institutions, in the other sectors of the secure estate and also we are now rolling it out into community settings. If I can tell you a little bit about the rationale for PLUS, the sort of youngsters we have in the youth justice system tend to be those that have not benefited from the gains that were made through the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy which has improved levels of attainment, particularly in the primary sector. They are also too young really to have benefited from the Adult Basic Skills Strategy, so they fall between those two government strategies, if you like. When we undertook some research into this about three years ago, it was clear that there was a gap which needed to be filled and we commissioned PLUS as a method of filling that gap. PLUS provides a framework for literacy and numeracy which is delivered through a raft of special learning materials to young people which are appealing, engaging and it is not *Janet and John* for 16-year-olds, but it is very much pitched at their idiom and, going back to Professor Morgan's point, it is deliverable through other methods, so deliverable by stealth, if you like. PLUS has a resource base for learners and it also has a resource base for practitioners because one of the things we discovered when we piloted PLUS originally was that there is a huge skills deficit amongst teaching practitioners around literacy and numeracy, so we could not assume that all the teachers we had working in the youth justice system were equipped to

deliver good-quality literacy and numeracy programmes, so PLUS tackles that factor as well. There is a third element of PLUS which is what we call "enrichment activity". Enrichment activity is something that supplements the core curriculum and again provides good, engaging activity through which you can deliver some literacy and numeracy learning. We have joined up with the Arts Council and the Adult Basic Skills Strategy in the DfES to develop and roll out PLUS, so it is tripartite funding and it is providing a very useful resource where teachers previously felt they did not have the tools to do the job.

Q126 Mr Gibb: You talk about 50% having numeracy and literacy skills below their chronological age. Can I assume from that that those 50% have a reading level of less than Level 3 in terms of how it is assessed at age 11?
Mr Newman: If you took a 17-year-old in a YOI, then you could assume that they had a reading age of 11.

Q127 Mr Gibb: But a reading age of 11 could be Level 4 or it could be Level 3. What I am trying to assess is how many of your people are below literacy and just cannot read?
Mr Newman: It is likely that something over 50% could be functionally illiterate.

Q128 Mr Gibb: That is a very useful figure to have, so they need really to go back to basics in terms of learning to read?
Mr Newman: Yes.

Q129 Mr Gibb: How do you do that? What is the methodology for doing that?
Mr Newman: Well, first of all, you have to find out something about their learning profile because everybody learns in different ways and we have undertaken some research to look at the sort of learning profiles that there are amongst this group. I think it has always been assumed that youngsters who have not attained very well were learners who preferred to learn through practical activity and that is borne out to some extent, but not exclusively so. I think we have a range of different learning styles amongst the profile, so it is important to find out what it is for that individual young person that actually turns them on and makes the learning most effective. Once you have found that out, it is a question really of setting some very clear objectives that permeate the whole curriculum and what we have introduced is a system of individual learning planning into young offender institutions which give practitioners, if you like, a framework for each young person. The individual learning plan then becomes part of the sentence plan and it will determine the sort of courses that these youngsters go on and the sort of level at which the literacy and numeracy input is pitched, and provided the teachers have got adequate resources, such as PLUS, then they can deliver that to the young people.

Q130 Mr Gibb: I wonder if it is possible, because it is getting terribly technical, for a note to be prepared specifically on the literacy, what these different profiles are, how the courses then are adapted to each of the profiles and some detail of the courses that are used to teach the people who are functionally illiterate and how they are taught to read.
Mr Newman: Yes, we can do that.
Professor Morgan: Yes, we would be very happy to do that.[1]

Q131 Valerie Davey: I just have a very quick question to ask. How many of these youngsters are dyslexic?
Mr Newman: That is a very difficult question to answer because—

Q132 Valerie Davey: I am not asking for the exact number, but as a percentage on average how many youngsters would you reckon are dyslexic?
Mr Newman: My reluctance to answer is that within the practitioner field, there is a wide variety of interpretations of dyslexia. We are doing some work with the British Dyslexia Association who are doing some work at one young offender institution to try to nail this down. Different practitioners have different views on whether dyslexia exists or not and it is not something that there is a consensus on, I am afraid.

Q133 Valerie Davey: That is what I was told in my LEA 20 years ago, that we could not define dyslexia. The world has moved on and I am really sorry that prison education for young people has not moved on because there are now, to my knowledge, very clear ways of testing and I would have thought that it was a given that that ought to be part of that process. I recognise that there are still people arguing the case all round, but surely some definitive situation ought to be reached by now so that young people are given the benefit of knowing whether or not they have a need for support as a dyslexic learner.
Mr Newman: Well, under PLUS we have commissioned a strand of work to try and understand a bit more fully these issues and to arrive at a position on dyslexia, but as we stand at this moment I would not like to say one way or the other. We can assume that a proportion of that 50% have dyslexia, but I cannot say at this moment what that percentage is.

Q134 Valerie Davey: Again in the note that you have been asked for, could we just have something about the background to that which will help me and others understand why there is still a remaining debate going on at this level?[2]
Mr Newman: I think, to be fair, that debate continues within the teaching profession as a whole. This is not something that simply is not resolved within offender education.

[1] Ev 46
[2] Ev 46

Valerie Davey: Well, I beg to differ on that; I think we have moved on.

Q135 Paul Holmes: The Youth Justice Board carried out an audit into education and training in young offender institutes and you found that, compared to local authority secure units or secure training centres, education simply was not a core feature of young offender institutes. Now, you have already touched on one or two examples of the barriers to shifting that, to getting the young offender institutes to rethink what they are doing and one of those barriers, you said, was the lack of suitable classrooms and the limitations on the monitors and things like that. What are the other sort of systematic barriers to trying to reorientate the focus of young offender institutes?
Professor Morgan: We have referred to population churn and transfers and short sentences and we have referred to staffing, skills shortages, the high turnover of staff, we have a problem of absenteeism amongst staff in this field also and there is a problem about information transfer. I referred to the ASSET process and whether or not the ASSET includes information, for example, about special educational needs, but a lot of these kids have not been attending school sometimes for long periods, so whether or not they have been assessed as in need, whether or not they have been statemented, et cetera, sometimes that information is not available at the point that the ASSET is prepared, the court report is prepared and whatever information we have got is transferred to the institution, so there are undoubtedly some children with special educational needs who have been dealt with within the school setting where we do not have all the documentation, we do not have the history and we are not able to transfer it. There is now a SENCO, which is one acronym I have learnt, in every young offender institution.

Q136 Chairman: What is a SENCO?
Professor Morgan: A special educational needs co-ordinator. I am sorry, I just assumed that that was part of the language here. There is now a SENCO in every young offender institution, so we try and pick up, but quite often the background information about the educational history, the pattern of exclusion, official or unofficial, is not there or is not there soon enough for us to get on to the case or for the staff locally to get on to the case as quickly as possible.

Q137 Paul Holmes: What about, for example, management structures or attitudes? We have visited four adult prisons and we were told there by people that an awful lot depended on the governor of the individual prison and we were even given the horror story of one governor who came in and said, "I'm closing down the whole education department", and when he moved to the mainland he did the same there. Are there any barriers of that kind whereby one young offender institute might be very good on this because the governor/manager is interested and another one might not?
Professor Morgan: This is always an issue and as you visit, as I hope you will, some young offender institutions, you will no doubt hear of precisely that same sort of story. Our view is that children in any institution should be cared for by staff who are trained and recruited to work with children. Now, we have a bit of a problem in that we inherited an arrangement whereby basically the Prison Service was almost a monopoly provider, as you can see, and that is going to remain to be the case, so we are working in close co-operation with them. Our view is that all staff in a young offender institution taking juveniles should be trained to deal with children and by the end of the year we hope we will have achieved that, but it will be fairly fundamental training. We would like all the governors who are allocated to want to be in that sort of institution and with a background of working with young people and wishing to take forward. That is usually the case, but it is not always the case, so sometimes there are some dips in perhaps commitment. There is very uneven provision, as we have said, in relation to resources, and the commissioning process in which we engage with the Prison Service is a long and convoluted one and we are moving by 2006, or we hope to move, to a position whereby the commissioning process is done regionally with the Skills and Learning Council so that what we envisage is that we will hand the money to the Skills and Learning Council who presumably will allocate it to the regions who will allocate it to the institutions so that provision is more mainstreamed. However, at the moment the commissioning process has been pretty convoluted with the Prison Service, so there is uneven resourcing and that is something which we have tried to address, but we have to work with the way in which, for example, the budgeting process is handled within the Prison Service and although they are moving now to devolved budgets for governors, it has not always been like that, so the provision actually getting through to the ground level has not been always even.

Q138 Paul Holmes: Partly on the budgetary issue, again when we visited the adult prisons we had a lot of people commenting that the contracting process was not at all helpful in providing any sort of consistency in providing educational needs and your audit touched on the same issue and said that the contracting regime created difficulties. Can you elaborate on that?
Professor Morgan: Well, I have said generally that what happens is that we deal with the Prison Service centrally, we have a new service-level agreement annually which changes, which is why incidentally this may come up from other witnesses before you, and this is why the detail of what we commissioned under the education and training head is in the service-level agreement, which incidentally we are very happy to be made public, except for the financial provisions within it, and it is in the service-level agreement rather than the Prison Service Order relating to juveniles because that is a more long-lasting document, whereas the service-level agreement is more a product of an iterative

developmental process, so it changes every year. They then hand the money to the procurement department who, in turn, then allocate to institutions and we have to work alongside the budgeting arrangements within the Prison Service, but it does mean that, as far as one can see, what is provided actually within institutions is not necessarily proportionate to need and that is true in terms of the facilities and the buildings we have inherited and it is partly to do with the resources as well and that is why we are moving to a different model.

Q139 Paul Holmes: What about the problems of the lack of clarity in the sort of strategic overview of management because we have got the Youth Justice Board saying, "We should be doing this", but then you have got the confusion between the DfES role with the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit and the Prison Service and then there is a different body again with a different emphasis. Is there any way round this or is it just something we have to live with?
Mr Newman: I think there is no doubt that there are probably more fingers in this pie than we would want ideally and Professor Morgan has outlined the reasons why. You may be aware that Ministers have agreed to reform offender learning and that process is now under way and I think it will lead to a more streamlined management chain of command and a more streamlined contracting process and we are supporting that. We are working with the DfES to develop that to make sure that the gains that we have made in the juvenile sector are consolidated through that change process and that change process, I think, has been designated over two years, so I think the end point is September 2006 for new contracting arrangements to be in place across the board.
Paul Holmes: Again on the funding, your audit showed an absolutely stark contrast to the amount of money going into education in different institutions. As much was being spent on educating the 300 inmates at local authority secure units as was going on 2,900 in the young offender institutions. That is a massive differential. Is that being redressed now over the next year or two, so will that total level up or is it going to remain a significant imbalance?

Q140 Chairman: Why is there that great disparity?
Mr Newman: For historical reasons, the investment in local authority secure homes was always greater than the investment in the Prison Service where numbers were much greater, so a prison, for example, would generally have 300 or 400 inmates, whereas a local authority secure home designed for children would deal with a maximum of 30, so the resourcing for that was much greater. We inherited that situation and I think Mr Holmes is referring to the research we did in 2001 where we found that the average education funding in a secure home was about £28,000 and about £1,800 in a YOI for a young person. That figure has now gone up to £6,000 in a YOI, so we are redressing the balance, but because of the numbers, there will never be absolute equality.
Professor Morgan: This is reflected, Chairman, in the overall costs of the three types of institution to which I referred at the beginning. It costs roughly £55,000 on average to keep a child in a YOI, £150,000 per annum approximately to keep a child in a secure training centre and £185,000 approximately on average to keep a child in a local authority secure home, so the cost differentials are huge.

Q141 Paul Holmes: Are those huge differences simply to do with economies of scale because of the larger numbers in young offender institutions or are they due to the different attitude and approach to what you are trying to achieve?
Professor Morgan: Local authority secure homes are small and they have a high staffing ratio. The STCs are larger but very small living units and once again have very intensive provision of education and a very high staffing ratio. YOIs on the other hand tend to be larger and to have large living units, which is reflected in some of the criticisms in the Inspectorate of Prisons' report.

Q142 Paul Holmes: Are the smaller units more successful than the bigger units in what they achieve for the people that go into them?
Professor Morgan: It is very difficult to compare them because they are dealing with slightly different age groups. In terms of long-term outcomes I do not think we have the data. It depends how you want to measure them. We are obviously dealing with very different age categories here when it comes to educational outputs into things like the acquisition of basic skills qualifications, for example, so that, overall, 26% of all of the children in custody are below the statutory school leaving age. The bulk of them are 16 or 17 and most of those of course are in the YOIs.

Q143 Paul Holmes: Although you say that it is very difficult to make those comparisons, however difficult, is that not something that is worth looking at because surely if the evidence is there that the majority of people in young offender institutes and then in adult prisons have got very low educational levels, it would seem fairly obvious that it is worth putting a lot of money into trying to improve that in order to stop them reoffending? Again, some of the evidence you have provided seems to indicate that sort of link. If you can prove that it works would that not justify putting more money into that preventative work? Surely it is worth trying to research these links even if it is difficult?
Professor Morgan: We would very much like to have more child-centred, smaller living units for some of the older young offenders but the cost implications of that are vast.

Q144 Paul Holmes: Is the Government convinced that it would be a good investment?
Professor Morgan: I am not sure that it is because in terms of reoffending rates I am not sure that there is the evidence to suggest that children who have gone

down one track and have been cared for and then those in local authority secure homes necessarily in terms of their offending careers are very different.

Q145 Paul Holmes: It is difficult to reach the judgment but over 20 years of research it does seem to be generally shown that young people who participate in custodial education programmes are more likely in later life to be employed and less likely to go back?
Professor Morgan: Absolutely.

Q146 Paul Holmes: So the evidence is there?
Professor Morgan: Absolutely, but then we would argue further that it would be very much better if we tried to do that within the community and within the framework of the community to access mainstream facilities.

Q147 Mr Pollard: I am concerned that there is a tension, it seems to me, in prisons between training and detention. In prisons I have seen—and I was a magistrate for donkey's years like you so I have been to a lot of young offender institutions—there was always lip service, it seemed to me, paid to training and you always had a training education manager or director but really it was about containment rather than education. Have we got the collective mind-set right yet in the Prison Service that suggests that training is absolutely core and vital to doing what we would all require which is to stop reoffending where we can and stop children going into prison in the first place?
Professor Morgan: The staff that I have visited, the institutions that I have visited, the YOIs that I have visited since I took up post in April I have to say indicated to me a very high level of commitment and really wanting to change things. I am not going to pretend that there are not some staff cultural issues that we have got to overcome but I think at senior management level there is a serious commitment in most YOIs to move in that direction. If you look at the Inspectorate Reports it is quite clear that they have made a huge amount of progress over the last four years but there is a long way to go.

Q148 Mr Pollard: I went to Feltham not long ago and I saw the list of senior managers and then it gradually tails right down until you come to head of education right at the end of the piece. Why is that? If we are saying as a society that education, training—vocational and academic—is so important why is the director of education not equal or why is it not the "governor and director of education" so that we send out the right message?
Mr Newman: I think that is a very valid point. I think we challenged that notion quite successfully when we pioneered the introduction of the head of learning and skills as a new post. We required through our commissioning arrangements the Prison Service to appoint heads of learning and skills. This was a new post to them. We required that that was a very senior post accountable directly to the governor. They were implemented initially about two years ago and there is now a head of learning and skills in every juvenile establishment with a specific remit to try to resolve some of the tensions that you describe between the security considerations of the regime and the grinding logistics of having to process people and the much more complex needs of delivering an education programme. We believe that is showing signs of success and in fact we believe it is so successful that the idea has been copied by the adult sector and there is now a head of learning and skills in each of the adult prisons as well. We believe that that goes some way towards resolving this tension but it is not a panacea.

Q149 Mr Pollard: You mentioned one-third/one-third/one-third which I was quite excited about. Is that flexible? You talked about "smuggling in" which again I thought was a very apt description because my experience is they are more excited—using your terms—by the vocational laying of one brick on top of another and actually creating something than they are by the academic bit of it, so there is flexibility, is there?
Mr Newman: Yes, this is the National Specification for Learning and Skills which is the template for what should be delivered and that sets out this third ratio. We do stress in that specification that the ultimate decision about the curriculum mix should come from the individual learning plan so this is the practice guide, it is not a straitjacket and we think that the interpretation of this should be made by the practitioner in relation to the individual learning plan.

Q150 Mr Pollard: Just lastly, is it the YJB's fault that YIOs become more like secure colleges in order to become learner centred?
Professor Morgan: I am picking up on your last point, in the same way as at the beginning of the 19th century when it was thought that putting a prisoner alone in a cell with the Bible was the best way of transforming him and you decide that chaplains should be running prisons so there were quite a few reverends, then I certainly would not object if the Prison Service decided that some governors should be educationalists so that was represented in the sort of culture of what we are trying to achieve. Everything is geared very flexibly to the individual and every prisoner now has a sentence plan and within it an individual learning plan as part of that component and it should be flexible. I am sorry, I have got a feeling I have not answered the question.

Q151 Chairman: Can I ask you two to stay there but just ease over because I would like to hold you there in reserve while we talk to the Howard League in case there is something that comes up.
Professor Morgan: I have a slight problem in the sense that I have got another appointment at 11 o'clock.

Q152 Chairman: Can we hold Robert Newman in custody.

Professor Morgan: If you would excuse me I would be very grateful.

Q153 Chairman: We could keep you here, Professor Morgan.
Professor Morgan: I know! Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak with you.

Q154 Chairman: We would like Professor Morgan to remain in contact with us.
Professor Morgan: If you decide that it would be helpful to have a written memorandum from us on any of these issues we would be happy to provide it.
Chairman: We are going to make this a very thorough inquiry and we will need your help on this.

Memorandum submitted by the Howard League for Penal Reform

Introduction

The Howard League for Penal Reform welcomes the opportunity to make this submission on prison education to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee.

The Howard League for Penal Reform believes that, if imprisonment is necessary, then 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 but should be part of a broader package, including help with finding work, maintaining family ties, addiction and behavioural counselling (if necessary) and securing suitable housing.

The Howard League for Penal Reform believes that the work experience prisoners receive while in custody should be an integral part of their prison education and should help prepare them for law-abiding self-sufficiency. Released prisoners are less than half as likely to re-offend if they are helped to find and keep a job. With employment at its lowest for 30 years and the prison population at its highest in living memory, education, training and work have to be the key to solving the revolving prison door problem.

The Howard League for Penal Reform's general comments are derived from its work to develop a social enterprise within a prison in its Real Work project and later, in relation to education for juveniles, work directly with girls in prison and with children contacting our legal department.

The Assessment of Prisoners' Needs on Conviction

1. Prisoner-focused sentence planning has been notoriously patchy in the past, but new developments in prison management mean that it may be possible to meet prisoners' education, training and work needs more effectively. A recent review of prison enterprise and supply services (ESS)[(1)] details how the new OASys information technology system is designed to better record prisoners' specific work skills, accredited qualifications, abilities and attitudes. The review suggests that, following a prisoner's initial assessment, OASys will be able to help staff identify those with the least work experience or the lowest work commitment, so they can be given priority when allocated work. While the ability to identify these needs will be invaluable, this course of action may prove to be a double-edged sword because, if those with greatest need or poorest commitment are given priority, it may demoralise the more skilled and motivated.

2. Importantly, with OASys, prisoners' employment records should be easily transferable if they move establishment. This could ease frustration, as they would not have to repeat the assessment process or "prove their worth" every time. It also means that it should be possible for prisoners to seamlessly keep up with their education and training.

3. It is the objective of the new National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to provide an end-to-end service during custody and post release. Although the Howard League for Penal Reform has documented its reservations about the new structure[(2)], it hopes that a positive outcome will be the opportunity for prisoners to continue their training after release. This would be of particular advantage to short-term prisoners who do not necessarily get the chance to start a vocational qualification.

The Provision of Appropriate Training Facilities in Prison

4. Prisoners are often offered the choice of doing education or work. The Howard League for Penal Reform believes that the two should not be mutually exclusive, and encourages the opportunity for prisoners to learn and train while working. This reflects life on the outside where employees study part-time to further their careers or pursue an outside interest. Some prisons are taking steps towards this, particularly in improving basic skills. The Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU) said in its *New delivery service for learning and skills* that the number of prisons providing classrooms adjacent to workshops has been increased over 2003–04, and the Howard League for Penal Reform looks forward to seeing these developing.

5. As prisoners are often unlocked for only short periods it is often difficult for them to study and work. Part time studying could be made possible if more prisoners had computers in their cells, where they could at least undertake CD rom based learning if the Prison Service cannot find a way of providing safe online access. The Howard League for Penal Reform would, however, like to add a note of caution, as computers in cells should not be used as an opportunity to lock prisoners up for longer periods instead of providing broader regimes. This has been the case with in-cell televisions.

6. If work is to be linked with training and education, it has to be meaningful, but most of the work prisoners undertake is low skilled and repetitive. This is demonstrated in responses to a recent survey conducted by the Howard League for Penal Reform[3], where prisoners were asked to describe the work they do day-to-day: "I glue plastic bubbly in punnets", "I place rubber seals and clips on guttering" and "I do measuring and re-packaging of screws and nuts". A look through 10 randomly selected inspectorate reports published over the last six months reveals a similar picture. A common theme in seven of the 10 reports was that work was "mundane and repetitive", along with the need to "improve the prospects of prisoners obtaining employment on release".

7. The Howard League for Penal Reform's survey also asked prisoners what they wanted from prison workshops. Twenty four per cent ranked learning a new skill highest and 19% said it was important to earn a work related qualification such as an NVQ or City and Guilds. The Social Exclusion Unit report[4], however, reveals that prisoners' experiences rarely match their aspirations; nearly half of all working prisoners are engaged in purely low skilled work and only 5% of all prisoners gain an NVQ.

8. The inflexibility of the prison routine can sometimes impinge on education and training. One teenager told staff from the Howard League for Penal Reform that she had been unable to telephone a college and ask for a prospectus as the number was not "listed". She had asked the prison education department to order it for her but, because of a delay, wanted to chase the college herself. The Howard League staff member eventually obtained the prospectus for her. Other case studies brought to the attention of the Howard League for Penal Reform include prisoners unable to telephone their tutors because they were locked in their cells for long periods of time.

9. The Howard League for Penal Reform is concerned that the training and work opportunities in prison do not reflect those on the outside and that the skills and knowledge prisoners gain are outdated. A prisoner at Littlehey prison, for example, said that he was learning computer studies on a machine still using Windows 95.

10. ESS has been making efforts to tie the work in prison with what is happening in the outside working world. The ESS review suggests, for example, that more prisoners should be employed making clothing, and some investment is being made to buy additional machinery. Making clothing does involve marketable skills which could lead to job opportunities on the outside, especially as ESS has been working closely with Skillfast UK, the textiles federation. After nine months of negotiation, Skillfast has written into its own business strategy that it will now work with ex-offenders, helping to link ESS with companies that have vacancies. The Howard League for Penal Reform would like to see more identification of areas of skills shortage, and similar partnerships developed.

11. The Howard League for Penal Reform urges that a broader variety of vocational and work opportunities are offered, this is particularly important for women prisoners, for whom many courses centre on hairdressing or health and beauty. These courses push them into stereotypical women's work and fail to engender aspirations.

12. Prisoners often do training or work that doesn't support their future plans. One prisoner told the Howard League for Penal Reform that he was doing gym management course not because it interested him or because he wanted a career in it when he left, but because it was all that was on offer. The Howard League for Penal Reform would like to see more training and work opportunities made available; some of the work, in particular, has remained unchanged over many years including catering and making furniture.

13. Most vocational training across the prison estate focuses on industrial cleaning, catering and decorating, most of which lead to low status, low paid employment. This could embed prisoners into a life of "making ends meet" and may return to crime to supplement their income.

14. A prisoner's work experience, even if it doesn't result in a formal vocational qualification, should be recorded so they can present it as evidence to potential employers. Diligence, initiative and the ability to work as a member of a team, for example, are all marketable skills. The Mount prison has been developing a "portfolio" to log such attributes and the Howard League for Penal Reform would like to see this adopted more widely. This could be particularly useful for short-term prisoners.

Links with Employers and Employer-Led Initiatives

15. The Howard League for Penal Reform would like to see much more involvement of employers in prisoners' training and work. The well-documented Transco initiative[5], for example, demonstrates how prisoners can be trained to fill predicted vacancies, often outperforming their counterparts in the community. The government is urged to foster more of these partnerships, encouraging employers to invest in prisoners' education and training as part of their corporate social responsibility policies, not purely for philanthropic reasons but because there is a strong business case too.

16. The Howard League for Penal Reform is planning a social enterprise in prison with the aim of demonstrating that it is possible to provide meaningful work and training in prison. The proposed print firm, to be established in The Mount prison, will operate like any outside business, offering prisoners the chance of a full day's reward for a full day's work. They will be employed under the same terms and conditions as their outside counterparts, from which they will be expected to support their families, save for their futures, donate to Victim Support (if they wish) and contribute towards prison upkeep. They will also have to pay tax and national insurance. Further details of the Real Work enterprise can be downloaded from www.howardleague.org/work/hlsubmission.doc

17. More businesses might be encouraged to consider employing prisoners if the government brought them into its current apprenticeships drive, announced in May this year, where apprentices learn through a combination of on- and off-the-job education and training. On the job they work alongside existing staff and the rest they learn from a local learning provider (which can be on a day release basis). There are over 80 apprenticeship schemes, many of which prisoners could already undertake including health and beauty therapy, production horticulture, call handling, bakery and construction.

18. The Howard League for Penal Reform would like to see companies involved in prison workshops, as well as their own training programmes. Prisoners are a huge untapped labour resource and examples from Swaleside prison show that they can achieve high output levels with the right incentives. However, the Howard League for Penal Reform considers it unethical that prisoners should be paid between £8–£12 a week by a private company which is effectively making a profit from prisoners' labour.

19. The Howard League for Penal Reform commends prisons such as Reading, which have held open days for potential employers, ranging from local businesses to those with international coverage. By bringing in outside companies, who should be encouraged to second trainers or managers, prisoners could be better exposed to the expectations and ethos of real workplaces.

Prison Education for Juveniles

20. In 2001, The Howard League for Penal Reform conducted research into the education of children in prison. Our report, Missing the Grade, highlighted the fact that prison education was not meeting the needs of school aged boys.

21. We recognise that there have been improvements in the provision of education in juvenile units. For example, the Youth Justice Board has ensured funding is available to appoint support staff to work alongside tutors and offer additional support to children with learning difficulties or special educational needs. There has been an increase in the minimum number of hours per week children should receive in education.

22. However, the Howard League for Penal Reform continues to have concerns about education for children in prison:

— *Prison education is still failing to meet the needs of more able students:* The Howard League for Penal Reform legal department recently took a case on behalf of a young man who had been studying for eight GCSEs prior to receiving a six month DTO. Despite the fact that his secondary school was supportive and had registered him for his GCSEs, the boy was not able to continue studying for his GCSE subjects during education lessons at the prison. The prison was not able to provide the range of subjects that he was studying and generally only provided him with "in-cell" education with a tutor "popping into the cell" on an irregular basis. In light of our representations, a considerable amount of effort was put in to provide education but not sufficient to meet his needs in the spirit of Prison Service Order (PSO) 4950 and the Young Offender Rules.

  Our project working with girls in prison found that girls were not able to continue with some college courses whilst in prison. Some girls told us they felt the work they were given was not challenging enough. Others complained that it was based on the needs of young men and focused on topics such as cars and scooters, in which they had no interest.

— *Children are missing education:* The Howard League for Penal Reform has found that children are missing out on education and do not always receive 15 hours education per week as specified in PSO 4950. Children placed on segregation have been denied education. In the case of BP, taken by the Howard League for Penal Reform, the Prison Service admitted that BP did not participate in education, training, PE or work whilst on segregation. The judge found that this lack of regime was a breach of prison rules, PSO 4950 and international obligations to children in custody.

— *Support and guidance on release:* Our work with girls in prison found that some did not feel they were given adequate support in preparing for education on release. Girls in prison are often placed a long way from home which has caused problems when liaising with colleges or setting up placements for release.

IN ADDITION

23. The Howard League for Penal Reform would like to raise with the Committee the following issues that need to be addressed if education and training in prison are to reduce re-offending:

24. Training in prisons is often treated as education, rather than work, and paid accordingly. Many prisoners choose to work because the pay is higher. Most prisoners learn very little from their prison labour, except that crime is more exciting and pays better, yet are not benefiting from what learning opportunities may be available.

25. Prisoners, like anyone else, benefit from incentives to learn. Many of us undertake further study to improve our status, earn more money or change career, yet the structure of prison workshops means that there is little "career progression" or recognition for new skills.

26. Overcrowding in some prisons means that staff are often unable to provide constructive regimes to the majority of prisoners. Governors report being able to do little more than ensure that those in their care receive food and the chance to shower. Governors have a key performance target of 24 hours a week for purposeful activity (which includes everything from work and education to visits), yet the Prison Service annual report shows that prisoners are only receiving an average of 22.5. This is far from a working or study week.

27. Sentencers should not be led to believe that they are sending people to prison to receive an education or training. Offenders should only be sent to prison if they pose a threat to society.

The Howard League for Penal Reform:

— wants a safe society where fewer people are victims of crime.
— believes that offenders must make amends for what they have done and change their lives.
— believes that community sentences make a person take responsibility and live a law-abiding life in the community.

References:

(1) The ESS review has not been formally published, but received ratification from the Prison Service's management board.

(2) See the Howard League for Penal Reform's response to the Carter Report on www.howardleague.org

(3) *Prison work isn't working,* 23 February 2004, Howard League for Penal Reform.

(4) *Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners,* Social Exclusion Unit, 2002.

(5) *A fantastic opportunity,* Nick Leader, HLM, Vol 21, No 3 July 2003 pp 7–8.

June 2004

Witnesses: **Ms Frances Crook,** Director, Howard League for Penal Reform and **Mr Robert Newman,** Head of Policy for Education and Training, Youth Justice Board, examined.

Q155 Chairman: Can I ask the Howard League and Frances Crook to join us. Can I welcome you, Frances, to our proceedings and thank you very much for sitting their patiently waiting to be called.
Ms Crook: It was very interesting.
Chairman: You and I know have known each other for a long time from when I was Shadow Home Affairs Minister—
Jonathan Shaw: You are saying this about all of our witnesses, we are starting to get worried!
Chairman: I have known Frances since I was Home Affairs Shadow Minister for about four years and we got to know each other quite well and Rod Morgan as well. You cannot help it, it is an incredibly inbred world, is it not?
Jonathan Shaw: Evidently!
Chairman: I am going to ask you to say something to open up but I have got a member of the Committee who has to go by 11.05 but who wants to ask a question, so could I ask David to ask his question straight off and then we will go back into normal service.

Q156 Mr Chaytor: During the Committee's earlier visits to prisons one of the issues that came up repeatedly was the problem of the difficulty of transferring prisoners' records between prisons. I understand that there is a new information system called Oasis and I would just like you to tell us a little bit about that insofar as what information will it transfer and what is the timescale for the implementation of Oasis across all institutions?
Ms Crook: Oh dear! I think you should ask the Prison Service. Detailed questions like that about management of records I cannot give you a definitive answer to. All I can tell you is that it is all pretty chaotic in my experience.

Q157 Mr Chaytor: We want to hear your experience. Is it fair criticism that what exists now is completely inadequate? Why has nobody got to grips with this over the last few years because simply recording prisoners' employment records and previous qualifications and educational activity would seem to be a fairly simple process and I do not understand why it does not work efficiently at the moment?
Ms Crook: I think the answer to that, particularly for the adults, would be that the pressure of numbers means that it is incredibly difficult for anybody to

manage anything efficiently. That is particularly true as well for the huge numbers of adults, mostly adult men of course, who are received into prison for short sentences and may serve a short time in one prison and then be transferred for a short time to another prison and then be released. If however you are sentenced to a longer period in prison—four or five years—things get a little bit more settled and your records are more likely to catch up with you round the system. The answer to your question is that it is an impossible task for any system to deal with the huge pressure of numbers particularly with the enormous rise of numbers of people going in for short sentences and their records will simply never catch up with them. Goodness knows, their underwear does not catch up with them, how can anything else!

Q158 Mr Chaytor: If we compare other institutions, the National Health Service for example has millions of transactions every day and yet the National Health Service has a system of medical record-keeping which is not perfect and falls down from time to time but everybody has a medical record and everyone's transaction, even if it is a five-minute interview with their GP, is recorded so why is the Prison Service so far behind the National Health Service for example. It is not just a question of numbers because there are far more numbers in the NHS.
Ms Crook: I think perhaps another emphasis is the emphasis on security because the money that has gone into the Prison Service over the last five or six years has tended to go towards building higher walls with barbed wire round them not on the additional support networks for administration. I think another issue would probably be, if you are looking at education, the educational level given to staff, the educational support and training for staff, which is well below what you would get in the Health Service. The basic level of education for a prison officer is lower than most people in the Health Service. I think it is a serious issue that if we are looking at the education of prisoners we also ought to look at education not just training (they are different) for staff.

Q159 Mr Chaytor: Do you think that there is a serious issue of professional development of prison staff across the board at all levels?
Ms Crook: I think it is a very serious issues, both from appointment, where many of the staff have a low level of education, and through the level of education that is given to them in professional development (and I think there is a significant difference between training and education) where support is not given to staff as it should be.

Q160 Chairman: Frances, is there anything you would like to say to the Committee to open our proceedings?
Ms Crook: I think perhaps, Chairman, you have seen so many people and have known so many people because this is such a fascinating area and once you are in it you stay in it. I would like to make a few key points, reinforcing what I said about the numbers of prisoners. You have heard that the number of children going into prison has risen, and of course we all know that the number of adults in prison has also risen, and this puts an enormous strain on the whole system. The second point I would like to make is that I am very concerned that particularly for children but also for adults no-one should ever be sent to prison to get an education. That is not what prison is there for. Prison is there for safety reasons and people should only be sent to prison if they are seriously dangerous, violent offenders and are a danger to the community. I am a little concerned about changing the names of institutions so that the courts might be duped into thinking this child in front of them has an educational deficit or a mental health need, whatever it is, therefore a young offender institution will be a good place to send them because they will get a good education. I think that is completely inappropriate. I really want to concentrate most of my remarks on looking at skills with adults because I think you have heard a lot about children, although there are one or two things that I might be tempted to comment on. For example, you should ask how many GCSEs children got in prison last year; and the answer is 189, which is not very good.

Q161 Chairman: 189?
Ms Crook: Yes, GCSEs awarded and they were mostly lower grades as well and yet some of the children are there for a very long time and not all of them have the educational deficit that you have heard about. However, concentrating on the adults and on skills training, we have started a major research project funded by the Community Fund interviewing young adults being received into prison on reception, pre-release and post-release, and one of the things we have found in our emerging findings is that many of the young people and young adults who are received into prison, although they say about 50% have been in employment before, when you unpick that they have been in the informal economy, shall we say. So these are young people and adults being received into prison who have no experience of real work, who do not have national insurance numbers in the sense that they have never been employed, they have never paid tax and do not know how to do it, they have not been in school for many years so they are completely outside what I would call real life. They go into prison. They may do a little bit of education in the evening classes. It is pretty "chalk and talk" stuff in adult prisons. They will be employed within the establishment maintaining the establishment earning £5 to £8 a week. They are not paying tax, they are not paying national insurance, they are getting no training, and this means that the Prison System is reinforcing the view that it is acceptable not to pay tax or national insurance or to work or to have a steady and organised life and to take responsibility for your life and to be engaged in being what we would like people to be, which is responsible citizens. I think in many cases the prison system is perpetuating the view that crime pays better, is more exciting and they

do not have to worry about when they are released because they can go back to this informal economy from which they came.

Q162 Chairman: Thank you for that. When you and I worked together on a number of things—
Ms Crook: —This makes me feel very old; I wish you would not keep referring to it!

Q163 Chairman: —The campaign we shared was a criticism of the Government because it had the horrific number of 50,000 people in prison and that was then thought to be the highest in the developed world apart from the United States and Turkey. The Howard League is the most powerful voice really in prisoner reform, it has been going a long time. Is it not depressing that not that many years later we have 75,000 people in prison and rising? Do you not feel like packing it all in and saying, "Well, we are not making any difference"?
Ms Crook: I like to think we are making a difference in the sense that things might be even worse if we were not here. We do come up with new ideas which are taken on board by government and by prisons. For example, the submission that we made to you talks about a new social enterprise that we are hoping to set up inside a prison in the new year because I would like you to think about work and training and education in a completely different way. Let me suggest to you, for example, turning the whole idea on its head. Instead of thinking prisoners ought to be provided with an education, I am talking adult prisoners here, perhaps if you thought prisoners ought to be engaged in the same way that you and I are with a full working day, paid a real wage, out of which they contribute like the rest of us do, and that education should form part of their evening classes, like you and I have, and that good employers should provide skills training so that a prisoner would be employed properly doing some useful work and getting work experience in a full working day, and that good employers, like many of the big employers do, would provide NVQ training or enhanced work and would provide training for trade union activities, for promotional activities, for enhanced skills, in exactly the same way as big employers do on the outside. That is the kind of vision for the Prison Service I would like to see but you can only achieve that if you reduce radically the numbers of people in prison so that only people who need to be there are held there. Then the Prison Service could do something useful with those who have to be held in custody for public safety reasons. It is a completely different vision, it is turning it round on its head.
Chairman: Certainly we have started to hear that voice. Some of us on visits to prisons that we have already gone to came away thinking that something needed to be turned on its head. The questions are open now. Who wants to lead?

Q164 Mr Pollard: I was very interested and would fully support you in the analysis that you have done and the results from it. You defined these young people as being outside society and I think we all would relate to that. My thought is that some of this bravura that is displayed is a Jack-the-Lad defence mechanism because they are outside society and do not like society and feel alienated from it. How do we get round that and give them the dignity and self-respect that comes from paying taxes and so forth? How do we make that jump for them, not for us as society, and put it into practice? How do we do that?
Ms Crook: I think work and skills training is the greatest dignity that you can give to somebody. They acquire dignity and self-respect themselves because they are not passive recipients of something and they are positively engaged in doing something constructive. They get social interaction with their peers, they can earn money, and they can gain independence. They can be engaged in society by paying tax, and I think there is a very positive interaction with a form of social responsibility. They can get the immediate benefits from work because we all like to go out and spend a bit of money on treats. They can help to keep their families and they can get the skills training that they would need in order to engage in that kind of activity and work when they are released. I know that you are primarily interested in education but I feel in addition to the work that people could be doing in prison they could get an education which is not about basic skill training but which is about the pleasure of learning. I speak as an ex-teacher. I started as a secondary school teacher with experience of teaching in inner city schools with special needs and remedial teaching in Liverpool. The most important thing I tried to do as a teacher (whether I succeeded I do not know) was to give a love of learning and a pleasure of learning. I am not sure that that happens very much in prisons at the moment.

Q165 Mr Pollard: How do we convince society, which generally likes prisoners to be punished for what they have done, and how do we reconcile that so that society will accept the vision that I would support that you have just outlined. I remember not too long ago there was a headline in a newspaper saying that prisoners going on Outward Bound courses were being given a holiday for stealing from old ladies. You will always get that. How do we persuade society that this is a good thing to do?
Ms Crook: I think society and your constituents would be very pleased to think that prisoners were working, that they were not lying on their beds doing nothing, which is a cop-out, which is expensive to the taxpayer and completely pointless and is no way of encouraging people to make amends for the wrong they have done if they are just lying about all day or if the only work they do is to support the institution; it is a cycle.

Q166 Mr Pollard: You talked about employers taking on prisoners. It is really difficult, as you will know better than anybody, when people leave institutions for them to get into paid work. How do we get over that? That seems to be the biggest hurdle we have got to get over.

Ms Crook: I think the Prison Service should concentrate on it more. I think if they worked more constructively with employers inside prisons they could form better relationships with employers outside and I think the public would be more supportive of it as well.

Q167 Chairman: We know about the Mount Prison. Can you tell us little bit more about the Mount Prison or any other good scheme or good practice that you could point the Committee to? For example, we have been to look at the British Gas Transco initiative in Reading which we were impressed by but it is very small scale, very small numbers.
Ms Crook: We too have visited the Transco work and that is very good but it is training for employment on the outside. What the Howard League for Penal Reform is trying to do is employ prisoners inside. We are working only with longer term prisoners because obviously we think short-term sentences are a waste of time and should be reduced very significantly. The idea is that it is possible to have a social enterprise, a fair trade enterprise inside a prison. It could be a print works. We will work primarily with other social enterprises but not exclusively. It would be run along commercial lines. I want this enterprise to make money for my charity, and I should say thank you to the Chancellor for allowing the rules for charities to engage in social enterprise in order to do this. We hope it will act as a prototype so that we will work our way through all the many problems there are about working in prison such as security and training and all those sorts of issues. As part of the project we are going to have a consultancy which will work with outside commercial employers to explain to them how they too can work inside prisons or with probation and in the community working with ex-offenders, and we will work with the statutory agencies to encourage that to happen.

Q168 Chairman: Certainly in the visits to the four prisons we have been to I gained the distinct impression that what was needed on the staff side was a senior manager who was an entrepreneur who could go out and get interesting contracts and be given the lead to run businesses and employ people. I very much like the vision and I am sure other members of the Committee like the vision that you are giving us. Does it work in other countries? Is there international good practice that we could point to say they do it so why not us?
Ms Crook: Germany, France and Scandinavia. Yes, it is quite common. Do not go to America; we do not want to see chain gangs.
Chairman: We were not thinking of visiting the United States to look at their penal system!

Q169 Mr Gibb: Can I pick up on a point that you made at the beginning about the number of GCSEs achieved. Was that figure of 189 for the whole of the prison system?
Ms Crook: It is for the 2,500 children in Prison Service custody.

Q170 Mr Gibb: 2,500 in prison.
Ms Crook: 2,500 in Prison Service custody, juveniles, 15, 16, 17-year-olds.

Q171 Mr Gibb: Do you have a similar figure for prisons as a whole?
Ms Crook: For adults?

Q172 Mr Gibb: Yes.
Ms Crook: I do not but I would suggest a Parliamentary Question might be quite usefully tabled.
Mr Gibb: I agree with that.

Q173 Chairman: Can I ask whether Mr Newman thinks that is an unfair criticism?
Mr Newman: I am not sure whether it was levelled as a criticism or a compliment.
Ms Crook: A criticism.
Mr Newman: Can I just put that into context here. If you add that to the level two qualifications that were gained, which are equivalent to GCSEs, you will come up with a figure of 773, which I think is quite creditable.

Q174 Mr Gibb: Out of 2,500 offenders?
Mr Newman: Yes and if you take into account that the average length of stay in custody for a juvenile offender is four and a half months there are not many youngsters in the mainstream who could obtain a GCSE pass in four and a half months.

Q175 Mr Gibb: What is your response to that? I sound like John Humphrys!
Ms Crook: I recognise that many children have severe learning difficulties and deficits, however some of the children who go into prison are half-way through doing GCSEs courses and all that is lost. As soon as they go into custody they lose the contact with the school, they lose the possibility of taking their GCSEs, and we have had cases of children who then have been lost completely and dropped out of school because of the custody interruption. Prisons simply cannot provide a GCSE curriculum. They are pretty narrowly focused. There are no prisons that for example offer science GCSEs, there are not prisons that offer languages at GCSE level. It is focused almost entirely on basic skills—reading, writing and arithmetic.

Q176 Valerie Davey: We share your vision and we are going to Norway fairly soon to see, we hope, some more valuable provision. The reality at the moment is that when we talked to prisoners recently their main concern was that they get less money for going to an education course than they do for doing training. I would like your immediate reaction to that. Is that a good system? In the reality of where we are, would it help your vision to make it equal?
Ms Crook: I do not think people should be penalised for choosing education and I think it would cost hardly anything in the system as it is at the moment to pay the same for working on a servery as for somebody who goes into full-time education (for adults obviously we are talking about); it is a tiny

amount of money. However, in the long run, as I said, in the vision I would rather see that education being done in evening classes and at weekends, and that we had a very wide range of evening classes and weekend classes available for adult prisoners but as a supplement to a busy working environment.

Q177 Valerie Davey: The other change in Bristol Prison, and I guess elsewhere, is that instead of prisoners having a discrete medical service they are linked up with the local doctors. Presumably the parallel is the local colleges, which we have also been encouraging. Is this part of your vision too? Although they may have to have some additional training before they come into prison for various reasons, it is part of the mainstream local education provision that prisoners are experiencing?
Ms Crook: It used to be like that. When it was contracted out what you got was big providers who provide education right across the system in huge contracts so that local prisons have very little say in the teachers they get and the provision that is given to them, the classes that are given. I think that is very unfortunate. I support your vision and would much prefer to see local links. I think that might help with one of the issues that was raised by the YJB about absenteeism by staff. I think local links are very much more important in education.

Q178 Chairman: What was the point about absenteeism that was made earlier?
Mr Newman: There are high levels of absenteeism in some establishments, largely I think because of the dependence on sessional staff.

Q179 Chairman: So really you were criticising and, Frances, you are now also criticising this whole system of contracting out and short-term contracts?
Ms Crook: Certainly central contracting out, where the individual establishments have no say and no control, is causing enormous problems across the whole prison estate.

Q180 Chairman: You would agree with that, Robert?
Mr Newman: Yes.

Q181 Jonathan Shaw: Staying on that, we have received that sort of criticism about the central contract across the board in terms of our visits and people are very open about their criticism of staff, which is a good thing but very worrying. In discussions that you have with the Home Office, Frances, is there any indication that there might be some new thinking, given that there is such whole-scale criticism across the board, to have more local contracting which may prove to be more flexible and beneficial to the prisoners?
Ms Crook: My experience of discussing things with the Home Office, particularly at the political level, is that it is completely impervious to criticism, however well founded.

Q182 Mr Pollard: Could you be more explicit?
Ms Crook: I think you have got my meaning.
Valerie Davey: Very subtly said!

Q183 Jonathan Shaw: Perhaps you could put a bit more flesh on the bones about your real work enterprise. It is a printing firm and they are going to have the same conditions as someone outside. They are going to have to support their families, they are going to have to save, they are going to have to donate to Victim Support if they wish, contribute to prison upkeep, and they are going to pay tax and insurance, so they are going to be earning above the minimum wage, aren't they? I do not know what is going to be left after all that. Give us a bit more of the detail. We have seen Transco in operation, spoken to youngsters, spoken to Transco. Tell us a little more about your enterprise.
Ms Crook: The way the law is at the moment it would be unlawful for a prisoner to contribute to their bed and board whilst they are in prison, but we would like, as a matter of principle, that they contribute something towards enhancing the prison experience in some way, something extra. It might be, for example, they would make a contribution to a visitors' centre (which are often run by charities) so it helps the families who visit the general prison. We may only be talking about small sums of money but I think small sums of money can sometimes be very symbolic, particularly as you talk about public confidence in this sort of thing, to feel that a prisoner is making amends for the wrong they have done, and contributing positively, even if it is only a small amount of money, to Victim Support or family involvement in the prison, is very important. I think perhaps the most important element of it is that it is a real work experience. They will have to apply for a job. They will have to spend a full working day there. We will keep them over lunchtime so they are not locked up for two hours at lunchtime. They will have promotional and training opportunities. They will be paid a real wage but it will obviously not go into cash in hand, it will be managed in bank accounts for them. They will get money at the end which they will have saved to help them on release so that people after a few years of working in the prison will have a sum of money and they will be given help and support on how to invest that in business or tide them over to some extent. At the moment the work that we have done to look at prison industries, which we published a couple of years ago, was probably one of the most depressing pieces of work the Howard League for Penal Reform has ever done. Prison industries are chaotic, there are very few of them, there are fewer than 10,000 people involved in prison industries.

Q184 Mr Pollard: It is very low tech as well.
Ms Crook: Very low tech. It is menial work. Somebody has to do menial work. I do not mind that there is menial work in it as long as it is properly paid. If that work is not the most exciting then it should at least be properly paid and properly respected, and you will get social interaction and all the other benefits that we all get from work. At the

moment in prisons that is simply not the case. It is low paid, low skilled, low respect and reinforces the view, as I say, that crime is much more exciting and pays better.

Q185 Chairman: In terms of the way in which prisons are organised what would you do? I felt you put your finger on something. We understand that prison officers have had a reduced amount of training, which has been cut back before they become fully-fledged prison officers. Is that true?
Ms Crook: I think it is true and I think it is very unfortunate. I think at the heart of it is partly a confusion still about what prisons are for and when people are employed in the Prison Service as prison officers, are they there as warders, are they there as custodians, are they there as social care officers or educationalists? They are expected to do a lot of things now. Prison staff are expected to provide all sorts of psychological support for people and even deliver programmes and yet many of them have very little educational attainment themselves. I think we ought to move towards a system where prison officers are given much more support for time off for education, so that training is given a priority, which at the moment it often is not. Training programmes are put on and then they are cancelled for security reasons or due to staff absences. The key to everything in prisons is the staff. If they are committed to it and think it is worthwhile and it enhances their working life, then it will happen and they must be engaged in it constructively.

Q186 Chairman: We saw one particular prison on the Isle of Wight where there was a very interesting printing operation where they were taking outside contracts. There seemed to be a high level of motivation, high-quality training and high-quality leadership, so within the prison system quite a lot can be achieved with the right management and the right leadership?
Ms Crook: Yes, in individual prisons that is the case. The trouble is that I think sometimes centrally that has not been the case and institutions will go up and down. If you go back in four years' time to the prison you went to you will see what it is like when that particular governor has moved on somewhere else, because it is not just the churn of prisoners, it is the churn of senior managers that is the problem, too.

Q187 Chairman: What are the steps to achieving your vision, radically changing the culture and radically changing the nature? What are the steps that you would take? Many of us hoped when there was a new administration in 1997 that there would be a totally different attitude to what prisons are and how they are organised. There does not seem to have been a change at all, does there?
Ms Crook: I think a change of attitude has to come from the top and it has to be political leadership. What I would like to see is political leadership saying people who have done something wrong must make amends for the wrong they have done and they should be helped to change their lives, and the most effective way of doing that is to maintain them in their communities as far as possible. If somebody has committed a serious and violent offence and has to go into custody for public safety then they should be doing something useful in that environment which, again, allows them to make amends for the wrong they have done. They should lead a busy, useful and constructive life in custody. That is the balance which I think the public would engage with. They do not want to see people getting what they think as benefits from having committed a crime. On the other hand, all of us would agree we want to see a safer society where there are fewer victims of crime, and the best way to achieve that is to have a new system of criminal justice which is based on restoring the damage which has been done by crime and changing people's lives by getting them to make amends for the wrong they have done, and that can be done through education, through training and through work.

Q188 Chairman: Why do you think there is such a lack of political leadership and even in terms of the press, usually this Committee, when we look at early years or universities or almost everything else, has radio, television and the press here. Since we started prison education there has been no radio, no television, I do not think there is one member of the press here. If there is, indicate please. No. I have never known that. It is astonishing, is it not, not the tabloids, not the heavyweight press, no-one. It seems as though we are in some sort of ghetto that no-one is interested in. Why do you think that is?
Ms Crook: People are interested when something goes seriously wrong, when there is a death or a riot, but you do not hear ministers talking about the sort of thing you are talking about. It is not a high political priority. We do not hear ministers giving strong leadership or the Home Secretary giving strong leadership talking about the place of prison in society and the place of community based penalties which can allow people to make amends for the wrong they have done in a constructive way. It is never talked about and unless you have strong political and moral leadership given on these issues no-one else will follow.
Chairman: The Secretary of State for Education and Skills has said that he is very interested in prison education and very interested in the inquiry that we have mounted and is watching with great interest. I suppose we have to be relatively fair because he has actually said that in the House on a number of occasions so perhaps we can hope for some change there. I would like to move on now. Other members of the Committee, any more questions? Paul?

Q189 Paul Holmes: Picking up the one that you mentioned earlier, the Isle of Wight example of the print works compared with the more realistic working and paying tax example that you are experimenting with. One of the things that the prison officers we talked to in various prisons commented on most often was the problem with any education or training course that they did run was having enough prison officers to make sure that the prisoners got there on time for classes or at all

because quite often a shortage of prison staff or other priorities within the Prison Service meant from day-to-day you never knew whether the people you were teaching or training were going to turn up and that interfered enormously with any attempts at education and training. How far would that sort of thing impinge? If you are trying to get prisoners doing a proper job while they are in prison, how far is that going to be practical within a prison situation?
Ms Crook: Some training prisons have something called "free flow" which is what the Mount has so that people are unlocked and it is up to them to get to where they are meant to go and everybody goes across the prison to where they are meant to be. The prisoners themselves are responsible for getting themselves after breakfast to their workplace. We are hoping that that will allow us to get the right people to the right time at the right place.

Q190 Paul Holmes: It seemed sometimes talking to the prisoners and to the tutors from colleges or the prison officers who were doing the training, that access to education, certainly to the better schemes, was a privilege and quite a number of prisoners did not get access partly because of their behaviour in the institution. Also a lot of people did not want to take part so it bypassed them. How far would the sort of training scheme you are talking about be the tip of the iceberg? It would be a wonderful example but would it really touch the bulk of the prison population?
Ms Crook: I do not think education should ever be seen as a privilege; education is always a right and should be encouraged. One of the reasons why sometimes people do not want to go to education is in the adult system it can be very dull, it can be very chalk and talk and classroom based. I know that when I was teaching challenging children, I took them out all the time. I took a whole group of children to the museum in Liverpool none of whom had ever been to a museum. They were terribly excited about going there because they thought it had a café because they knew about cafés, cafés were treats, but they did not know what a museum was. Unfortunately, education in a custodial setting is almost invariably sitting down and talking with very poor resources a lot of the time, particularly in the adult system. As far as the employment scheme goes, I think it is possible that it will be part of an incentive, although anyone in the prison as far as we are concerned will be able to apply as we will be selecting the best candidates, exactly as you would as an employer outside. We will be looking for good candidates to do this work and we will be selecting them, not the prison.

Q191 Jonathan Shaw: Just a bit about employers. You said that you would like to see more identification of areas of skills shortage within local areas to prisons and partnerships developed. That is what my brief says. You are looking a bit puzzled.
Ms Crook: I probably said that. I wish I had!

Q192 Jonathan Shaw: I am sure you did. What opportunities are there for prisons to engage with local employers to identify local skills shortages? We know about Transco. It is almost like do not mention Transco because there has got to be something else.
Ms Crook: Not necessarily.

Q193 Jonathan Shaw: Is that why we always mention it?
Ms Crook: Yes, quite simply. There are a few training prisons. Those are prisons that hold the longer term prisoners, and which have developed good relationships with employers, places like Swayleside for example in Kent. There are of course the open prisons like Blantyre House or Leyhill which have a large number of prisoners who go out to work in the local community but to have a local prison engaging with a local community in that way is very rare.

Q194 Chairman: Did the Victorians not have more of an attitude towards work? If I remember rightly there was a whole network of prison farms on which people worked. Do they still exist? They certainly existed until fairly recently because I helped in a campaign to save a rare breed of horse, the Suffolk Punch, and the only place the Suffolk Punch still existed in this country was in a prison in Suffolk and it was the prison farm wanting to be sold off that led to a crisis. Prison farms have all now gone, have they?
Ms Crook: There are very few. Again I think that is unfortunate because working with the land and animals can be a transforming experience and it is a useful thing; we need food, we need animals, it is generally a good thing to do but they are being closed down and sold off.

Q195 Chairman: Why?
Ms Crook: Because they have been so badly managed.

Q196 Chairman: That does not auger well for the Prison Service getting more involved in ventures, does it?
Ms Crook: That is why the voluntary sector is going to show them how to do it!

Q197 Chairman: I can see the voluntary sector playing a very important role here but is there not an institutional aspect? You say you want a new direction of leadership from the very top and that the Prime Ministers should get interested in prisons and Home Secretaries should take a different view, we can see that, but in terms of the management structure, is there a quality of management that we need to recruit into the Prison Service to raise that aspiration and give it the expertise? I mentioned entrepreneurs; is there an enterprise manager that is lacking in the prison establishment? It is interesting, when we looked at the number of prisons it is round about the same number as the number of universities. I sometimes think that we need an

entrepreneur on every university campus. Perhaps we also need an entrepreneur on every prison campus, if you can call a prison a campus.
Ms Crook: Coming back to the conversation you had earlier, what we need is to give a higher priority to entrepreneurialism as well as education that is within a custodial setting. I would say that there are some extremely good and entrepreneurial governors around at the moment. I think that the dead hand of some of—I will be very careful here—the industrial guidance is perhaps not as exciting as it could be that is coming from the centre.

Q198 Chairman: That comes from the Home Office.
Ms Crook: Home Office and Prison Service, yes.

Q199 Chairman: You looked very nervous when you said "dead hand". Why were you nervous?
Ms Crook: I am not sure I want to point the finger too closely at certain individuals or people. I think it is an historical problem. Prison industries have always been relegated to a minor role within the prisons.

Q200 Chairman: It is a systemic problem.
Ms Crook: It is a systemic problem. It is not a problem of individuals. I was trying to find a way of saying that.
Jonathan Shaw: I wonder whether there should be a recommendation that each prison campus has a director of business and enterprise.
Chairman: We can see a recommendation coming along.
Jonathan Shaw: Alongside the learning and skills.
Mr Pollard: You talked about getting contracts to do work, and the only experience I have had is Remploy, there is a similar sort of set-up there, and they have real difficulty getting good quality work that is not just stuffing things in envelopes or pulling a thing down. How do we get over that? I think an employer might look upon it as cheap, readily available labour that will do anything they want, that will jump through hoops. There is neither dignity nor security. Secondly, we have no press here today and I just wonder if I could share a headline with you and ask you which you would prefer: "Crook Savages Blunkett" or "Crook Hammers Blunkett"? Which would you prefer? I will do either one for you!

Q201 Chairman: Frances, do not be tempted down that road!
Ms Crook: I think the point you are making about the problem of getting contracts and cheap labour is very important and at the heart of what we are trying to get over. In the past and currently that is exactly the problem that prisons have had—providing cheap, inferior, unsupervised labour which has turned out poor-quality work late. That is the relationship there has been with the private sector and with the voluntary sector which has tried to do work there as well. We want to change that. I think it is possible and you have perhaps seen it is possible in other countries. To have real work, rewarded in real terms, engaged in the real world so that when people come out of prison they are going to expect to get a decent wage for a good day's work. They will have built up tax credits, national insurance credits and pension credits which they will want to maintain. They will know how to register with a doctor, which they probably have not done before either. They will be engaged in the world in a way that all of us are. It is no good looking to one thing to reduce the chances of reoffending. You cannot just say education will do it or the Health Service will do it or drug rehab will do it. It has to be a complete whole which allows people to take their place in society as responsible citizens who do not commit further crimes.

Q202 Chairman: Step onto the treadmill within the Prison Service rather than hope that they might do it outside. Any more questions from the Committee? Frances, this is the first prison education inquiry ever held by this Committee. We want to do it pretty thoroughly and make some serious recommendations. Is there anything that has not emerged today under questioning that you would like to say to the Committee?
Ms Crook: I do not think so. I think perhaps the only thing to say is that prisoners are people too and they should be enabled to contribute to society whilst they are in prison and when they are released, and at the moment that is not happening, and I think if you can find some way of helping towards that it would be a great achievement.

Q203 Chairman: Thank you. Of course, I hope you will remain in touch with the Committee. If you think there is any information and material that we should receive that would help us please let us know. I hope we have got your inquiry into prison working schemes. If you could also suggest anywhere we might visit. We cannot make that many visits but if you could give us a list of your priorities. Where is the Mount?
Ms Crook: Near Hemel Hempstead, not far.

Q204 Mr Pollard: It is my part of the world, Chairman, it is a very good prison.
Ms Crook: As prisons go!
Mr Pollard: Relatively speaking.

Q205 Chairman: Robert, would you do the same?
Mr Newman: I am very happy to do so, yes.

Q206 Chairman: Have you any reflections or comments you want to make to the Committee? No. You have been a very good pair of witnesses. Thank you very much for staying with us.
Ms Crook: Thank you very much for inviting me.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by the Youth Justice Board

Literacy and Numeracy

1. Low Attainment and Young People at Risk of Offending and Re-offending

1.1 *Educational Risk Factors*

There are four main areas where there appear to be significant links between education and offending by young people:

- detachment from mainstream education;
- the impact of custodial sentences and care episodes;
- the efficacy of school organisation; and
- educational under-achievement, particularly with respect to literacy and numeracy.

It is likely that these four aspects have complex and negative inter-relationships. It is highly likely, for instance, that the barrier to learning represented by low levels of basic educational attainment is a significant factor in pushing young people out of formal learning. Once outside mainstream education a young person's attainment will tend to fall even further behind. Despite the interplay between these areas, there is evidence to support the argument that each of them represents an independent risk factor for youth offending.

1.2 *Low attainment*

In 2001 the YJB commissioned a strategic audit of custodial education and training and a review of the pre- and post-custodial educational experiences of young people on Detention and Training Orders (DTOs)[1]. The Review revealed low attainment levels in a significant proportion of the population on entry to a Young Offender Institution, specifically:

- One in 10 was functionally below the level expected of the average 7-year-old in literacy, and a slightly higher number in numeracy.
- One fifth were functioning at or below the level expected nationally of the average 7-year-old in literacy and nearly one third in numeracy.
- Over half of the sample (51% for literacy and 52% for numeracy) were not functioning at the level expected of the average 11-year-old

A recent survey of young people on Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes (ISSP)[2] found that the average reading age was 10.8 years which is $5\frac{1}{2}$ years below the average actual age of this group.

Knowledge of the attainment levels of children and young people who have just entered the Youth Justice System, however, is much more sketchy, although analysis of Asset[3] data across the whole of the wider population of young people who offend (Oxford University, 2002)[4] demonstrates that:

- one in two Yot clients is under-achieving in school;
- one in three needs help with reading and writing;
- one in five has special educational needs.

However, the relationship between low attainment in literacy and numeracy and offending behaviour is unclear, although likely associated links are shown in the diagram below:

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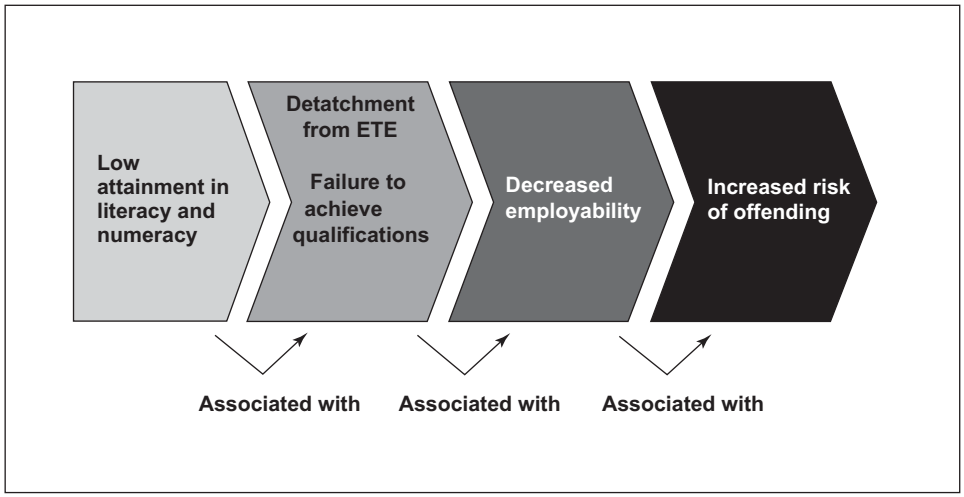
[1] Youth Justice Board. (2001) An Audit of Education and Training Provision Within the Youth Justice System. London: Youth Justice Board.

[2] Youth Justice Board (2004) *ISSP Interim Evaluation*. London: Youth Justice Board.

[3] Asset is the Youth Justice Board's statutory tool for assessing risk and protective factors in relation to offending behaviour with individual young people.

[4] Oxford University (2002) *Validity and Reliability of Asset: Findings from the First Two Years of the Use of Asset*. London: Youth Justice Board.

Fig 1: Low attainment: association with increased risk of offending



(Stephenson, 2004[5])

The link with "employability" is an important one, in particular the development of the essential skills required for long-term "employability" and lifelong learning, fundamental to which is the development of sound literacy and numeracy skills.

The evidence indicates that attainment in literacy and numeracy may be inversely related to the length and/or gravity of a young person's offending career. The reasons for this are hard to establish, although the following summarise the most likely causes:

- these young people's lives are characterised by instability;
- young people at risk of offending spend too much time out of school or other learning environments;
- young people do not have sufficient help with their education if they get behind;
- primary carers are not expected, or equipped, to provide sufficient support and encouragement for learning and development;
- young people have unmet emotional, mental or physical health needs that impact on their education;
- young people have specific learning difficulties that have either not been properly assessed or are not being adequately met by mainstream services.

1.3 *Detachment*

It appears that the older a young person is, the more likely s/he is to have detached completely from mainstream learning. Given that the majority of young people sentenced to DTOs are 15 and over, it is not surprising that the majority of these young people are likely to have received little or no education or training for some time prior to their admission to custody. The Review of the Pre and Post Custodial Educational Experiences of Young People on DTOs[6] revealed that between one-quarter and one-third had no education, training or employment provision arranged immediately prior to their entry into custody.

The recent evaluation of Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes[7] (ISSP) revealed that only about one-fifth of the cohort were in mainstream education. Over half of the young people on ISSP who were above statutory school leaving age were unemployed. Only 13% of this group were in full time/part time or temporary employment and 29% were attending some form of training or educational course.

Interim findings from research into re-connecting young people with education, training and employment[8] reveals that there are still large numbers of young people partially or fully detached. The initial analysis of the census survey revealed that only 53% of those young people known to Yots under school-leaving age were in mainstream full time education, whilst 7% had nothing arranged at all (which represents over 1,800 young people). For those post school-leaving age, 32% were unemployed, (not participating in any education, training and employment at all) which is strikingly higher than the national NEET (not in education, employment or training) figure for 16–18 year olds at the end of 2002 of 10%.

[5] Cited in YJB (2004) Reader: Education, Training and Employment (Community). London: Youth Justice Board.

[6] Youth Justice Board, 2001.

[7] Youth Justice Board (2004) *ISSP Interim Evaluation.* London: Youth Justice Board.

[8] Youth Justice Board (2004) *Research and Evaluation to determine the most effective means of ensuring that young people are in education, training or employment: Interim Report.* London: Youth Justice Board (Unpublished).

1.4 *School disorganisation*

Schools have a substantial effect on the academic progress of their pupils and on attendance (Rutter, Giller and Hagell, 1998)[9]. However, examination of the influence of schools has concentrated on their effects on pupils' academic achievement and attendance rather than positively engaging young people to address their disruptive behaviour, exclusion or offending.

In relation to mainstream community provision, Youth Offending Teams are often frustrated in their attempts to broker access to appropriate provision either through lack of availability or through the unwillingness of schools and colleges in particular to take on challenging young people with low attainment levels when they are striving to achieve government targets related to national tests and qualifications. In a recent Audit Commission review of the reformed youth justice system[10], only one third of Yots said that they had good access to educational services.

In reality, where provision is provided, many young people who are at risk of offending or re-offending are often placed into Pupil Referral Units and other segregated provision, often only part-time. While behaviour maybe modified in a segregated setting, it is the transfer to mainstream settings such as school, college or work that is the real challenge. A reintegration model that groups together young people on the basis of their anti-social behaviour and encourages them to form a group—in an environment that is very different from mainstream school—would appear to have a limited chance of success in terms of equipping them for a return to mainstream school. Even positive behaviour, when it is learned in "abnormal" environments, will not easily survive the challenge of transferring to a school, college or workplace without additional resources such as mentors to support young people[11].

1.5 *Custody*

There are grounds for suspecting that the criminal justice system itself exacerbates the problems of detachment by lowering attainment and increasing risk factors for further offending. This is exemplified by the impact of custody. The criminal justice system, in its interaction with the education system, appears to detach young people from mainstream schooling, partly as a punitive reaction to offending. Legislation permits Head Teachers to remove a young person from the school roll when they receive a custodial sentence (The Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 1997). In addition, schools may assume that the educational problems of young people who are subject to custodial episodes belong to Yots and the secure establishment, rather than to them. The Audit Commission Review recommends that schools retain responsibility for the education of young people remanded or given custodial sentences and that funding should follow the young person and only return to the school when the young person does. It further recommends that a Connexions Service personal adviser should be responsible for facilitating the link between a young person's school and the custodial establishment.[12]

The review of the pre- and post-custodial education and training experiences of these young people[13] found that, while for some young people there was an increase in the volume of education that they received in custody, there were some extremely negative consequences. While between one-quarter and one-third had no education, training or employment provision arranged immediately prior to their entry into custody, this figure had risen to nearly 60% by the time of their release into the community, on average only three months later. There was a significant increase in part-time educational provision and where young people did continue in education there was a 70% discontinuity in the learning opportunities they encountered compared to those undertaken in custody.

Whilst the YJB has through its commissioning relationship with the Prison Service invested significantly in improving both the quality and quantity of education available to juveniles in YOI's with considerable success, a recent review[14] showed that progress continues to be hampered by:

- — population churn resulting from the transfer of young people between establishments. A young person serving a DTO in a YOI stands a 29% chance of being moved mid-sentence;
- — staffing issues—recruitment and retention of appropriately skilled and qualified staff remains a problem both in terms of delivering effective learning programmes (particularly in vocational areas and enrichment), and in ensuring punctuality and attendance (establishments site disruptions to movement due to staff shortage as a significant factor in relation to attendance and punctuality);
- — continued difficulties in ensuring the timely transfer of educational information and records of progress between custody and the community;
- — the lack of availability of suitable, full time placements for young people returning from custody.

[9] Rutter, Giller and Hegel (1998) *Antisocial Behavior By Young People.* Cambridge University Press.

[10] Audit Commission (2004) *Youth Justice 2004: A Review of the Reformed Youth Justice System.* London: Audit Commission.

[11] Stephenson, M (2000) "Inclusive Learning" in B Lucas and T Greany (eds) *Schools in the Learning Age.* London: Campaign for Learning.

[12] Audit commission (2004).

[13] Youth Justice Board (2001).

[14] Youth Justice Board (2004) Progress Report on the Implementation of the YJB's National Specification for Learning and Skills in the Juvenile Prison Estate 2003–04. London: Youth Justice Board.

2. The Youth Justice Board's Response

In recognition of the importance of learning and skills provision in assisting with the Youth Justice Board's primary aim of preventing offending, a strategic approach towards young people's access, participation and progression in education, training and employment has been adopted.

The following extract from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales Corporate Plan 2003–04 to 2005–06 outlines the strategy.

> *"Ensuring young people are in full-time education, training or employment is the single most important factor in reducing the risk of offending. The Youth Justice Board will, therefore, continue to prioritise the engagement of young people in education and training. We aim to improve access to education, training or employment in the community and for those young people making the transition from custody to the community on Detention and Training Orders . . .".*

2.1 *Targets and Performance Indicators*

The Youth Justice Board has set out in its 2005–06 Corporate Plan that during 2004–05, 90% of young people will receive 30 hours a week of education, training and personal development activity compliant with the National Specification for Learning and Skills. For young people in YOIs, the target is for 25 hours a week by the end of 2005. Other targets and performance indicators set by the Youth Justice Board relating to education, training and employment include:

- to ensure that 90% of young offenders supervised by Yots are in suitable full-time education, training or employment;
- all young people entering secure facilities will be tested for literacy and numeracy, with 80% of young people on DTOs of six months or more improving by one skill level or more in literacy and/or numeracy to the level of need set out in their Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

2.2 *Investment in Custodial Education and Training*

In relation to young people on Detention and Training Orders the Youth Justice Board has produced a detailed National Specification for Learning and Skills (Youth Justice Board, 2002) which is now part of the Service Level Agreement between the Youth Justice Board and the Prison Service. The vision of the secure learning centre has been an important element in driving forward a culture change within secure establishments aimed at positioning learning as the central purpose to which all other functions contribute.

The implementation of the National Specification has been accompanied by a significant increase in resources for education and training. Over the last three years the YJB has trebled the per capita spend on education for juveniles in Prisons and invested £13 million in new classrooms and workshops. It pioneered the introduction of Heads of Learning and Skills, whose role it is to co-ordinate activities to ensure coherence and quality both across the whole of the regime and with opportunities in the local community. The Board has also funded a raft of other new posts: 250 Learning Support Assistants, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators and Literacy and Numeracy Co-ordinators. The reforms have had a positive impact on both the volume and quality of education now being delivered to juveniles in custody and is reflected in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons reports and in Progress Reports prepared by the YJB.

As identified earlier, however, there is still some distance to travel before the National Specification is fully implemented in all establishments.

2.3 *The Effective Practice Strategy*

In order to achieve its objectives the Youth Justice Board has adopted an evidence-based approach to practice through its Effective Practice Strategy designed to enable managers and practitioners to apply the lessons derived the evolving body of research to their everyday practice.

There is a specific focus within the strategy on education, training and employment. In addition, the strategy emphasises the importance of learning generally in relation to all areas of effective practice, in particular the development of new skills such as literacy and numeracy as an essential part of helping young people to learn to behave differently and to have greater opportunity for positive engagement in their communities.

2.4 *The PLUS Strategy*

In recognition of the low level of attainment in relation to literacy and numeracy amongst young people who offend, and its importance as a risk factor in their offending the Youth Justice Board has also devised and introduced the PLUS strategy. PLUS is funded jointly by the Youth Justice Board, the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU), and Arts Council England (ACE), who comprise its main strategic stakeholders along with the DfES Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit. Significantly, many local PLUS

development partnership areas have found or are seeking funding through, for example the Learning and Skills Council, to drive the implementation of PLUS. This is vital for the long term sustainability of PLUS at local level and the process of mainstreaming it.

The PLUS Strategy is designed to address some of the weaknesses in literacy and numeracy provision that exist for adolescent learners who have not achieved in line with their peers, in particular the paucity of age and attainment level appropriate learning materials and the lack of appropriately knowledgeable and skilled staff to initiate and sustain long-term learning gains for this group.

The overall aim of the PLUS Strategy is:

> *to raise significantly the literacy and numeracy levels of children and young people in order to prevent crime.*

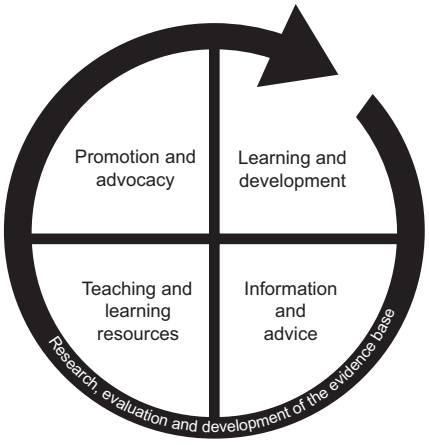
The Government's strategy on children at risk and for correctional services provides the social policy context for the PLUS Strategy. PLUS provides the means for helping young people return to mainstream learning and become functionally literate and numerate. It also aims to equip universal services to prevent this happening in the first place.

The objectives of PLUS are to:

- equip all educational and other practitioners working in the Youth Justice System, and others working with children and young people at risk, with the skills, knowledge and learning resources to promote literacy and numeracy skills acquisition;
- enable educationalists to fulfil their duty of preventing offending by enhancing their skills, knowledge and resources in teaching literacy and numeracy to children and young people at risk of (re-) offending;
- mobilise community involvement in raising literacy and numeracy levels of children and young people at risk of (re-) offending;
- promote reading amongst children and young people at risk of (re-) offending;
- establish how significant and widespread low literacy and numeracy levels are amongst young people at risk of (re-) offending and how the problem may be remedied.

There are five strands that comprise the PLUS Strategy.

Fig 2: PLUS strategy overview



- *Resources:* High quality paper and ICT based resources that are accessible and engaging for learners and relevant for teaching staff. Enrichment materials for use by any practitioner in the Youth Justice System.
- *Learning and Development:* Training/staff development programmes to support all relevant staff in the implementation of the PLUS Strategy.
- *Information and Advice:* Assisting managers to plan and review the effectiveness of their implementation of PLUS within secure and community settings throughout the DTO, in ISSP and preventative programmes.
- *Research and Evaluation:* Development of the evidence base through continuous assessment of the effectiveness of teaching and learning resources, interventions and learning and development programmes.
- *Promotion and Advocacy:* Encouraging a clearer understanding of issues related to basic skills, re-offending, participation and progression.

The initial priorities are young people on Detention and Training Orders and Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes. PLUS is also a vital component of preventative strategies for young people at risk and one of its objectives is to enable practitioners to identify children and young people who have low attainment levels in literacy and numeracy at much earlier stages, including before offending behaviour has commenced.

2.5 *Implementing PLUS in the Juvenile Secure Estate*

The National Specification for Learning and Skills requires establishments to deliver the PLUS Strategy through a range of contexts: daily literacy and numeracy sessions, through one-to-one support provided by Learning Support Assistants or volunteer mentors and through learning embedded into other curriculum areas, including vocational training. The PLUS Strategy has provided learning materials and staff training to enhance the capacity of staff to do this.

Young people in custody should also be provided with the opportunities to extend their learning through enrichment activities that will also focus on linking back to the community and extending learning there. These activities are broadly educational as well as supporting the objectives of the Adult Core Curricula and give young people the chance to apply and practise the skills they have learned in diverse settings and with a range of different people. The PLUS Strategy has developed a series of materials for enrichment projects on arts and environmental themes such as drama, building a pond and making digital music.

A range of staff including tutors, vocational training instructors, Physical Education officers and wing officers have undergone accredited training in order to support learners and/or work in the classroom when off duty. In some cases, identified staff work in the education block daily. Some YOI's for example have plans to put a group of officers through the YJBs accredited Professional Certificate in Effective Practice (Learning Support) which focuses on providing effective support in relation to literacy and numeracy, particularly for young people below Level 1. This programme has also been provided for Learning Support Assistants in all Young Offender Institutions.

Training and support for instructors to deliver accreditation through vocational training workshops, and to support these skills with underpinning key skills such as communication, numeracy and teamwork, is further encouraged by peer partnership schemes through which prison staff as well as young people can become literacy and numeracy supporters.

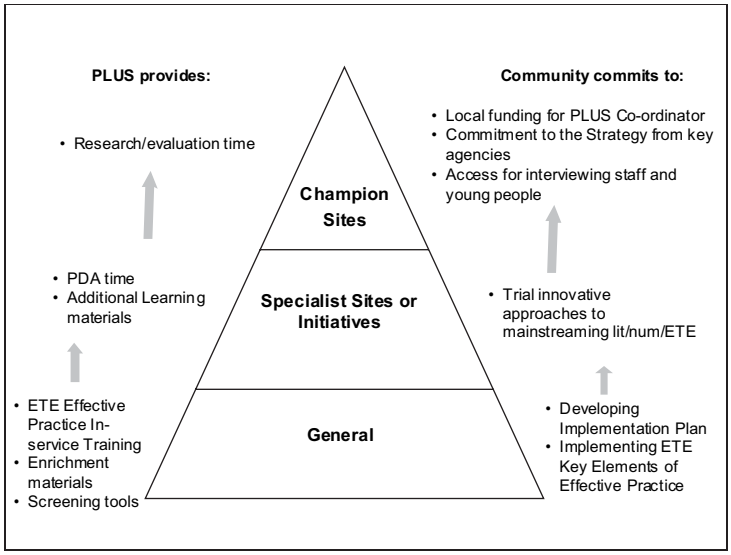
2.6 *Implementing PLUS in the Community*

Improving the quality of literacy and numeracy provision in custody, however, is irrelevant on its own if there is no suitable provision for young people in their communities. In addition, even though the custodial population is important in terms of the severity and persistence of offending behaviour and costs it represents, of the 160,000 cases processed through the youth justice system, 95% are not subject to custodial sentences.

To this end, the community roll-out of the PLUS Strategy is fundamental to ensuring not only that there can be seamless provision both in terms of approach and materials used for young people returning to their communities following custody, but also in terms of preventing the escalation of serious and persistent offending behaviour in the first instance.

A range of work is being done through the PLUS Strategy team to ensure a managed rollout to a range of community providers. A number of specific sites in England and Wales have been identified either through Youth Offending Teams or providers, such as NACRO, which has adopted PLUS as the strategy underpinning its literacy and numeracy programmes, in particular Entry to Employment.

Fig 3 PLUS Community Roll-out



The main drivers for this are PLUS Development Advisers working at regional level and PLUS Co-ordinators working at Yot level and funded locally. The role of the PLUS Co-ordinator is vital at a local level in ensuring that the support of all relevant local agencies comply with the PLUS Strategy in order to increase the literacy and numeracy attainment of young people at risk of offending or re-offending. A number of sites have already been identified and PLUS Co-ordinators appointed.

As the PLUS Strategy is adopted by mainstream providers, such as schools, colleges, Training Providers and Pupil Referral Units, the opportunities for much greater consistency in relation to promising approaches should emerge.

However, getting local authorities, Local Learning and Skills Councils and mainstream education and training providers to take the learning needs of young people at risk of offending sufficiently seriously, remains a significant challenge to Youth Offending Services.

The impact of the PLUS Strategy in terms of outcomes for individual learners is currently being evaluated and preliminary results should be available during 2005. In order to illustrate the way in which the PLUS Strategy is influencing work with individual young people, a composite case illustration is included at Appendix A.

2.7 *Dyslexia*

Given the YJB's commitment to evidence based practice in order to ensure that youth justice interventions are effective, there is some reluctance to adopt a singular position on dyslexia, where there are clear differences between practitioners and academics about what consititues effective definition and practice in this field.

In order to develop a tenable position and unequivocal guidance to practitioners, the Youth Justice Board has recently commissioned a review of dyslexia in relation to young people at risk of offending and re-offending. Emerging findings suggest that there is a range of definitions of dyslexia, reflecting different theoretical approaches. Some researchers do not believe that dyslexia is a valid concept. And among those who do regard it as a diagnosable condition, there is no consensus about whether dyslexia is biological in origin; related to experience such as the influences of the home and explicit teaching methods; or a consequence of an interaction between the two.

Research studies specifically relating to those at risk of offending or re-offending have come to widely differing conclusions, some suggesting that there is no evidence that the incidence of dyslexia is over-represented in the prison population, after other relevant variables have been taken into account, while others claim that there is a very high rate of dyslexia among young people who are at risk of offending or re-offending.

The underpinning research base for this is often methodologically weak. Issues include inconsistent definitions of dyslexia, poor research design, questionable sampling techniques including inappropriately selected control/ comparison groups, poorly defined interventions, and over-stated claims made on the basis of unsubstantiated findings.

To compound this, assessments that purport to test for dyslexia reflect the various theoretical positions outlined above and have not always been appropriately validated, often relying on data from small samples and unrepresentative groups, eg. university students, or relying on data purely from screening rather than diagnostic assessment. It is likely, therefore, that many tests conflate dyslexia with poor reading skills, particularly when used with groups who have low attainment levels in literacy generally.

Given the diversity of views on dyslexia, the lack of robust research and the consequent unreliability of existing assessment tools, it is not possible currently to determine what "dyslexia" means in relation to young people who enter the youth justice system. The Youth Justice Board also has a responsibility to ensure that all young people at risk of offending and re-offending have their individual needs met. To this end, resources provided through the PLUS Strategy will help support the progress of all young people experiencing literacy and numeracy difficulties, including those who may have dyslexia. In addition, the Youth Justice Board will continue to appraise new and existing research evidence related to literacy and numeracy difficulties, including dyslexia, experienced by young people. It is vital to be able to assess the credibility of claims and the implications of findings for young people who offend or who are at risk of offending.

In particular the YJB has a keen interest in the study currently being conducted by the British Dyslexia Association, Bradford Youth Offending Team and Wetherby YOI and will be assessing the outcomes against its effective practice criteria.

APPENDIX A

PLUS Composite Case Illustration

CASE STUDY: ALEX

Alex is 16 years old and has just received a DTO for aggravated burglary.

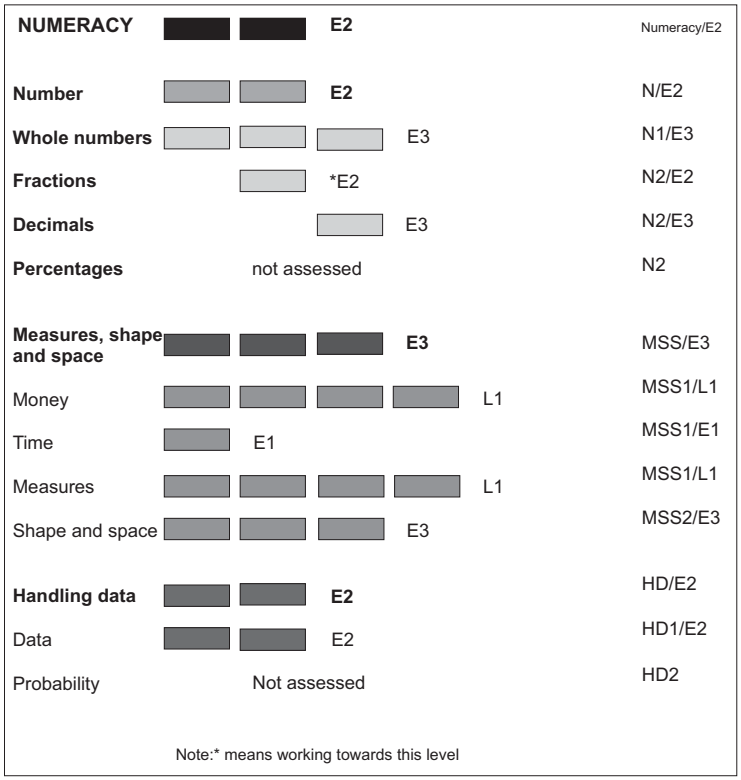
Alex struggled to achieve in line with his peers from an early age, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy. He found the move to secondary school particularly difficult, often turning up with the wrong books and equipment. His mum provided little support at home and rarely turned up for parents' evenings as there are a number of other children in the family younger than Alex and there is no one to look after them. While Alex is offered some additional support by the school, he continues to struggle and objects to being "singled out" as he sees it. He is placed in bottom sets for everything. Alex begins to act out his frustration in lessons and by the time he is in Year 9 he has been temporarily excluded on two separate occasions. Although he shows a particular aptitude for sport, Alex is dropped from the school football team because he has failed to turn up for matches. He refuses to go for additional support with his reading although it is offered as he says the work they do is too babyish.

Alex starts developing friendships with older pupils. These pupils rarely attend school and they associate with a group of young people who have left school and are involved in offending, mostly car-related. During Year 9 Alex is arrested as a passenger in a stolen car. He is placed on a Final Warning. Alex struggles with GCSE's, and quickly falls behind in terms of completing coursework. His attendance becomes even more sporadic and when he is in school his behaviour is increasingly challenging. He is told that his behaviour is such that he is not going to be allowed to go on the geography residential fieldtrip. He pushes the member of staff over and storms off. He is permanently excluded for this.

Alex is referred to a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). He attends for 15 hours a week (the rest of the time he is provided with work to do at home). Alex appears to enjoy life there but does little work. The PRU is 10 miles and two bus rides from his home. Alex's attendance soon starts to drop off.

Alex is arrested for minor thefts and receives an Action Plan Order. By now Alex is well known to the police as part of a local group of young people who are felt to be responsible for much local crime. Alex is now receiving no formal education. At the age of 16 Alex is arrested for aggravated burglary and given an eight-month DTO. He will be beyond statutory school leaving age by the time he leaves custody.

Fig 4: PLUS Assessment literacy and numeracy profiles for Alex



On entry to custody, Alex assessed for Literacy and Numeracy in line with National Standards for Youth Justice using the PLUS Initial Assessment Tool. Overall, the initial assessment reveals that Alex is at Entry 2 in Numeracy and Literacy overall, although the PLUS Initial Assessment reveals "spiky profiles" as shown in Fig 4.

Alex is quite communicative during the initial interview. He says he is interested in getting some qualifications so that he can get a job on release from custody. He is unclear about what kind of job he would like, but expresses an interest in doing something out of doors. He is concerned that having been in custody, this will make getting a job difficult.

As Alex is below Level 1 in both literacy and numeracy, he is assigned a Learning Support Assistant who also attends the first Sentence Planning Meeting to ensure that education and training needs are fully represented in resettlement plans and to find out more about what options are available for Alex on release from custody.

On the basis of all initial assessment information and Alex's likely destination on return to the community, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator with the help of Alex's Learning Support Assistant draws up an Individual Learning Plan with SMART targets relating to the areas of difficulty highlighted in the Initial Assessment.

A learning programme is set up whereby Alex focuses on the goals and targets set in his Individual Learning Plan. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy although all the work is contextualised through themes that he finds interesting. He particularly enjoys the PLUS football modules and the IT based interactive elements of Buying a Scooter. Literacy and numeracy are also embedded within all areas of learning, including Vocational Training and PE where they use parts of the PLUS module on health. Alex achieves Entry 3 qualifications in literacy and numeracy of which he is very proud.

Alex also takes part in an environmental enrichment programme at weekends and in the evenings where he works with a group of young people to build a wildlife pond and bird and bat boxes. Literacy and Numeracy are fully embedded in the programme through the PLUS enrichment materials for Pond Kit and Tree Kit. Alex completes a portfolio of work, including a photographic diary of the process, which is accredited both in terms of its literacy and numeracy outcomes, but also for the wider key skills. His Learning Support Assistant helps him to complete some of the activities and Prison Officers trained in supporting private study and enrichment also help on the residential wings.

Alex's Learning Support Assistant attends all DTO review meetings and makes sure that all those involved in the process are aware of what Alex has achieved and what his aspirations are.

Early on in his sentence, it was agreed that Alex would start an Entry to Employment programme run by a voluntary sector Training Provider in his home area when he is released for the community part of his DTO. Through Release on Temporary License (RoTL), Alex visits the Training Provider for a day with a

Connexions personal adviser where they give him a taster session. A member of staff from the Training Provider also attends Alex's final review at the YOI and phones him regularly. Through RoTL, Alex also goes once a week to a park near the Young Offender Institution where he does some work experience.

On release from custody, Alex takes up his placement on the E2E programme. The Voluntary Sector Training Provider uses the PLUS Strategy to support its literacy and numeracy provision. The Yot Supervising Officer ensures that Alex's Individual Learning Plan transfers to the Training Provider, which includes evidence of what Alex has achieved and his current literacy and numeracy levels. The establishment makes sure that a record of Alex's work also transfers so the Training Provider is clear about which elements of the PLUS learning materials Alex has completed. Alex continues to work with the PLUS materials to improve his literacy and numeracy, in particular through enrichment materials. A work placement is arranged at a local nature reserve.

While Alex finds the challenge of the programme difficult, particularly with the greater level of freedom compared to custody, he achieves Key Skills Level 1 in Communication and Application of Number and gains an IT qualification. His Yot Supervising Officer monitors his attendance and works closely with the Training Provider to ensure that any lapses are picked up quickly.

Alex completes the E2E programme. A year later he is working full time at the nature reserve and is doing an NVQ in land management. He attends college once a week. He has not reoffended.

October 2004

Wednesday 20 October 2004

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr David Chaytor	Paul Holmes
Valerie Davey	Helen Jones
Jeff Ennis	Mr Kerry Pollard
Mr Nick Gibb	Jonathan Shaw

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr Chaytor was called to the chair

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Memorandum submitted by the Shannon Trust

1. There are, at any one time, at least 30,000 prisoners in the system who, for all practical purposes, can't read. The Prison educational system struggles with this problem but is not succeeding for a number of reasons:

   (a) many of these prisoners will not admit their ignorance and are allergic to teachers and classes.

   (b) their attention span is very short—about 20 minutes.

   (c) they require daily individual coaching. Using paid teachers, this would cost too much.

As a result, most of these prisoners leave prison as illiterate as they entered. Such numbers of illiterate criminals must be a serious burden on society.

2. The Shannon Trust has developed a system of overcoming the problem by using literate prisoners as Mentors, teaching up to five mentees a day. The Trust provides each party with a ToebyToe reading manual which is so structured that anyone who can read can teach anyone who can't. It takes on average six months for a prisoner to complete the course—and he can then join in class work. It costs the Trust less than £50 per new reader, the taxpayer nothing.

3. The Trust needs the support of prison staff because everything in prison has to be supervised. It did not really get going until the Prison Officers Association decided to sponsor it in February 2003. Since then, it has spread to over eighty prisons in England and is about to be launched in Scotland and Ireland.

4. It works better in some prisons. Success depends on generating enthusiasm. The Trust's rules— daily, short, one-to-one and ToebyToe—have to be adjusted for each prison's circumstances but it works well wherever there is the will, and in all kinds from high security to open, in women's prisons and YOIs. Experiments are in hand to provide post custodial continuity for prisoners and young offenders who do not complete the course before release.

5. So far, the Trust's plan has produced 350 new readers and is currently teaching over a thousand. This is way short of its aim to reach all 30,000. To do that, the Trust will need far stronger support from the authorities. This is available in Scotland and is hopefully coming in England but some political interest would be of great value. We hope that the Plan will one day become embedded and standard on every wing of every prison so that, wherever a prisoner is sent, he/she can continue ToebyToe.

6. Currently the Trust meets all the costs, relying on grants from Charitable Foundations. Everyone involved works voluntarily and 75% of its funds goes on manuals. We are convinced that the Plan works best when everyone is voluntary, especially within the prisons. However, we recognise that, even at £50 per new reader, 30,000 illiterates will constitute a considerable burden on the charitable sector. If it does become embedded, therefore, we would hope that the Government might pay for the manuals, leaving the Trust to concentrate on the motivation.

7. We hope that the inquiry will find the Plan a place in its report. If it is given the right support, we believe that our system can break the cycle of failure that starts when a child for whatever reason fails to take advantage of school. When he/she realises the error, it is often too late and so they make their way through life as best they can but often criminally. Prison could offer them a chance to redeem themselves but too often it comes in a form they can't accept. For such people, the Shannon Trust is often the only game in town—but it works.

June 2004

Memorandum submitted by the Dialogue Trust

The Dialogue Trust would like to make a short submission to this inquiry, as our work is complementary to education in British prisons. The Trust adds an experiential and developmental strand which can motivate prisoners to start a programme of education and help them complete it. Through our dialogue groups we have extensive feedback from prisoners about education in prisons.

Background

The Dialogue Trust is a charity, registered in 2003. The trustees and committee members include: group analysts, trained facilitators, a local magistrate, a researcher from Cambridge University's Institute of Criminology, a former probation officer, a prison's Independent Monitoring Board member, a former prisoner (in training as a group analyst) and a psychotherapist with 10 years' experience of dialogue groups.

The Dialogue Trust assists the rehabilitation of offenders by convening and facilitating dialogue groups in prisons and in the community. Most prisoners feel alienated and excluded. We deliver an experience of integration which can result in a greater sense of belonging to the wider community and a feeling of being made of the "same stuff" as other people.

Prisoners' confidence can grow as they find ways to express themselves more effectively. Vocabularies, which typically diminish significantly, especially during a long stay in prison, are rebuilt, and the confidence to use them increases. The result is less violent interactions. Participants learn, sometimes for the first time, to listen and speak in a group and to develop ways to engage with others that are respectful and worthwhile.

These developmental gains give prisoners tools to survive outside so that they can take better advantage of opportunities for resettlement on release. They can also feel more motivated to take up training and education.

How do Dialogue Groups Work?

Our dialogue groups meet weekly for two hours, usually with two trained facilitators. The groups include up to 20 prisoners, two or three volunteers and when available staff from the prison hosting the dialogue group.

There is no fixed agenda; attendance is voluntary and group members are encouraged to talk openly about any matter important to them. We aim to create a safe space where understanding can develop between different, and often warring, sections of society so that people can begin to think together.

We also run dialogue groups for ex-offenders in the community to try to counteract some of the stigma and exclusion felt by ex-prisoners and offenders generally. At present the Trust runs dialogue groups at HMP Norwich (Cat B), HMP Whitemoor (Cat A) and with the Huntingdon Probation Service Drug Treatment and Testing Orders programme. We are planning to develop more probation groups over the next year and to start dialogue groups in a London prison.

Benefits Observed to Prisoners

- Development of a larger vocabulary with increased ability to listen and communicate;
- Greater understanding of people outside their peer group and, as a result, a better ability to trust others;
- Increased control over behaviour as alternatives to violence are found;
- Growing capacity to think more clearly about issues;
- Growth in personal esteem: without this growth how can there be any real motivation to contribute to society?

Dialogue groups offer a developmental function for prisoners because:

- Many prisoners have little experience of the benefits of a slower, more thoughtful approach to issues—there is often a tendency to react on impulse;
- The experience of being listened to carefully in the dialogue group is, for many, rare or completely missing;
- Feelings tend to be defended against in order to survive the prison experience, so that working in a more cognitive way may well be experienced as safer to the prisoner;
- The provision of a safe space to open up and explore issues and emotions is of value in the prison environment;

— The involvement of volunteers brings the outside world into the prison helps to normalise the setting, increase the variety of topics, experience and vocabulary and helps prisoners to view themselves as ordinary people;

— The setting offers an opportunity to think together about offending and the effects on the community without individuals being judged;

— Those in the group can learn to respect themselves and others.

Overall there is the potential for group members to discover more mature ways of communicating and to experience a different kind of relationship in the dialogue groups.

Many prisoners have had or experience learning difficulties; the dialogue group is a form of education with which prisoners can engage quickly and with little difficulty.

How the Dialogue Trust Benefits Prisoners Educationally

Our work is skills-based in terms of:

— developing communication and listening skills;

— developing a more thoughtful and less impulse-driven approach to life ;

— modelling and offering mature ways of relating within the dialogue groups;

— peer group recommendation of the benefits of education.

It focuses particularly on the final phrase in this inquiry's terms of reference: preparing prisoners for life in the community. We feel that this kind of experiential learning and development should be incorporated into prison education and rehabilitation. Ideally, these two components, education and rehabilitation, would be provided in a seamless service that is integrated with prisoners' sentence plans.

Our Observations About Prison Education

One of our regular volunteers points out: "We know, from being in dialogue with prisoners, that many of those who attend the dialogue groups are highly intelligent. But they have never participated in the education system and so need to learn how to learn and how to start an education or training activity."

Some of the prisoners complain about the difficulty of getting onto educational courses and say their applications get lost or ignored. Others are not motivated to do so, despite having limited skills in literacy and numeracy, because their previous experiences of education were difficult and often painful. Yet other prisoners' motivation to start a course is limited by the knowledge that if or when they get moved to another prison, they are unlikely to find a place on the same course and hence they are unable to complete their chosen course.

However, we are aware that a prime demotivating force for many prisoners is that for them education has been a negative experience. We believe that experiential work such as ours can overcome some of these anxieties. Attendance at a dialogue group can help prisoners see themselves as intelligent people with something to offer, and they can develop an ability to communicate on the level with people from the outside world.

While the focus on literacy and numeracy in prison education is laudable, there are many prisoners who have good skills in these areas but they are frustrated by the limited educational opportunities available to them. At the other extreme, prisoners who have spent much of their time in segregation often find speaking extremely difficult. The dialogue group has helped such prisoners re-engage with their peers and the organisation.

Finally

We know that prison managers find it difficult to accommodate the work we do given the pressures under which they operate. Conflicts for rooms, difficulty in finding the right type or size of room, staff shortages, lack of willingness of prison staff to participate in the dialogue group, security concerns, problems with getting group members unlocked and escorted to the groups, problems for facilitators and volunteers to get escorted to the group room on time—these are all challenges to be overcome for a voluntary group such as ours going into a prison.

This may be partly because prison staff can lose motivation themselves because of the stress associated with their work, and they can therefore just concentrate on the basics of their job. Outsiders coming in to provide a service can be viewed as disruptive to the prison because the value of prisoner self-development is not recognised. However, most of the prison officers that participate in the dialogue groups have stated they have found their participation beneficial to their relationships with prisoners.

At present, we receive part-funding only from the prisons at which we work, because of the demands on the prison budgets. We therefore have to fundraise in order to be able to do our work. This funding route is, of course, limited and uncertain and constantly threatens the survival of each dialogue group.

Our work at HMP Norwich is being evaluated by the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge University but, even if the evaluation is positive, funding will still be a problem for the prison. The contribution of our work in terms of helping prisons meet some of the key performance indicators has been recognised by prison management. Further, our work has a very low cost per head, compared to many other formal and voluntary programmes.

Our evidence from more than ten years' experience of running dialogue groups in prisons is that the majority of prisoners have received little or no education. Often, this is a result of special learning needs that have not been recognised or met. Many prisoners are dyslexic, and thus have been unable to participate in their education system.

We feel that education should, overall, be better funded in the prisons and also for the prisoner: it seems to be a general policy that prisoners doing education get paid less than those involved in a work activity. Much of the work activity provided in prisons today has no educational value. The result is that prisoners are not incentivised or motivated to take up education courses and the current imbalance between remuneration for work and education gives out a message that education has a low value.

Secure funding for organisations such as The Dialogue Trust would enable us to plan with certainty and would also give our work greater credibility in the prisons, which would inevitably ease the day-to-day problems that are currently faced by all.

October 2004

Witnesses: **Mr Christopher Morgan MBE,** Director of the Shannon Trust, and **Mr Bob Duncan,** Member of the Management Board, the Shannon Trust: **Ms Ruth Wyner,** Director of the Dialogue Trust; and **Mr Bobby Cummines,** Chief Executive of UNLOCK, examined.

Q207 Mr Chaytor: Good morning to you all and I am sorry for the slight delay. I shall be acting as Chairman for the first part of the meeting as our Chairman is, we think, somewhere in the underground system; he is *incommunicado*; he left a message earlier saying that he was running a little late but he is later than he anticipated. I apologise for London Underground's problems and our Chairman's problems but I do welcome you to the meeting of the Education and Skills Committee this morning. What I would like to do to get the session going is to invite each of you—and I know that two of you are from the Shannon Trust—to say a little about the work of your organisation before we move into questions and if we can be reasonably informal and use first names. Christopher Morgan, if you could start us off, please.

Mr Morgan: The Shannon Trust came about a little by accident in that I had some money from a book and decided to use it to see if it was possible to get prisoners who could read to teach prisoners who could not read to do so. It was quite difficult to get started but, once we got started, we discovered just the size of the problem because there are 30,000 prisoners in our prisons at any one time who cannot read. There is no way that they can get given the one-to-one attention of professional teachers and a number of them refuse to go to the professional teacher because they have bad memories of school and so on and so forth, but they will learn from another inmate. We did not get a very good reception from the Prison Service at first but, after a slow start, we joined up with the Prison Officers' Association and, together with them, we started to make a great deal of progress 18 months ago and we have now reached something over 100 prisoners in England and we are already on our way in Scotland as well, again in conjunction with the Prison Officer's Association. What we need to find in every prison we go to is an enthusiast. It is usually ideally a member of the wing staff or perhaps an educator or it could be a librarian or a woman from the Padre's office or it can just be a prisoner. So long as they are allowed to do it, it works very well. A mentor can deal with about three members. It takes about six months for an adult non-reader to learn to read and it costs the taxpayer nothing because we give them—

Q208 Mr Chaytor: Could I just intervene. I think we are getting into the area of the process that you can be involved in rather than strictly the organisation and I think we will question you on that later. So, that is fine and just sets the scene. Can I move on to Ruth and ask you a little about the Dialogue Trust as an organisation.

Ms Wyner: The Dialogue Trust is a charity which has been registered for just one year and we are developing an intervention that has been going on at Whitemoor Prison for about 12 years. We are now into one other prison where we have some research on the process and we are moving into a London Prison soon but also work with the Probation Departments. We run dialogue groups where the method is grounded in group analysis in a professional method. We have two trained facilitators, volunteers coming from the community which is a very important part of the group and we have maybe 15 to 20 prisoners in a group. There is no agenda in the groups, everyone is on a level, and it is a way of really empowering the men—at the moment, we only work with men—and helping them develop their confidence, their skills and

motivation really and their feelings of being made of the same stuff as everybody else. So it is a developmental intervention really.[1]

Q209 Mr Chaytor: Finally, Bobby Cummines?
Mr Cummines: UNLOCK is a national association for ex-offenders. It is the only charity run by ex-offenders for ex-offenders. So, rather than theory, we come from practical experience in that we have actually been there, so we know the obstacles and pitfalls. We go into various prisons once every six weeks and we advise Home Office Prison Departments and different Select Committees. We also work with children on anti-social behaviour orders, so we are getting them before they go into jail. We have found that education is a very powerful thing in prisons but we have also seen the flaws in it. So, if you like, we are looking at how money is spent. Is it being spent well? Are we getting quality service? We speak on behalf of the ex-offender community and we are very grateful to this Committee to allow ex-offenders an actual voice—we think it is very brave of you and also very sensible because we have always been the missing part of the jigsaw and we can show that it can work. We have done numerous television programmes where we have trained mentors. We did it on BBC2 with *Make Me Honest*. We had one lad who had never been out of trouble for two weeks and he is now with the *Prince's Trust* and he has not been back in trouble for 18 months. We are very pro-active. We have bank accounts for ex-offenders which they said would never happen; we have insurance for ex-offenders which they said would never happen; we have mortgages for ex-offenders which they said would never happen and what we are saying is that it can happen if you have the will to make it work.

Q210 Mr Chaytor: When were you established?
Mr Cummines: We were established in 1999 and we are getting bigger and bigger.

Q211 Mr Chaytor: When was the Shannon Trust established?
Mr Morgan: We were established in 1997 but it took us several years to get going because of the reasons I have explained.
Mr Chaytor: Thank you for setting the scene very well and I will pass over to Jeff Ennis to begin the questions.

[1] Note by witness. As the Rev. Gordon Ashworth wrote to us (June, 2002) concerning the Dialogue Group at HMP Whitemoor, when he was working in the chaplaincy at the prison: "We feel that the Dialogue Group at Whitemoor serves a very important function in allowing prisoners to express their feelings in a neutral environment and at the same time helps them to develop as human beings. Many people come into prison because of a lack of social skills and the Dialogue Group has helped prisoners to develop those skills." Rev. Ashworth is now based at HMP Wandsworth.

Q212 Jeff Ennis: My first few questions are directed towards the representative from the Shannon Trust. Christopher, why do you think the *Toe by Toe* mentoring system has been so successful?
Mr Morgan: I think it is partly the book. The book is structured so that you do not have to be an accredited or a trained teacher. Anybody who can read the left-hand page can teach the right-hand page. The second reason is because these guys, and girls too, are very suspicious of teachers in authority but they do not mind quietly going off. The third reason is that the lessons must only last 20 minutes a day, so that nobody's attention wanders—if you lose them, you lose them—and it seems to arouse a lot of enthusiasm.

Q213 Jeff Ennis: Is it as successful with all types of prisoners or does it seem to align itself to any particular category?
Mr Morgan: Yes. In every prison from high security down to Ford and women's prisons and YOIs, there is nowhere we are not . . . Well, there are prisons where we are not because they have not heard of it or the head teacher is against it or something like that.
Mr Barry Sheerman took the Chair

Q214 Jeff Ennis: So, there is no effective drop-out rate from the system—
Mr Morgan: The drop-out rate in our pilot scheme at Wandsworth was that I think we reached something like 80 graduates and five had fallen out.
Mr Duncan: Because of the numbers in the Prison Service, the movement of prisoners is a problem because the numbers are transferred regularly. It does not matter in some senses because they can continue elsewhere if the scheme is there, but the transfer of prisoners does interrupt the scheme to both mentors and mentees.
Mr Morgan: Particularly mentors because, if you have a very enthusiastic mentor and he disappears, maybe nobody else will pick it up. If the mentees go anywhere else, that is one of the ways it is spread because they have arrived at a new prison with their *Toe by Toes* under their arm saying, "I want to go on", so the prison gets on to us and that is how we started.

Q215 Jeff Ennis: We cannot spend too much time looking at the detail of the scheme as it operates but I just wondered if you incorporated within the scheme what I would have called some sort of prepared reading process whereby the mentor reads along with the trainees as it were, something which has been adopted quite successfully by parents in a number of schools these days.
Mr Morgan: Not in the first instance; they stick to the rules of the exercises they have to do, but, in the second phase, some guys get to the end of *Toe by Toe* and they read like Daleks and they do not really understand what they are reading, but we have a follow-on called *Stride Ahead* and that is combined reading against the clock and there are comprehension tests.

Q216 Jeff Ennis: Do all the prisoners go on to that phase?
Mr Morgan: No. If they have a good grasp of reading by the end of *Toe by Toe*, we prefer them to go on to a normal course, but by this time they will because they are not ashamed of themselves anymore.

Q217 Jeff Ennis: Other witnesses are going to deal with other questions but can I just move on to the role of the Dialogue Trust. What type of prisoners attend dialogue groups with the Dialogue Trust?
Ms Wyner: At the moment, we are running in the high security prison of Whitemoor where there are long-term prisoners but we also operate in the local prison in Norwich and basically you have the ordinary prisoner who comes and goes. The prisoners choose to come. Really, that is a prerequisite of the groups, nobody is told to come, they make the choice for themselves and, unless somebody is extremely disruptive or a real problem, they come.

Q218 Jeff Ennis: Do we have a dropout rate for the people who come to these sessions?
Ms Wyner: Most people who have left in Norwich have left because they have finished their sentence or been transferred. We have only had one man over the year who actually the prison suggested should leave because he had become violent. I do not really know of the dropout rate in Whitemoor.

Q219 Jeff Ennis: Do dialogue groups focus on attitudes to learning and identifying learning difficulties amongst their clientele?
Ms Wyner: That is one of the things that we do focus on. It is very much that the prisoners bring things in but certainly the volunteers and I think the overall focus of the way in which people think and the way in which people see things does include the way they see education, training and rehabilitation and what the facilitators are looking for is to develop a more thoughtful outlook on life and an ability to see that other people can have different opinions and to sit with that and also to get a more rounded feeling about themselves so they feel they can actually go on and think about other things. We are always trying to encourage people in groups to think about solutions rather than just focus on problems.

Q220 Jeff Ennis: Have you been successful in integrating dialogue groups into prisoners' sentence plans because that is a big problem with a number of education programmes in prison?
Ms Wyner: We have not and we are unsure about whether that would be helpful because we do see ourselves as being almost like a first step before you go into anything, to get people in the right frame of mind to be able to move into education and that sort of thing. We are very young and it is something that we can talk to the prison about but, at the moment, our feeling is that we should be seen as very much a first step, there are no strings attached, you come and we can then hopefully move people on in a kind of very non-threatening way.
Chairman: Can I apologise to our distinguished witnesses that I was not here to greet you. I do not normally arrive late except when the Committee is being held in Helsinki! I was incarcerated somewhere around about Lewisham on the train and I could move neither way. So, apologies for that but we are pleased to have such a distinguished group of people giving evidence to us today because we are really getting into this inquiry and, as members may have told you, we are fresh from both Oslo Prison and also Helsinki Prison which are very big and busy prisons, 375 prisoners in each, but it was very important for us to look and have experience of that.

Q221 Mr Gibb: It is very impressive that it takes an adult non-reader about six months to learn to read but, when you say a "non-reader", what do you mean by that?
Mr Morgan: It varies very much from people who have not read at all and people who are dyslexic to people who have a grasp of some of the letters but who cannot string the words together. I say that it takes on average six months but some people become very enthusiastic and continue in their own cells and so on and do it in two or three months, others take quite a long time. I know one prisoner in Wandsworth who has been at it for two years—he is a Pakistani and he cannot read in either language. He is sticking to it though; he has reached page 200-and-something but he has a bit of a way to go!

Q222 Mr Gibb: From your experience as a trust engaged in this important work, do you have a feel for the proportion of prisoners who cannot read?
Mr Morgan: The number of prisoners who cannot read is frighteningly large. The OLSU figures are 48% of all our prisoners are effectively non-readers. That is the basis of my figure of 30,000.

Q223 Chairman: How accurate is that?
Mr Duncan: The Prison Department's own report says that 50% of receptions cannot read and there are 100,000 receptions a year. Those are their own figures. Some prisons are testing all prisoners on reception but the volume is such that not all prisoners are tested fully. The Prison Department would admit that it is 50% and 30% are school failures or school excluders. There is a high proportion coming into prison because of their disorganised backgrounds.

Q224 Chairman: There is no incentive at all for a prisoner to not indicate the true position of their literacy and numeracy?
Mr Morgan: Yes.

Q225 Chairman: Is there?
Mr Duncan: Yes. Some prisoners are quite clever and they live by their wits—those who cannot read live by their wits more often and they can get around the system, but I do not see any point really.

Q226 Chairman: It is just that a voice came to the Committee saying that prisoners suggested that they could not read because it gave them some advantage.
Mr Morgan: I think the contrary is true. A great many prisoners on induction know the form, they know where the ticks should be and the crosses should be and they will pretend they could read.

Q227 Chairman: Bobby Cummines knows the form more than most people; is that right?
Mr Cummines: That is correct. Christopher is 100% right there. We train students from colleges to actually act as mentors and what we teach them about is the prison culture. The first thing I say to our mentors is, "Make sure you are working them and they are not working you" because half of them have been through children's homes and they know the tick box syndrome and they go through it. Also, there is an embarrassment in going into education in prison, it is seen as you have sold out. So, a lot of people who want to access education will not because they see it as having gone over to the other side and life can be made pretty difficult by other inmates. What we also found was that, when people actually got into an educational course, we were concerned whether the education that they received to a degree level was actually going to get them into employment because there are still a number of degrees being taken for jobs in which they could never work. For instance, when they take criminology, sociology and psychology, they cannot work with vulnerable people. So, we saw that as a wasted three years where they could have gone into higher education on courses which would gain them employment. What UNLOCK basically does is that we go in and we deglamourise crime. Crime is very glamorised by the media and everything they read. We ask everyone we talk to, "Have you read the book about the Krays?" and, yes, they all have. This is happening with the schoolchildren we work with who are on anti-social behaviour orders. We talk from experience and we deglamourise crime. We actually show them the benefits of education. So, if you like, what UNLOCK does is prepare them and tell them that education is a well worth path to follow but we also train our mentors in the culture of prison because there is nothing more dangerous—and any security officer in prison will tell you this—than someone going into prison who does not understand that culture because they are in fact a liability to the prison. We would like to train the teachers who are dealing with our people exactly where our people are coming from and the culture of disorganised lives that they come from.
Mr Duncan: May I just add one point on the Chairman's point. Amongst the juveniles, the very young, you are right. Some of those can actually read a little but are in denial. It is almost a status symbol not to be able to read. I have seen a very clever member of staff who runs a catering course with the people who cannot read to start with who are also disruptive, the more disruptive juveniles that nobody else wants, and he then says, "If you want to cook, you have to write the menus down." They say, "I cannot read and write" but he gets them to do it. So, there are a number of means—*Toe by Toe* is one means, I am not saying we are the only means—of tackling these things. There are some juveniles who are in denial about their ability to read to some degree.
Mr Morgan: I believe the reason they are in denial is because they have given up. They do not think they are ever going to be able to. They cannot cope with classes and nobody is there to give them sufficient one-to-one time to overcome their problem. Once they realise that this way they are going to learn, to be quite honest, their behaviour completely changes and they stop being disruptive, they seem to gain self-esteem and they go about brandishing their books whereas formerly they slunk about hiding them. It does bring around a sort of change in personality, not of character but of personality which has been useful.
Mr Cummines: I can actually verify that. I was at Rochester Prison where they have an A wing which deals with people with drugs problems who have committed violent crime. They go through a 12-week programme and UNLOCK is part of that 12-week programme in giving them support outside. When you see these people actually get a certificate, it may be the first certificate that they have ever had in their life and they are so proud. It moved me greatly. I know what it feels like to get a certificate and to be recognised. Once they had that certificate of achievement, they went on to bigger things because they were given permission to do it and they knew that they could do it for themselves and they were encouraged. I am a little embarrassed because our MP is here and Kent does it very well.

Q228 Chairman: It could not be a better man!
Mr Cummines: You are 100% right. He is proactive; he is not a weekend MP, he is 24/7. Once they get their first certificate and they realise that they have been recognised for achievement, they go on to achieve even better and greater things. It is so important.
Chairman: Any time you want to move to Huddersfield, you are welcome!

Q229 Mr Gibb: It sounds like there is an array of abilities there but would you say that it is skewed to the almost illiterate, the 48%?
Mr Morgan: Yes. It goes all the way from the dyslexic . . . We now issue coloured cellophane sheets because it seems, that with the really extreme dyslexic, prints on a white page jumps about the whole time but, if you put it on a yellow sheet or

a blue sheet, usually yellow ... That is the extremity of that. The letters do not stay still long enough to be read. That is the worst case and of course there are others who have learnt a little but who do not use it because it is too much of a fag to use it.

Q230 Mr Gibb: I do not know if you have done any studies about how this compares to other countries; is this something you might know about?
Mr Morgan: No, I do not know very much about that but I was very interested in your speech on Monday, Chairman, in which you said that you had encountered prisons in Oslo where they said that 20% of the population could not read properly. I was very surprised to hear that. I am told by the same OLSU that 23% of our school leavers cannot read but it is double that in prisons and higher than that still in YOIs. I have been told by people in YOIs that it is 70%.
Mr Gibb: In Finland, we were told that there was almost no illiteracy amongst the prisoners coming in.
Chairman: Apart from the foreign prisoners.

Q231 Mr Gibb: Yes. Finally, I have just had a quick look at your *Toe by Toe* book and they will jeer when I say this but it does seem to be very phonics based. Have I understood that correctly?
Mr Morgan: I would not call it phonic or look and say. It uses every technique. It was invented by a primary school teacher who found that 20% of her classes could not hack it at all. So, she started inventing little games and exercises for them to do it. She was enormously successful at achieving a very high rate of literacy and, when she retired, her headmaster said to her, "Could you make sure that your technique survives your retirement." She had all these exercises on bulldog clips and her son put them on the computer and that is the book. I would not say it was phonetic or any other system.

Q232 Mr Gibb: Phonic.
Mr Morgan: It is pragmatic. It is what works.

Q233 Mr Gibb: And is that Keda Cowling?
Mr Morgan: Yes.

Q234 Valerie Davey: Very specifically, of the 48% who are non-readers, do you have any idea as to what percentage of those are dyslexic?
Mr Morgan: I cannot answer that. I am not an authority on anything at all!
Valerie Davey: You have a lot of good experience which counts for a great deal!

Q235 Chairman: I am very surprised that you are not a Member of Parliament!
Mr Morgan: I am not quick enough thinking!
Mr Duncan: I have seen a figure—I do not know how true it is—that 33% of people in prison are dyslexic but I do not know how they assess that.

Q236 Valerie Davey: That is what we are trying to find out.
Mr Duncan: With this method, you do not have to recognise the tag "dyslexic". We are dealing with people who cannot read, whatever form does not matter, whether it is foreign national or whether it is dyslexia, we do not need to recognise those titles because the method will deal with it.
Mr Morgan: A by-product is teaching foreigners in prison to cope with English. Take a prison like The Vern where over 50% are foreign nationals. It is enormously successful and popular in The Vern.
Mr Cummines: I think it also boils down to the enthusiasm to learn. You cannot teach a prisoner unless they want to be taught and it is, if you like, that first bit of getting them interested and showing that it is not a sissy thing to do and, once that enthusiasm is caught, then you can teach them but they have to come to the table. We have tried to explain to the people that the culture of education is a thing they did when they were at school and they bunked off school because they did not like it. I have brought for the Committee—I would just like you to take the names off it—the actual comments from pupils who have been excluded as to what they say about learning, why they turned to crime and what they could do to get away from it. I will leave that for you.

Q237 Chairman: That would be most useful. I think it was Dialogue that got the prison officers signed up to this. To all of you, at what stage and how important is it that you get the staff, the prison officers, engaged in supporting what you do?
Ms Wyner: It is very, very important but we find that it is very difficult. For instance, in Norwich where we have done some research, we have been there for a year and we have not yet been able to get officers regularly in the group. We had one come in briefly. There are various different views on the wing where we worked. For instance, I heard a prison officer say, "I don't know why you want to go in there, that group is rubbish." Then, if you challenge him on it, he will say, "I'm only joking." I think there is a tendency for officers to be very defensive about new interventions that come in because they are working in a very difficult environment and they have to really have very strong defences in order to be able to cope with the prison itself but, on the other side of the coin, in Whitemoor, we have had officers come in and, when they have come in, they have made comments such as, "It was really helpful to see these men as real people. I view you differently now. Now when I see you on the wing, I will see you as a different person" and it works the other way round as well because the men say, "It is such a relief to see you as a real person" because there is a tremendous 'us and them' situation in prisons.

Q238 Chairman: Are prison officers themselves sufficiently well educated and trained for the job?
Ms Wyner: Do you really want my opinion?

Q239 Chairman: That is what you are here for.
Ms Wyner: I think they are not sufficiently well educated and trained but I think also, very, very importantly, they are not sufficiently supported and supervised. If you go out into the voluntary sector, people who are doing stressful jobs will have support and supervision regularly, sometimes external supervision from a trained group analyst in groups. This is something that is just not there. It is a very macho culture, you sink or swim. We have had comments at Whitemoor where people, if they are interested in the group or come into the group, are called "care bears". There is a huge cultural thing to overcome. I think there is some change in some of the newer officers coming in but it is a battle.

Q240 Chairman: Do they see you as amateur do-gooders?
Ms Wyner: Some of them do, yes. Others are very respectful. I have had a senior officer say to me, "It is very helpful. Even if the prisoners are just sounding off about how difficult it is in prison, it helps us because there are not so many difficulties on the wing." They are very much in favour of helping the prisoners get different attitudes and so on, but there is a bit of a split between the officers themselves really.
Mr Duncan: The right culture is very important. A motivated officer is more important than an educated one in some senses. It is their enthusiasm that will help a scheme like ours develop. I have to say that very often we do not get much support from the management locally and we have spoken to the Director General about this. He is personally in support of the scheme. His argument is that governors have too much pressure on them already, too many tasks to undertake, and he does not want to add to that burden. I understand where he is coming from but we would like a little more support through the hierarchy in some of the things. Some officers are doing a magnificent job because they are motivated and I know that in some places—and I should explain that I am an ex-governor, I am a retired governor—some staff themselves are dyslexic and have welcomed a culture change in the approach to education because they have been able to admit their own deficiencies and take advantage of schemes that operate.

Q241 Chairman: If you wanted to really radically change the culture of a prison and have an educational culture, surely you would need a motivated management and staff and that provides the environment in which prisoners would have a totally different way of learning.
Mr Duncan: Governors do have a lot on their plate and they have a formal education department.

Q242 Chairman: But they have reduced the training of prison officers to six weeks, have they not? In Scandinavia, it is a year's training.
Mr Duncan: It was nine weeks but they had them on probation for a year. The training is changing all the time.

Q243 Chairman: But it has been reduced in time.
Mr Duncan: It has been reduced, that is right.

Q244 Chairman: Do you think six weeks' training to be a prison officer is sufficient?
Mr Duncan: I do not want to hang on to this. It is not reduced to six weeks. They do less time in the residential training centre but they get more support and training at the local establishment.

Q245 Chairman: Her Majesty's Inspector at the very conference at which I spoke on Monday said that it has been reduced to six weeks and they get no further training except training in restraint.
Ms Wyner: I was involved in weekend training for some officers at Whitemoor. The officers did not get paid for going to that training; they were told that they had to go in their own spare time.

Q246 Chairman: I am trying to get it out of you as to whether it is related. We are the Education and Skills Select Committee. If we want an educational culture in our prisons, what I am asking you is can you just pluck out one part of prison education, literacy and so on, or do we have to do a much more thorough—
Mr Cummines: I think you need to go deeper than this. Some prison officers see education as a threat because what it means is that there are more educated prisoners who can write more complaints. That is how they see it. There are some prison officers who see it as an asset because, if you have an educated prisoner, they are more likely not to be disruptive. You have this macho culture that was talked about, them and us. What I have noticed in Maidstone Prison, for instance, is that there was a strong move towards learning—let us educate prisoners, let us build some dialogue, let us break down the barriers of "them and us"—and it was the old "bang them up and bash them up" brigade that were rebelling against the education, but the new blood that is coming into the prison are more for the education, and I think it was a very strong point that you made, are the prison officers educated enough to do that job? I have to do the other side of this now. I actually have to defend prison officers because I did an investigation for the Regimes Unit of the Home Officer at Elmley Prison and there were prison officers going out in their own time to get information about benefit systems, educational courses etcetera. The education authorities could have sent that into the prison but these people were doing it in their own time. There are very committed staff there working in very few numbers who are working in appalling conditions—and my members are living in that—and that is why you have the "bang up 23 hours a day" thing. If you have a man banged up in his cell, the prison officers and the governor of that prison have to decide whether they want that prison to be a university for rehabilitation or a university for

crime because, if they are not in education blocks, they are reading books on crime or talking to their fellow inmates about crime. Education is so important but it is feeding back to the staff so that they do not feel resentment when somebody gets a degree and they say, "Hold on a minute, I've got this job." A prison officer in my presence said to an inmate, "I'm going home tonight and you're here" and he was ribbing him a little but the inmate said, "I'm here at the lowest point in my career, you are here at the highest point. It doesn't say a lot for you, does it?" The prison officer was stumped! What I am saying is that there has to be equal learning. Also, when I was doing a course at Kent University with the prison officers about addictive criminal behaviour and we were talking about why people re-offend, the officers on that course were given no increment for going on that course and the skills that they achieved on that course were not accredited so they could take them outside, they were not transferable skills, and I think that prison officers who are willing to go for further training should either get some form of recognition through payment or at least be given certificates of achievement. I think they are demoralised a lot. Colin Moses would be very pleased to hear me say that because I was talking to the POA and saying that you have to give prison officers an incentive to do this. Also, the lack of prison officers means that, if they are running a course, they can be called off for movement which disrupts the whole of that course and the prison is banged up again.

Chairman: Thank you for that very balanced evidence. I will be accused by the Committee of a lot of mission creep here, so I am going to go back to support for prisoners on release and Helen is going to lead us on that.

Q247 Helen Jones: What we are concerned with as a Committee is that any recommendations that we make for education in prison can be followed through when the prisoner leaves. I wondered if you had any thoughts that you could give us on how the work that some of your groups is doing could be followed through after release and also how we can maintain what we start in prison, so that if prisoners need both support to build self-esteem, if they need basic skills or if they want to go on to do more training afterwards, we can build that into the system. What are the obstacles for doing that and what would you recommend? I know it is a very wide question but we would like to hear your thoughts because we see no point in setting up a prison education system when it falls down when the prisoner leaves.

Mr Cummines: We are doing something now with Goldsmiths Colleges and Goldsmiths College is probably one of the most advanced colleges for this: they have actually given rooms now for ex-offenders in order that they can integrate with normal students. There is also a group called *Open Book* and it might be interesting to the Committee to have a look at *Open Book*. It actually takes people, not just ex-offenders, from disadvantaged backgrounds and brings them into education and follows it through. The thing we found with most of the people who have undertaken education in prison—and I, as a national charity, am very much offended by this—is that there are charities taking huge amounts of money from the Government and not coming up with the goods. They are turning out the glossy literature but they are not coming up with the goods and the support systems outside fail miserably. Education does 100% work in jail but there are not the support systems outside. It is not just around education, it is also about housing that can disrupt education and it is about training for employment and it is about the benefit system which is the most notorious out of the lot because, if they cannot get their benefits, they cannot get to college. They are the practical problems we are facing and that it is why it was imperative that UNLOCK negotiated with the Bank of Scotland that ex-offenders coming out now have bank accounts in line with Government policy and we did that because then they could get their fees paid into their bank accounts and manage their finances. Once their finances and their housing was organised, then they could concentrate. In prison, you are living in a false society where everything is done for you and then we throw them out of the door. We do not let them make decisions in prison and then we throw them out of the door and they have to make all these decisions that they are not capable of making and handling.

Ms Wyner: One thing that we are wanting to set up are dialogue groups outside in order that the community can then receive people when they come out of prison and provide continuing support that involves volunteers from the community. One thing certainly when I was in prison that I was aware of is that there was a system of personal officers set up. I think that most prisoners do not know who their personal officer is and have very little contact with a personal officer. I thought it was a very good idea to have a personal officer because one of the problems that many prisoners have is that they have not had any supportive relationships or very few supporting relationships. If this system of personal officer was set up properly, that person could be focused on the needs of the offender in a wider sense in terms of all sorts of issues while they are in prison but also in terms of what happens when they go out and, if there is one person with whom they can make contact and deal, I think that is very, very helpful. Similarly, once someone is out of prison, the Probation Service, just as the Prison Service, is very overwhelmed but, if the probation officer can actually have the time to work on these individuals that Bobby has mentioned, then there will a lot of reward coming back. I think that the one-to-one relationship is actually very important, having one person you can trust and who you know is there for you.

Mr Cummines: I think also if we could be, if you like, a little revolutionary and these things were put in place before the prisoner went out, such as the housing etcetera, because I believe that you would find a better integration. Also, there is a great

mistrust from my members towards anyone who is not from their community and I think that it helps a great deal—when UNLOCK gets involved and we have worked alongside most educationalists and most prison officers and the police etcetera—is when they have a member of their own peer group who has been there, done it and has come out the other side, it gives them the faith. They can talk to us. We have things from kids that they would tell us because of our background that they would never tell a teacher. It is because we are non-judgmental and they know that we are no better than them, if you like. So, it is having someone there to shadow you and that is why we encourage ex-offenders who have achieved to come back as mentors and train mentors in that culture. It is so important that their own peer group take ownership. My members tell me, "We don't want people doing it for us, we just want the foundations to do it for ourselves" and education gives them the foundations, but it comes from a very middle-class background and a number of people do not understand where our people come from and their very chaotic lifestyles. So, I think that the educators need to be educated in that.

Mr Duncan: Kent is very exceptional in that it has a mentoring scheme/support scheme for discharged prisoners which is unique and very pro-active. The rest of the country does not have that as yet and you have to remember that 40% at least of all prisoners discharged have no supervision whatsoever.

Mr Cummines: That is right.

Mr Duncan: So, to try and even talk about support in terms of other problems of housing and finance just does not exist. NOMS may change that but NOMS is some way ahead. I know that Christopher anguishes over whether we ought to extend to post-release but we cannot run before we can walk. We are not struggling but we stretch our resources to meet the needs that we see in prison. We would love for it to continue afterwards but I think there has to be something like the Probation Service recognising that there is a need for this to continue and maybe that can be built into the NOMS concept but, at the moment, aftercare is very patchy.

Q248 Helen Jones: I think we would all agree with you that what is important is the whole package when a prisoner leaves prison, but I want to ask specifically about education. In your view, are the courses that are generally being offered in prison of the right calibre and transferable for prisoners to then carry on in whatever outside, whether it is education or training, because, to do that, they have to get to some recognised, whether it is basic skills, whether it is further education or whatever? Is the problem that we are running a lot of ad hoc courses that are simply then not properly certificated and not transferable to outside?

Mr Cummines: You are 100% right. The biggest employer of ex-offenders is the construction industry: there are 400,000 jobs available out there. We used to have in prison the old VCT training courses where they learned bricklaying and plumbing. In the whole of Wales—and I have actually done a survey on this—there are six Corgi registered heating and ventilating people earning £750 a day. In fact, I was thinking of resigning my job and going off to do a course in it! It is very pro-active. We are looking at an industry that could train our people. Some of the training in prison is not appropriate for employment. Bob and I were on the Select Committee for Rehabilitation and we went to various prisons to look at it and I went to Aylesbury Prison where they are doing a course in car mechanics. These are jobs that our people can get because then they are not working with vulnerable people within the community, so they are not barred from these jobs. I think that education in prisons has to be geared more for the workforce outside than for academia. I think we have run away a little with academia and we have to look really at what works and what works is getting people into employment. We went to Grendon and they did courses on enhanced thinking skills and psychoanalysing people. Warehouse foremen do not want you going in and psychoanalysing staff! What you need to do is be able to operate a forklift truck. We have to get down to practical basics and that is what UNLOCK does. We deal with the basic practical stuff that excludes our people from employment.

Mr Morgan: We take it as a self-evident truth that life is more possible if you can read, but we are also coming up against the problem of following on after a prisoner leaves prison because most sentences are less than six months' duration and, of the 75,000 prisoners in our prisons, 90,000 (sic) are released every year, which shows that they are not there for long. We are operating already with a number of post-custodial hostels and one or two of these YOIs which are scattered around the country, but I have to say that I find it very difficult. I have asked for meetings with the Probation Service and with Harry Fletcher because we find we get on better with the unions than we do with the authorities really. I have a number of hopes that we will be able to do it but I can see it as a very difficult thing. When a person is in prison, you have a wonderful opportunity to teach him to read and cure this problem that he has. Once they leave, whatever their good protestations of wanting to carry on, other things get in the way and so on. For those 40% of prisoners that do have some supervisory element after they leave prison, we very much want to enable them to carry on and we are trying to find ways of doing it.

Ms Wyner: I would like to make a couple of points. I endorse what Bobby said. Before coming here, I asked the dialogue group members for Norwich what they would like me to say to the Committee and they said, "What we would like are courses that actually enable us to get employment. Train us to be bricklayers, train us to be plumbers, that sort of thing." Also, I do not think that we should knock Grendon because what we are involved with in the dialogue group is actually getting people in a state of mind where they can learn and sit for more than

two minutes and concentrate and so on and I think that Grendon is working with prisoners in such a way as enables their personalities to grow so that they are able then to take their lives forward. There is just one more point that I would really like to make and it may be that this will feel a little like a red herring but I think it is very pertinent. Nobody has mentioned the problems of addiction.

Q249 Chairman: We were just going to come on to that.
Ms Wyner: Then I will leave you to get there.
Chairman: It is a very good point.

Q250 Helen Jones: Carry on, please.
Ms Wyner: If I can carry on, I think all this goes completely out of the window if we do not deal with people's addiction problems. The kind of courses that people have in prison are just not enough for the majority of addicts. Six weeks or three months is not enough. Research shows that you need nine months to a year minimum, preferably 18 months, to really help someone overcome their addiction. So, for people on short sentences, there are some projects in America whereby people are taken into drug rehab while they are in prison and, when they go out, their rehab continues and focuses on the drug problem and they go into a therapeutic community or something which seems to be the treatment for drug addiction but it is not a short-term fix. Unless people's addictions are dealt with, this is just a total waste of money as far as I can see. There are people in the dialogue groups who cannot get drugs out of their minds. They may have been on an ETS (Enhanced Thinking Skills) course or whatever but they are still right in there and they know that they are going back to communities they were in where drugs are available and the first thing they will want is to have a hit.
Mr Cummines: That is 100% right. If I can just clear up the point on Grendon, I was not knocking Grendon, what I was saying is that there needs to be a balance between therapeutic and practical. You are very right but what I found in prison with the drug problem is that they tend to concentrate mostly on heroin and crack cocaine. The biggest problem we are having, especially with the younger prisoners, is alcohol abuse mixed with drugs, cocktailing. Alcohol is not seen as a threat and yet the biggest sector of crimes committed are alcohol related. So, we need to educate, if you like, the addiction services not just to concentrate on the hard drugs as alcohol is a serious, serious problem.

Q251 Helen Jones: I think anyone in the centre of my constituency would agree with you. When we are planning for discharge, what is your view about what educational planning should be undertaken? Should that not be part of a proper plan for discharge with the support built in? How good is it?
Mr Cummines: Educational training is probably the most important thing you have in prisons today. It is one of the things that will stop people re-offending. It is all right, as I said, doing the courses, even the plumbing courses, but we also have to teach people practical skills like money management. We have them coming out of prison with their £54 and they go straight to a Kentucky Fried Chicken place and buy a big bucket, do the rest on booze and the next day they are skint and they are shoplifting. I worked in hostel environments with ex-offenders coming out and the big problem we were having is that they blow their money because they do not use money in prison so they are not used to budgeting and they are not used to shopping. I think that we have to teach people basic skills of life, life skills if you like, and they have to be part of a package that is followed through outside.

Q252 Helen Jones: Part of the whole course.
Mr Cummines: Yes.
Chairman: I am very pleased about what you said regarding drug addiction. We picked that up very strongly on our trip last week to the Nordic countries where they said that 60%, perhaps 80%, of their inmates were on drugs and would go out on drugs and we saw a very interesting Finnish pilot called *Pathfinder*.

Q253 Jonathan Shaw: Can I just tag a question on to this question of release. Pre-release courses: in our papers, we are advised that Lord Justice Woolfe said that he would welcome plans for the Prison Service to introduce pre-release courses and they were first established at the end of 1992/beginning of 1993 but, more than a decade later, these courses are still to materialise.
Mr Cummines: In a number of the cases, it was down to the Governor of the prison. If the Governor were pro-active, pre-release courses were done but they were done in a patchwork quilt way. They would look at, say, Dialogue and then they would look at the Shannon Trust. What they were trying to do was do it on the cheap. Instead of getting the people in who were professionals in that skill, they were trying to mix it up in prison. When you have a prison officer who is on landing duty and doing all the rest of the things and you are understaffed, it cannot work. Pre-release courses were seen as not that important.

Q254 Jonathan Shaw: So, there is no blueprint for a pre-release course?
Mr Cummines: No. There was one we put up and UNLOCK is putting one together on money management and all that. We are doing a DVD for pre-release courses to assist prisoners to do a pre-release course—and the Home Office are doing a pilot with us—which we will give them when they go out. So that, if they move into Manchester, we will give them all the support agencies in Manchester on a DVD that they can plug in. It saves them carrying lots of paperwork because we found that they would dump that. It will be in Urdu and also Braille for people who are partially sighted because we are getting a number of elderly prisoners now who are coming out of prison and they have no home, they cannot access the benefit

system properly and they need support. If we had proper pre-release courses, the prison population would drop dramatically because they would be prepared for when they went out and we could hand over to the Probation which is what NOMS is about or other agencies and they would be able to filter in to that and they would drop dramatically because they would have that support but, because we do not have pre-release courses, it means they are not prepared for release to deal with things like basic shopping skills etcetera.
Mr Duncan: There is another charity called the Foundation of Training Organisations which does run pre-release courses in a number of establishments. I can leave their card if you are interested.

Q255 Chairman: Why has it all gone on such a patchwork basis? That is what we want to know.
Ms Wyner: Prisons are totally chaotic and it is all crisis work really and that is the problem.

Q256 Jonathan Shaw: I think this leads on to the next point which is that the schemes you run are not nationwide, are they?
Mr Cummines: Our one is.
Ms Wyner: We would like ours to be.

Q257 Jonathan Shaw: We hear all too often, not just in the Prison Service but right across the public service, models of good practice, where it is working. We have heard from the Shannon Trust that, where you have those enthusiastic people, whether they are prisoners or prison warders, and I am sure it is the same for you, Ruth, you need someone as that catalyst. If the consequences of you good people not doing the things that you do mean that we have that revolving door, surely that is not good enough, is it? We should have the blueprints.

Mr Cummines: Charities could put it together. We actually looked at pilot schemes. That is why we did not take Home Office funding: because the pilot schemes *kamikaze*. If you go up in the plane and it runs out of petrol after 18 months—they have withdrawn funding—it is sunk. A lot of people would not employ people to do projects, because you would only have to sack them 18 months down the line. So it was no incentive for charities. If you are going to have something, you have to fund it for at least three years. Why? When you are looking at the chaos that is prison, it is purely a puncture outfit. What we need now are new tyres on the vehicle, because puncture outfits do not work and it is going from one thing to another. As you said, there is no blueprint to be able to say to you, the Committee, "Here we go—this is how you do it". Charities are also to blame, because we are so busy trying to fight for the same funding that we are not effective in what we do—because we are all chasing the same pot of money—where, if the money was dispersed properly and there was adequate funding—

Q258 Jonathan Shaw: A lot of us are new to this area, but it strikes me that there is a myriad of different charities involved in this education. I was recently trying to think, with a colleague, of what one of them was called, and it is Pythonesque.
Mr Cummines: But there are frontline charities that are doing the work, and this is what you as politicians must sort out. What you need is an inspectorate of aftercare. You have got an inspectorate of probation, an inspectorate of prisons, but you have no inspectorate of aftercare—someone to look at whether you are getting value for money. The bottom line is no, you are not. There are charities out there and all they are doing is turning out glossy literature, making it seem as if they should be in the publishing business and not the resettlement business. I talk about what I know and I will tell it how it is. I will tell you straight. What you need to say is "Prove to us—

Q259 Chairman: One small rule, Bobby, is to talk through the Chairman!
Mr Cummines: I am sorry. What you need to say is, "Show us what you are doing". What we need is evidence, and that is what it boils down to. Not nice, glossy literature. "Show us the numbers where you are putting these people out of prison and into employment, and you are getting them back into a stable lifestyle." I will not name the charities, but there are charities taking to the tune of £74 million, and a lot of the work is glossy literature and research. We do not need the research. We know the problems of crime and the causes of crime. What we need now is action.
Ms Wyner: But I think that we do need some research so that we can develop our practice as charities.

Q260 Jonathan Shaw: You are being researched at the moment, are you not? So you would say that.
Ms Wyner: We have actually commissioned that research. We have got some funding to commission the research. We are planning to extend it into a project in Wandsworth Prison. The overall difficulty is that there is no time for thinking about these problems, because everyone is rushing round, just trying to keep the lid on prisons. There is no overarching policy really. With NOMS there is the potential for that. As to the Inspector of Prisons, having read David Ramsbotham's book about the way he was inspecting prisons and making recommendations, people were completely ignoring it. I think that it has to come from a political level. There has to be a real intention to do something thoughtful that works, and also to bring in the POA and so on, so that there is real commitment.

Q261 Jonathan Shaw: We are going to hear later from some of the trade unions and organisations which represent the staff. Looking at their submission to us, it is quite encouraging in terms of the direction of travel, from where we were a few years ago to where we are today—where governors would be able to vire money off from the education budget to do whatever they wanted to. If they did

not have an inclination, if they did not have the enthusiasm that Christopher Morgan was talking about, then it went somewhere else. So are we going in the right direction? You are describing some big steps that have to be taken, and I think that most of the members of the Committee would agree with you, but are we going in the right direction?

Mr Cummines: I think that the problem with the Government as it is, and the Prison Service as it is, is that they do not publish what they do well: they let newspapers publish what they do badly. This undermines those people in prison who are active and doing good stuff from doing it, because they get no recognition for it. But, yes, you are going down the right track, because at least now you are listening to the voice of an ex-offender. It has never been done before in committees. It was always done by the theorists and academics. What we are saying is that, yes, you are listening and the Home Secretary is looking at what is going on, but what we need now is, "This is what it will be". I think that it needs to be a bit firmer now, into action; but you need to be properly funded. Everyone I talk to, every charity I talk to, every course that is running—all they are saying is "Lack of funding". It is not that they cannot do the job: it is lack of funding. With Professor David Wilson from the Prison Education Forum, you have some great stuff going on in education in prison—but, again, lack of funding.

Ms Wyner: The lack of funding extends to prisons as well. We go in and they say, "Yes, we'd very much like to have you, but I have got to cut half a million pounds of my budget this year". What we are hearing from the Government is, "Yes, we are doing resettlement", this, that and the other; but if the funding is being taken away, it can be seen as window-dressing. I think that we are going in the right direction with NOMS. There is a specific amount of money for voluntary sector interventions and so forth, but it has to be at the right level. There has to be real commitment. Also, if we continue expanding the prison population, it makes life a lot more difficult.

Q262 Chairman: Christopher, did you want to come in on that?

Mr Morgan: From my point of view, I personally do not think that funding has got too much to do with it. Our activities do not cost the taxpayer anything. We give them free, and we get such money as we need—which is not terrific—very freely from the private sector. What I think needs to be done is that a complete change of philosophy needs to be brought into the prisons which puts the matter of education, and trying to prepare the prisoners for the outside, on a vastly higher scale than it is at the moment. Let me tell you a little story. When we go to a prison, we always have a lot of guys there who want to teach. They are seized by the idea and they want to teach. They see this as something that will make their doing time meaningful; it gives their own self-esteem a great boost and, instead of being bullies and throwing their weight about, they put their energies into this activity. All we ask of the prison is that they should not lose financially. "Financially" is too big a word for what a prisoner gets in money for making the widgets they make. It is just chickenfeed; it is a few quid a week. But a lot of prisons will not do it. The prison makes money from widget-making. They use this very cheap labour; they produce teabags in boxes; they cut up the rubber bits of cat's-eyes in the road, and that sort of thing, incredibly cheaply, and that is all part of their budget as far as I can see. Therefore, they are not very willing to make it up. If a guy says, "I want to stop doing that and become a mentor", they will not make it up. So a lot of these guys are doing it, notwithstanding the fact that they lose money. And, in particular, women: I know a lot of women who have children at home; they want to be mentors but they cannot afford to be, because they lose a few quid, they cannot buy their telephone cards and cannot talk to their children. It is just a small example of the way the attitude is wrong. If we want prison to work, we have to get that attitude changed. It is not to do with ticking boxes and what they call "hard outcomes". It is more to do with soft outcomes: of changes of attitude and of behaviour, which are the side products of trying to give people back their self-esteem.

Mr Cummines: Christopher is 100% right on the changing of attitude. You are penalised when you go to prison if you go into education, and you are encouraged to go into the workshops. I think that you need a complete reversal there, where you are enhanced for your attempts to rehabilitate yourself, rather than sitting at a conveyor belt.

Q263 Chairman: Should there not be proper work in prisons that is properly paid?

Mr Cummines: Yes.

Q264 Chairman: So that people can send money home to their family.

Mr Cummines: We brought up an idea, when Sir Stephen Tumim was alive, bless him: that we would like prisons to be colleges, where people could go out and be on tag for their last year; they could do their theory while they were in prison. It was heavy plant machinery fitting—because in five years' time we would be importing from Poland, because we do not have any. What we wanted to do was train them while they were in prison, long-term prisoners, and then they would go into society, in college, like an open prison. A third of their wages would be held in trust, if they behaved themselves; a third would be sent to their families, so that they could get back their dignity and get off the benefit system; and a third would be for their keep. But I think it was European legislation that prisoners were not allowed to pay for their own keep. That was the view of legislation, but there is also common sense. If a man has got his dignity back, that he can provide for his family and he is working towards a profession—and we could do it with Sir Robert McAlpine or someone, saying "We will train people for employment"—then we could gear them up so that they are not going out dependent

on benefit and taking their family off benefit. Then it is a real thing and, you are 100% right, we should be training people for work and allowing prisoners to earn proper wages. We employed three female prisoners from a prison in Kent. I fund-raised and got them a proper job. It was called "the Vision Team". They were doing really well. We trained them in conference centre building; we trained them in media studies; we trained them in reception work, and all the computer work. For that prison, we got £108,000—£8,000, I think it was—and the girls could have earned £15,000 a year each. It was knocked on the head, because the governor said, "I'm not having them earn as much as my staff". That was a fact, and it was appalling—and we had to give the money back to the European Social Fund.

Mr Morgan: There is a lot of talk about making prison too soft, and perhaps giving too much education to prisoners would be put by some newspapers into that sort of category. But I think that you can only say that if you are somebody who has never been in prison, because anybody who has actually spent any time in prison—certainly as a prisoner—will know that it is not like that.

Q265 Jonathan Shaw: We have been to Parkhurst.

Mr Cummines: So have I!

Ms Wyner: It is also quite different when you do not go out at the end of the day.

Q266 Chairman: We have a press that is always very interested in prisons, until it comes to any serious interest at all. This is the first inquiry under my chairmanship where we have had sessions on prisons. No press come. Are there any members of the press here today? One today. We have had sessions with no press present.

Mr Cummines: They are glamorising crime—

Q267 Chairman: On any other subject the place is full and we have got television and radio. This is the level of interest in prison education.

Ms Wyner: There is a problem in the messages that government gives out about crime and punishment. There is this vote-gathering type of message, and I do not know whether it comes from focus groups or what. I think that there is another message that could come out: that if we rehabilitate our prisoners properly, we cut crime. That is the way to cut crime. I do not hear that message from government, and I think that is a real problem.

Mr Cummines: What we have to look at is, when we rehabilitate prisoners, what we are doing is reducing the victims of crime. That is what it is all about here. For every prisoner who goes out, that is 33 crimes he is not going to commit—because that is the average. They get nicked for one, but they have done 32 that they have not been nicked for. I think that, seriously, if we want to send a message out—if you are a *Daily Mail* writer, you can write this and quote me on it!—it is that prison is not a holiday camp like Butlins. I do not know too many people who will hang themselves in Butlins, but quite a few are committing suicide in prison. So let us get that—that prison is not a nice place; it is a place where people are punished.

Q268 Chairman: I think that the gentleman is a serious journalist!

Ms Wyner: It is also a place where people are damaged, traumatised, and come out desperate and unable to cope even with basic things. When I came out of prison I could not focus distance. Goodness knows what else had happened to my brain, but I could not focus distance.

Mr Cummines: We also have to say that there are successes coming out of prison. Myself—I have been on select committees and have been made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and all those sort of things I have achieved. If I had said to the governor of Parkhurst that I would be sitting here giving evidence to you today, he would have taken me over to see Dr Cooper and I would have been on the "wally juice"—severely "nutted off"! There are prisoners that can achieve great things. We have to celebrate that and hold that up—about the achievements that can be achieved if people are given the foundations to build upon; and I think we need to do that.

Q269 Chairman: Bobby, Ruth, Christopher—Bob has had to go—it has been an excellent session and we have gained from it. Will you stay in contact with the Committee? We are getting halfway through this inquiry and we want to be in touch with you. If you think of things that we should have asked you and did not, tell us. I have no doubt, having experienced the last hour and 15 minutes, you will!

Mr Cummines: Perhaps I can leave you with this. This is what the kids are saying themselves. If you could keep the age group, and just take the names off—it is from the children's own voice.

Chairman: We can do that. Thank you.

Memorandum submitted by the Association of Colleges

Introduction

1. The Association of Colleges was founded in 1996 to represent further education colleges in England and Wales. Twenty-seven further education colleges are contracted to provide education services to young offenders and adult prisoners. Colleges also provide many courses to help former prisoners to gain the skills they need to obtain work and to make a proper contribution to their communities.

2. The Association welcomes a number of changes that have occurred in prisoner education in recent years. The establishment of the Offender Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU) within the Department for Education and Skills was a recognition by government of the importance of improving prisoner education.

The prison education budget has also had an overdue funding increase from £41 million in 1999–2000 to £83 million in 2004–05.

3. Colleges have played a vital role in ensuring that these extra resources have increased the number of prisoners achieving qualifications. HM Prison Service reported in its 2004 Annual Report that education targets were significantly exceeded in most areas with prisoners achieving 103,583 Work Skills awards compared to the target of 52,672; prisoners achieving 43,731 Basic Skills awards compared to the target of 34,482; and 13,338 Basic Skills Level 2 qualifications completed, just below the 13,648 target. However, as the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Further Education and Lifelong Learning noted in its report of September 2004, these targets measure the "number of qualifications achieved rather than the achievements of individual prisoners."

The Assessment of Prisoners' Needs on Conviction

4. Since 2000, pre-sentence reports have rightly been required to assess the literacy and numeracy standards and needs of offenders. This is a welcome advance on a situation where such needs were often overlooked: basic skills are crucial to the chances of offenders' rehabilitation and their ability to find work upon release.

5. However, some of our members who have contracts to provide prison education are concerned that the prescribed BSA literacy and numeracy test is a very poor instrument. Education departments need to carry out other assessment and diagnostic tests to gain a picture of an offender's full basic skills needs. Some colleges believe that another test, such as those provided by Cambridge Training and Development (CTAD) would be more appropriate.

6. Continuity remains a big problem. Offenders are assessed whenever they move in the system (as well as upon conviction and remand). This seems to be an unnecessary waste of still limited valuable resources. Some colleges report that it also makes many prisoners needlessly dissatisfied with the education system. Electronic information-sharing between prisons about educational achievements should be a standard part of the arrangements for any prison transfer. This would be facilitated if, as is proposed for the new contracting arrangements, each prisoner had a standard national Individual Learning Plan, which could be provided by the OLSU.

7. In Round 4 of the Capital Modernisation Fund, £20 million was allocated by the Treasury "to support the modernisation of education and training facilities for prisoners to increase employment opportunities and to reduce reoffending." Providers have welcomed this extra investment, but are concerned that there are, as yet, no guidelines about which is the preferred assessment.

The Effectiveness of Local Contracting Arrangements

8. Prison education has been contracted competitively to a range of providers since 1993. This change coincided with the incorporation of further education colleges. While there were 45 external contractors in 1994, that number has fallen to 27 today. Tenders are issued every five years. In January 2004, contracts were extended beyond this period for up to three years following the abandonment of plans to widen tendering procedures.

9. A study jointly commissioned by the Association of Colleges and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NAFTHE) in 2001 found significant dissatisfaction with the current contracting arrangements; 60% of contractors and 56% of education managers didn't believe the arrangements worked as they should. By contrast, only 24% of prison governors were not satisfied.

10. As the Home Office is merging the prison and probation services into the new National Offender Management Service (NOMS), the DfES and the Home Office want a flexible service which provides continuity beyond the sentence, which improves information-sharing, and which makes full use of e-learning opportunities. The LSC regional infrastructure is intended to link offender education with its wider post-16 roles in planning, commissioning and funding. Pilots have been introduced in the North West, South West and North East regions which are likely to inform the new developments. New contracts are likely to follow.

11. More recent reports from colleges show different experiences with the current contracting arrangements. Strode College provides a service to nine prisons in the South West and has found that its regional provision worked well. The college has been seen to perform well in its ALI inspection and Prison Service Audits. By working with nine prisons, it has been able to provide cost effective staff training and quality control systems. Distance is not a problem: all prisons are visited every fortnight by College Directing staff.

12. However, some colleges have found their contracting arrangements less satisfactory. Price rather than quality of provision has been central to the process. One told us: "As a contractor, we suffer repeatedly from a very poor contract . . . we feel that we are second class within each establishment. There is also a tendency

to use a contractor as a scapegoat, especially in an organisational culture that is somewhat anachronistic with rigid hierarchies, bureaucracy and a blame culture." Another college comments: "Price before quality appears to be the Contract and Procurement Unit's (CPU) agenda".

13. The Association believes that is important to continue to enable colleges to offer education services to offenders under contract. Colleges, with their networks in every community, will be in a strong position to provide continuing education to those on probation and beyond. We recognise that regional contracting is often desirable, and believe that in some circumstances it will make sense for contracts to be awarded to consortia of colleges to ensure that post-prison provision is flexibly provided. The nature of past contracts has prevented joint working in the past.

The Provision of Appropriate Training Facilities Within Prisons

14. The increased investment in prison education and training facilities—and the ring-fencing of prison education funding—has been welcomed by colleges as long overdue. But, despite this increased investment, teachers often still have to work in inappropriate facilities. At Her Majesty's Prison, Dorchester, for example, an induction group takes place in a corridor, while at the Young Offenders Institution in Portland, converted cells with little light are still in use alongside a new modern classroom block.

15. Colleges also report that education and training are still treated separately in some prisons, rather than as part of a wider learning experience. The result is that there has been insufficient co-ordination between the two activities. This has been exacerbated by a lack of consultation and planning on the most effective use of the new investment.

16. Many colleges have been awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence status by the Learning and Skills Council for particular aspects of their work. This has been a very welcome initiative which has helped to drive up standards in vocational learning. It is worth considering whether the scheme could be extended to prison education, or whether a similar initiative might be developed in prisons. This would also involve substantial investment in industry-standard facilities that could lead directly to skilled jobs in areas like construction, driving or plumbing.

The Role of Prison Staff in Supporting Educational Activities

17. The 2001 AoC/NATFHE research found that a majority of education managers felt they were not well supported by the prison bureaucracy. Each prison now has to appoint a Head of Learning and Skills, a move which has been welcomed by providers, though their role should be more clearly defined.

18. One college has found that this new support has encouraged prison officers to take a greater interest in education. It reports that a young offenders' institution with which it works has three prison officers training to be classroom assistants.

19. However, the system often still militates against effective learning provision. Prison routines don't make it easy to learn. It is difficult to motivate students in classes lasting nearly three hours. Pay remains poor for those attending education. Even if prisoners receive £5 or £10 a week less for going to class than going to work, that is the price of an extra phone card to call home. Education should be placed on a par with work in terms of its rewards.

20. There are no links between education and prison sentences. With the greater co-ordination that is being planned by the OLSU, it would make sense to link individual learning plans with sentence plans. Otherwise, the chances of rehabilitation are reduced.

Links with Employers and Employer-Led Initiatives

21. The All-Party Parliamentary Group report on prisoner education noted that there was often too little mapping of regional skill shortages, and too little effort made to link these to the vocational courses being provided to prisoners. Many colleges have developed strong links with employers through the provision of tailored courses to meet their particular needs. The Association would welcome closer involvement of employers and the Learning and Skills Council in making such links. This should allow courses to be tailored much more to the needs of the learner and the labour market.

Continuing Support and Guidance on Release, Including Co-ordination with Local Providers

22. Continuing support and guidance are essential to prisoners, if they are to continue to learn and to put their learning to good use after they are released. Colleges tell us that the current contracts do not provide the resources to offer anything beyond prisoner education.

23. In the NOMS environment, it will be important that sufficient funding is made available to providers to assist prisoners who are about to be released in finding work and continuing their learning. The absence

of such links and funding in the past has made it difficult to provide such assistance. Funding should allow other learning providers in an offender's home area to continue work that had begun in prison, where such provision is not available within the prison education provider's contract.

Education, Training and Support for Those on Probation

24. The current funding system does not make resources available to contractors for prisoners on probation, with community penalties or serving less than twelve months when they are released. Colleges believe this to be a major weakness, which a more integrated system of prisons and probation education should address.

25. There has been a growing emphasis on community penalties for more minor offences, but there is a restriction of 10% on the amount of time an offender may spend in education as part of the total sentence. We share the view of the Forum on Prisoner Education that this should be reviewed.

October 2004

Memorandum submitted by NATFHE

Introduction

NATFHE—The University and College Lecturers' Union represents prison education lecturers working in adult prisons and Youth Offender Institutions. Our members in England and Wales are the principal staff delivering education to prisoners.

Over the last decade NATFHE nationally has monitored both negative and positive developments in prison education. This period has seen prison education put out to competitive tendering, dramatic cuts in provision and staffing in the early to mid 1990s and since 1997 the gradual increase in provision, resources and government attention.

In this time NATFHE has published surveys on:

- the effects of competitive tendering on the provision of education services in prisons;[1]
- the decreasing opportunities for staff development for prison education staff;[2]
- the perceptions of prison education amongst principal stakeholders—research commissioned with the Association of Colleges.[3]

This response will focus on those issues primarily of concern to our members working in prisons, rather than the issues that link prison education to the outside world, such as employer links and education and training and support for those on probation.

NATFHE evidence is drawn from "Shared Responsibilities" and from continuing feedback and dialogue with NATFHE members in prison education.

Background

Organisation and funding

1991

Until 1991 prison education was funded by the Home Office and delivered under contract by LEA adult education services and FE colleges. Contracts for prison education services were then put out to tender. Contracts were issued for five years and went to a variety of providers, largely FE colleges. Some colleges had multiple contracts geographically spread across the country. Mostly there was a reasonable proximity to the prison and the education contractor, but some contractors were anything up to 150 miles away from the actual prison.

Prison education budgets were placed in the hands of prison governors who could "vire" money to other areas of the prisons.

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[1] "Prison Education after competitive tendering": NATFHE, 1994.

[2] "A 'soft target' for cuts"; NATFHE, 1996.

[3] "Shared responsibilities: Education for prisoners at a time for change" Julia Braggins: NATFHE and the Association of Colleges, November 2001.

1991–96

Prison education was subject to decisions by governors often made for non-educational reasons and suffered large cuts in provision with losses of many full-time prison education lecturers.

1996

Prison education contracts were retendered. Contracts went to FE colleges, two LEAs and one private provider. Some colleges had developed a considerable expertise in prison education.

2001

Responsibility for prison education was shared between Prison Services and the DfES. A separate unit was established—the Prisoners Learning and Skills Unit (PLSU), now the Offenders Prison Learning and Skills Unit. The PLSU had a network of Area Managers who had a geographic and lead responsibility for an area of work. Recently the Prison Service appointed a Head of Learning and Skills with a responsibility for all learning in prisons. They are directly employed by Prison service and are part of management of prisons.

With the establishment of the PLSU, the funding for prison education was transferred from the Home Office and Prison Service to the DfES and ring fenced for education work.

2002–03

The PLSU commissioned PriceWaterhouseCooper (PWC) to review the funding of prison education. This review found little connection between the vocational training that went on in prisons (in workshops with directly employed instructors) and other aspects of prison life such as offending behaviour and management programmes, sentence management and resettlement. The Review took the broad line that funding should be more closely aligned to individual prisoners' learning needs and the characteristics of their sentence and the actual prison.

Numerous options were put forward for the future of funding and contracting of prison education. The outcome of the review was that a new retendering process would be undertaken and a new specification for such contracts would be drawn for prison education providers. The proposals made it clear that new providers would be encouraged to participate in the tendering process. The project was titled Project Rex. It recommended that prison education should again be retendered as a combined contract of prison education and vocational training.

2003

Notice to contractors of the retendering process was given in April and the date for the new contracts to come into force was April 2004—later changed to September 2004. Existing providers had their existing contracts extended twice to meet these timescales.

2004

In January 2004 Project Rex collapsed and the OLSU announced that current contracts would be automatically extended for between one and three years from September 2004.

NATFHE welcomed the creation of the Prisoners, now Offenders Learning and Skills Unit and the active participation of the DfES in the delivery of prison education. We felt that linking prison education to reform taking place in post-compulsory education and training were especially positive.

The union has enjoyed a close and supportive relationship with the unit. We believe that it has led to a higher profile for prison education, and its position at the heart of the Government's policies to combat social exclusion.

NATFHE opposed the contracting out of the prison education services. The first round of contracting was inappropriate, as the determining factor in granting contracts seemed to be price. This resulted in a drastic cut in provision; the loss of many committed and experienced prison education staff and the subordination of prison education to other aspects of prison regimes.

NATFHE feels that the second round of contracting saw some improvement including the removal of contractors not drawn from the ranks of those already providing post-16 education and training. In our response to the PWC review (attached),[4] NATFHE supported the broad thrust of the OLSU's proposals but felt that if contracting continued, it should be reissued to contractors who wished to continue with their prison education work and any changes envisaged by the OLSU could be accommodated through variations to these contracts.

[4] NATFHE Submission to the Review of Prison Education July 2003.

With the collapse of Project Rex, it was decided that LSCs would be the route for contracting. NATFHE considers that the involvement of LSCs will draw prison education closer to the rest of post-16 education and training provision. This means many of the worst aspects of the previous rounds of contracting may disappear, especially the physical distance that some contractors have had from the prisons in which they are responsible for the delivery of education.

Curriculum

In the mid 1990s the prison education curriculum was reviewed. There has always been an emphasis in prison education on teaching basic skills alongside other curricula, especially the arts. Many offenders have disrupted schooling and between 60–70% lack basic skills.

The review

- established a core curriculum, consisting largely of basic skills provision.
- reduced other areas of the curriculum.
- introduced Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at level two basic skills qualifications.

NATFHE believes that these changes, especially the introduction of KPIs, distorted the curriculum on offer in prisons. Prison governors concentrated almost exclusively on programmes that met the KPI, with little below level 2 and little above level 2.

It has now been recognised that this diet of purely basic skills learning programmes could be unpalatable to the recipients. Embedding basic skills in other learning provision including the delivery of vocational training has now reduced some distortion. NATFHE feels that this lends weight to the arguments for bringing prison education, vocational training and instruction taking place in prison workshops, closer together.

Future Delivery

NATFHE would wish to see

- A continuing strong role for the OLSU in ensuring quality in prison education, initiating, supporting and disseminating innovation and best practice.
- Training and staff development for LSC staff dealing with prison education who are unfamiliar with prison education.
- The LSC consulting with all stakeholders before establishing structures and new models of practice and contracting.
- Prison education at the centre of the organisation of prison regimes. This is essential if rehabilitation is to be successful. For too long prison education has been a neglected part of prison organisation with low status and priority.
- Prison education as an integral and important part of sentence planning dovetailing with other programmes of rehabilitation and resettlement in prisons (also favoured in the Social Exclusion Unit Report).

NATFHE supports

- The creation of the new National Offender Management System (NOMS).
- The move towards the organisation of offender and prisoner education on a regional basis.
- The involvement of OFSTED and the Adult Learning Inspectorate in prison education. This will supplement the existing good work of the Prison Inspectorate in identifying weak and excellent provision whilst ensuring raising standards is at the forefront of prison education delivery.

NATFHE recognises that one of the main barriers to successful and high quality prison education is the continually rising prison population. Shifting the focus to rehabilitation and reducing re-offending with new custodial and sentencing policies, along with stronger partnerships between the Probation and Prison Services will mean a great deal of offender education will be community and not prison education-based. This should leave education workers to concentrate on sustained education and training work with those still in prisons. Any changes in patterns of provision will have resource implications and must not mean any diminution of funding for prison education. Offender education outside prisons will need additional resources, and staff development and guidelines for its providers. There will be a need for funding to encompass time for staff involved to meet and plan and liaise with NOMS staff. The creation of court orders directing offenders to learning programmes has administrative implications and this will need to be resourced.

Funding of Prison Education

In its submission to the Review of prison funding, NATFHE argued that the funding for prison education must be:

— adequate to provide proper education and training needed by each prisoner, subject to proper and on-going assessment of their educational and learning needs.

— sufficient to fulfil an individual learning plan for each prisoner.

— based on entitlement to a learning programme that is part of a whole process of sentence planning and management that leads to rehabilitation and resettlement.

— linked to vocational training and other prison regime programmes of education, training and behaviour modification.

— able to support its full costs, given the facts known about the mental, physical health and previous educational experiences and achievements of prisoners—with the kind of social and educational disadvantage that most prisoners have experienced, such support is crucial for successful learning.

Funding methodology/allocation for prison education must be:

— fit for purpose—flexible enough to fund the various forms of education/learning programmes that are suited to the type of establishment, prisoner population within that establishment, and patterns of movement to and from that establishment. Local prisons with high prisoner movement and short prisoner stay should be funded to provide proper and full initial assessment and short "taster" access courses. Offenders whose sentences are no longer carried out in prisons should be able to learn in the community. If prisoners are able to settle into training it will lead to greater take up of longer learning programmes.

New partnership with the LSC in delivering offender education should:

— enable the use, in offender education, of the long-standing and largely successful system of funding additional learning needs used for a decade in further education colleges, and now being expanded to adult and community and work-based learning.

NATFHE believes that the ring fencing of prison education funding since 2001 has been wholly beneficial. It has resulted in more stability and it must continue in any future organisation delivering of prison education. Similarly if vocational training is to be included in any new contracting arrangement, the funding of this should be ring fenced too.

NATFHE would argue for stability in prisoner and offender education. If there are to be new contracting arrangements through the LSCs and increased power of governors over prison education, then there will need to be a continuation of ring fencing of both education and vocational training resources. Governors should not be given the power to alter at short notice education provision made by contractors. There will also need to be discussions between NOMS, the LSCs and educational contractors about the correct amount of notice to be given for alterations in programmes.

Funding Infrastructure

NATFHE believes prison education funding should cover maintaining and improving its infrastructure. Many prisons are old, some Victorian. Prison education facilities should not be housed in unsuitable accommodation, with difficult physical access or poorly equipped, especially in the area of new technology.

Two other elements of the "infrastructure" are crucial in the successful delivery of prison education:

1. Improved pay for prisoners attending education programmes. The SEU Report, the NATFHE/AoC "Shared responsibilities" and the recent Prison Reform Trust report on the perceptions of prisoners of prison education[5] all reported that the disparity in the payments prisoners received when attending education programmes, as compared to the payment received for other prison activity, was a serious disincentive to participation in learning in prisons. Total funding for prison education must encompass an increase in the pay of prisoners for attending learning programmes. It would also be a public recognition of how the prison regime values learning and educational achievement.
2. Resources to pay prison regimes for prison staff undertaking escort and security duties in relation to prisoners' attendance in prison education. The NATFHE/AoC research and the Prison Reform trust research on prisoners' perceptions demonstrate clearly the crucial role that prison staff, especially prison officers, have in relation to prison education. One of the key tasks is escorting prisoners from the wing to prison education, and then being on duty in prison education centres for security purposes. The NATFHE/AoC survey found that 51% of prison education managers

[5] "Time to Learn" Julia Braggins and Jenny Talbot, Prison Reform Trust 2004.

reported regular difficulties getting students to classes. The lack of prison officers to supervise security in education centres can pose a serious safety risk in some prisons. If as a result of new sentencing policies, those prisoners remaining inside prisons in the future are more "difficult" and/or serving sentences for more serious offences, then this security risk may increase. NATFHE acknowledges that these problems stem from circumstances that are not always in the control of Prison Services or prison governors. However, we do suggest that some of the problems might be overcome and there might be a greater willingness for prison officers to undertake these duties if prison education had an allocation of resources for the undertaking of escort and security duties. Ultimately if prisoners do not arrive in education, they are not going to learn. At the very least escort duties, the percentage of prisoners attending learning programmes and the reasons why they do not, should be part of any new specification for prison education and be part of key performance indicators for prisons.

Basic Skills in Prison Education

The facts concerning previous educational experiences and achievements of prisoners and offenders are well known. The Social Exclusion Unit Report showed that compared with the general population;

- Prisoners are ten times more likely to have been a regular truant.
- 60% of prisoners have the writing skills, 65% the numeracy skills and 50% the reading skills at or below the level of an 11 year-old child.
- 52% of male and 71% of female adult prisoners have no qualifications.
- Literacy and numeracy skills, and some form of qualifications are required for 96% of all jobs.

Clearly if re-offending is to be reduced, the focus of prison education on basic skills is necessary.

In the past progress around basic skills was hampered by crude use of targets. When the key performance indicator was literacy skills at level 2, establishments concentrated on these to the exclusion of qualifications at lower and higher levels. The consequence was a severe limitation on progression. NATFHE acknowledges that the worst of these past policies have been remedied in recent years, both in terms of new and more realistic targets and embedding basic skills in other provision and throughout prison life. Targets must be built from the bottom up and be appropriate for all types of prisoners and establishment.

In the mid-1990s the core curriculum was introduced into prison education. This was the first initiative that focused on the delivery of basic skills programmes in prisons. One of the principal conclusions of the NATFHE/AoC research was that this had been problematic and there had been high levels of dissatisfaction among all the respondents to the NATFHE/AoC research over the narrowing of the curriculum. An education manager spoke about the impoverishment of the prison education programme as a result of the imposition of the core curriculum.

"We have no other educational provision than that required by the core curriculum. This is a major deterioration in the programme. Our curriculum is narrower now than at any time in the last 30 years."

Others spoke of how often those with poor previous learning experiences would only choose practical education options. With the imposition of the core curriculum, these opportunities had been lost and thus opportunities for some prisoners to rebuild their confidence on their ability to learn.

We acknowledge that most of the negative aspects of the focus on basic skills have been or are being rectified by the OLSU. Nonetheless NATFHE would argue that basic skills provision needs to be placed within the context of a wide curriculum offer. We realise that not every establishment can or will be able to offer a wide range of subjects, but there must be a balanced educational programme offering a range of creative, practical and life skills and personal development programmes which can be studied in their own right as well as being platforms for delivering basic skills. The embedding of basic skills delivery across the educational offer in prisons will mean that there needs to be support for this and for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) in these programmes. Staff delivering these programmes will need time and opportunities for staff development and training in this.

The Social Exclusion Unit Report also pointed out that black prisoners tend to be more highly qualified than white prisoners and so benefit relatively less from the emphasis on basic skills. The provision of a wider curriculum with basic skills and ESOL support at its heart will allow black prisoners to develop appropriate skills at the relevant level. The wider curriculum with provision for creative programmes will assist black prisoners in realising their cultural identity and thus assist in improving their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Vocational Training and Education

NATFHE supports moves to bring closer prison education and vocational training taking place in workshops. We are not convinced, however, that vocational training needs to be part of same contract as education provision. We doubt whether the long tradition of in-house delivery of vocational provision is worth disturbing. The union considers that the closer integration between vocational training and education provision can be achieved without the disturbance that merging the services into one contract will bring

As we have stated above, if vocational training and educational provision are brought under one contract then we would advocate ring fencing the funding of each to allay fears that provision in one area would be reduced.

Assessment of Educational Needs of Prisoners

Initial and on-going assessment and diagnosis of educational needs of prisoners and offenders lies at the heart of successful learning provision tailored to actual needs of the recipients. This has, for a long time, been problematic.

- Assessments are undertaken but often only initial screening takes place and not diagnosis or on-going assessment.
- Initial assessment often takes place shortly after the arrival of prisoners in prison. This is at a time when the prisoner may be extremely disorientated and may be suffering from drug withdrawal.
- It is essential that assessment is supplemented at various points during a prisoner sentence and that the results of assessments are fed into sentence planning and management.
- Educational assessments should not be separated from assessment of other needs. These assessments should then become the basis for an entitlement to a learning programme that is part of whole sentence and integrated into other programmes of education, training and behaviour management. Assessment is vital at pre-release stage.
- For assessments to be useful in terms of sentence planning and management, and ensuring prisoners follow programmes of learning that lead to qualifications, it is essential that initial and on-going assessments, diagnosis and individual learning plans follow the prisoner around as they move around the prison establishments.
- In the NATFHE/AoC research 72% of respondents declared that there was an adequate system of transferring records on prisoners' learning progress within their establishment. 61% reported that they always sent on such records. Yet 67% of respondents reported they received such reports only irregularly. Whatever such figures may mean, something is wrong and a proper electronic mode of transferring records could resolve many of these problems.

Effectiveness of Local Contractual Arrangements

NATFHE has always opposed the contracting process as it leads to a profit-led approach to prison education. The first round of contracting indicated that price was the overriding determinant of successful tendering rather than quality of provision. We agree with the Forum for Prison Education that profit from punishment is immoral. The Union can discern no advantage to prisoners and can only assume that it is part of more general successive Government policies to outsource provision.

The periodic contracting of education provision puts an increasing strain on prison education staff in terms of their security, with posts remaining unfilled longer and staff having temporary positions and upgrades.

Successful prison education can happen only if staff feel valued and respected and are contented in their work and feel a sense of security.

NATFHE understands it is unlikely that the contracting out of prison education will end in the near future. If contracting out is to continue NATFHE would urge that:

- Contracting processes must be open and transparent. Although the specification for contracting is known, the details of contracts are subject to commercial confidentiality. This makes it difficult for organisations representing prison education staff, such as NATFHE, to know necessary details of what is contained in the contract and make defence of prison education staff difficult.
- Quality of provision and the welfare of prisoners and prison education staff, not price must be the main determinants in the award of contracts.
- Contracts for prison education must be written in a form that allows some flexibility so as to allow contractors to pay nationally agreed pay rates and appropriate increases.
- Contracts must have the flexibility to encompass changes from legislation such as those on working time and part-time staff directives, on health and safety and discrimination.
- Contracts must also be priced to include the resources to ensure proper representation of staff through their representative organisations. This would include time off and facilities for trade union duties remission for union officers and for health and safety representatives.
- Contracts should include time and resources for staff development and training. This should include development and training in educational developments, including that required to teach in prisons. It also should include training and staff development in "prison craft".
- As the system of prison education moves to new structures that encompass offender learning that takes place outside prisons, it will be essential that the time needed for proper liaison with other agencies is included.

The contract price must include:

— Resources for infrastructure, for administrative support, for initial and on-going assessment.

— Resources to enable contractors to pay salaries at least equivalent to those for post-16 teachers, lecturers and trainers in mainstream education in order to attract the highest quality staff to prison education. Prison education lecturers are the only staff within prisons who do not receive either an element of pay or a special environmental allowance to compensate them for the particularly difficult circumstances and situations in which they teach. NATFHE considers it scandalous that some contractors pay their prison education lecturers less than they pay lecturers on their mainstream sites. Prison and offender education is extremely demanding. It requires committed and properly qualified staff.

NATFHE was pleased with much of the detail of the specifications for the contracting of prison education published in December 2003. We hope that much of this will survive and underpin future contracting. There is an overwhelming need for contracts for prison education to maintain national standards and this should be part of contracting specification. Thus the price that is paid for the delivery of prison education must be more than merely that which is paid for the taught hour.

The intention of the last round of contracting was to attract new providers into prison education. NATFHE does not deny that some of the "private" providers have produced innovative and successful programmes of learning in prisons. However, this is provision that is supported by the use of public funds. We would wish to see contracts largely going to public sector institutions.

We would remind the Committee that a number of "private" providers received contracts for prison education in the first round of contracting in the early 1990s. By the time of the second round, only one such provider remained. NATFHE sees no need for new providers.

We see a danger of fragmentation and loss of expertise if too many new providers are brought into the delivery of prison education. If new providers do receive contracts in any new round, then it is imperative that they are subject to the same quality assurance procedures and requirements that FE colleges and LEA Adult Education Service contractors are subject.

NATFHE supports the possibility of moving towards regional contracting. This will eradicate some of the problems associated with having contractors physically distant from the prisons for which they are responsible. It will also help ensure closer co-operation between learning that takes place within prisons and that outside prisons.

Role of Prison Staff

Prison staff can make or break successful provision. Attitudes to education and learning have improved over recent years. The recent appointment of Heads of Learning and Skills responsible for all learning in prison establishments and part of the prison service staffing should help prison education be recognised as a key part of regimes and resettlement. However, for too long prison education and its staff have been seen as outsiders who are at the bottom of the hierarchy of prison staff. The NATFHE/AoC research found that 45% of governors, 43% of education managers reported that conflict with other regime areas hindered education in their establishments; 34% of both groups reported uniformed prison staff lack commitment to prison education.

Prison education staff are committed and hard working. Many of them are on hourly part-time and fixed term contracts. Staff are often paid only to teach, and not for many of the other tasks and roles necessary for successful learning to take place, for example for the time that it takes to get from the prison gates to their teaching accommodation. In a maximum-security establishment, this can take over an hour.

Prison education needs to recruit and retain the highest quality staff. This response has already referred to the need for prison education staff to be paid the same rates as mainstream post-16 education and training staff and for prison education staff to be paid an environmental allowance similar to other prison staff. The gap between post-16 education and training pay and schoolteachers' pay has been widening in recent years and is now a significant barrier to the sector meeting the challenges set for it by government. Colleges are increasingly losing qualified staff to schools. Adult education, work-based learning and prison education services are losing staff to mainstream work in colleges, especially basic skills teachers.

Providers that have not been subject to LSC and legislative requirements for new providers can obtain contracts for prison education. To avoid any unfair advantage, it is imperative that all potential providers are subject to the same requirements.

We recommend that increasing the payment for escort and supervision duties in relation to prison education could ease some of the current difficulties. We would go further and would wish to see prison education departments becoming learning centres that could be used by all in prisons, staff and inmates alike. This could transform attitudes to prison education and learning and also help in terms of retention and recruitment of prison staff.

As new forms of sentencing are developed an emphasis on community sentencing linked to learning programmes, prison education staff will need to strengthen and expand their links to NOMS staff, especially those responsible for such community sentencing.

Finally, prison education, needs to be seen not as an optional extra or add on to other activities in prison, but as a central and key part of rehabilitation and resettlement. It should be integrated into the full range of regime activities such as work and the delivery of offending behaviour programmes.

Continuing Support and Guidance on Release Including Co-ordination with Local Partners

At heart of new proposals bringing in and linking with NOMS is education work that will take place outside prisons and in the community. This brings a new focus on working with education and training providers in the community. Such partnership work must also encompass prisoners prior to and on release from custodial sentences.

NATFHE fully supports the provision of proper, independent and impartial education advice, information and guidance prior to release and continuing whilst prisoners resettle in the community.

The current proposals to involve local LSCS in contracting for prisoner and offender education and for a robust partnership between LSCs, NOMS and education and learning providers should make links between provision inside and outside prisons. This should minimise some of the dislocation and disruption in learning that can take place for many prisoners when released.

It needs to be recognised that these links may be difficult to maintain for some prisoners on release. Not all prisoners are in custody near their homes. This is particularly true for women prisoners. Because of the relatively smaller numbers of women prisoners and consequently establishments for prisoners, many women prisoners are not housed near their homes. The same is true for prisoners from London. This will need to link prison learning activities with outside provision on release for these categories of prisoners will need careful investigation.

October 2004

Witnesses: **Dr John Brennan,** Chief Executive, Association of Colleges, **Ms Merron Mitchell,** Head, Offender Learning Directorate, City College Manchester, **Ms Jeanne Harding,** Principal, Dudley College of Technology, **Mr Dan Taubman,** National Official (Education), and **Ms Christiane Ohsan,** National Official (Further Education), NATFHE, examined.

Chairman: May I welcome our witnesses. I can see from some of their faces that they were enjoying the last session as much as we were. May I also say that my Committee always groan when they find that there is yet another person that I have known for a long time and who has Huddersfield connections. Jeanne Harding and I go back a long way, because she was principal of Huddersfield College before her present job at Dudley. I just let the Committee know that, before they leap on the fact.

Jonathan Shaw: Do we groan now?

Q270 Chairman: You can groan now! May I also say that this is a very serious inquiry and we were straining at the leash, waiting to do this. It was interesting to hear some of the names mentioned a few minutes ago, like Stephen Tumim and others. I happened to be the shadow Minister for prisoners, Sir Roy Hattersley's deputy, at the time all that was happening—and the Woolf inquiry into Strangeways. If you get involved in prisons and prisoner education, it is something that never leaves you and you get this real commitment to it. Certainly I know that, as Chair and the team here, we are as keen to make this as good a report as we possibly can. That does not mean fiddling around on the edges of the problem. Christiane Ohsan, Dan Taubman, John Brennan, Jeanne Harding, Merron Mitchell—I am not going to ask you all to give an introduction, because it would take up the whole time. John, can I pick on you and ask whether you want to say something to open on behalf of the team?

Dr Brennan: That would be very helpful. We very much welcome the inquiry you are undertaking, because we share the view that this is a very important but often neglected area of learning. To give it some profile and to address some of the issues is very important. I think that you know what our credentials are in relation to this. Colleges are the overwhelming providers of prison education. If I have counted it correctly, 24 colleges provide 126 of 137 prison contracts that exist. So we have a very substantial share. AoC represents those colleges; NATFHE represent the staff who work in those institutions. I would want to emphasise that, whatever differences we may have on other issues, in this area there is a considerable degree of commonality of view between ourselves and NATFHE about the issues which exist. I would like to make four points, if I may. The first one is to emphasise that, as was coming out from previous witnesses, our starting point is that offenders are some of the most deprived learners. Whatever other characteristics they have, they are a group who have very considerable learning needs. What we would want to see, the kind of vision that we would have of the system that we want to see created, would be prisons as a kind of secure learning environment—a secure college, if you like—in which offenders can acquire the skills they need, the knowledge, the qualifications which will help them not just to secure a job on release but also to equip them to cope with the complexities of the lives they often lead; to give them confidence, raise their own aspirations, shift them away from offending behaviour, to becoming much more productive members of society. We do

see that learning has a key role to play in contributing to all of that. In realisation of that vision, I think that we see three important areas of issues that need to be tackled at the moment. One is about what, to coin a phrase, we might call the personalisation of the learning programmes. Our belief is that there has been a bit too much emphasis on key skills, basic skills, as being the sole vehicle in this area, and that we need to broaden out that offer. We need to recognise that there are a variety of learning needs, and that often the motivation of learners, even where they have important basic skills requirements, can be better achieved through integrating and embedding those basic skills activities in a whole range of other learning opportunities. To some extent the emphasis on basic skills, the key performance targets, and so on, has distorted the programme. We think that we need some rethinking about the way in which the prison education offer is structured, in order to take that forward. Around that, we think that there needs to be a much more comprehensive approach to assessment, to planning of individual learning, to monitoring, and taking that through into the post-release phase as well as in the institutions themselves. In that context, we saw the attempt which was being made through Project Rex, to bring together vocational training with education programmes, as having that capacity to offer a greater integration, and we would want to see that taken forward. That is one area. The second area I would want to highlight is management. It was already coming out in your previous session—the importance of a significant cultural shift in terms of the way in which learning is viewed within prisons. There have been some helpful developments in this respect. The appointment of heads of learning and skills, and so on, in prisons is beginning to change that. There are issues around that. There is often a lack of clarity about the roles of those individuals and their real authority, in terms of managing contracts and so on. There are still lots of operational problems about giving prisoners access to learning. Other operational requirements often override—the fact that you have to appear in court, or prison officers are not available to escort you to the learning centres, and so on. There are issues about priority and attitude in all of that, which we think do need to be changed. In doing so, we believe that will eliminate some of the waste which is inherent in the present system—which those kinds of disruptions create. There are some issues around contracts, where we are not, in principle, opposed to some changes in the way in which the system works, but the shifts of direction over the last couple of years have not been helpful in terms of managing and running those services. While we think there are some benefits to be gained from a more localised approach in linking prison education contracts to learning and skills provision more generally, what we would see as being important is that we do not go for something which is far too parochial and which loses the expertise and skills, and the considerable strength which has been built up as a result of the system that we have. So we see it as important to try to preserve all of that. There is a series of other management issues inherent in all of this. I would just draw attention to one in particular, which is about the management of learner records. It is very evident that the system does not work effectively in that respect, and we need to get a lot better. Electronic transfer is the means by which we could achieve all of that. We need to put some emphasis on trying to create a system in which, as prisoners move round the system, there is much more effective transfer of information about them, and they do not end up doing the same things over and over again—which may boost the key performance statistics, but do not do a lot in terms of taking those individuals forward. The final point I would make is about the need to have proper resources to back all of that up. We very much welcome the emphasis which government has given over the last few years to boost resources in prisons but, after you take account of inflation and the increased volume of people in the prison system, the real investment in learners and in prisoners is not that great. We think that much more needs to be done. There is a series of issues round that, not least to do with staff pay because of the pressures created by a contracting system which drives prices down, and about giving prisoners incentives to want to engage in learning. At the moment, the system is very much tilted against encouraging them to engage in learning. A series of issues of that kind, therefore, which we believe exist in the system at the moment. We are happy to discuss any of those or any other issues that the Committee would want to explore.

Q271 Mr Chaytor: I would like to ask about the contracting arrangements, and particularly to flush out the strengths and weaknesses of the old contracting system. I would like to ask Dan and Merron to comment on what they thought were the strengths and weaknesses of the old system, before we go on to the new arrangements.

Mr Taubman: You mean the contracting through prison procurement, rather than the pre-1993 local authority—

Q272 Mr Chaytor: Yes. The system that was disbanded and should have modified into Project Rex.

Mr Taubman: I am not sure that there were a huge amount of positives. Over the years, we have built up positives. One of them is that we have built up a body of expertise, particularly in further education colleges, around the delivery of prison education. Some of the drawbacks were sometimes very stretched lines of management; contracts that were based on price rather than quality, and certainly that has had a very negative effect on recruitment and retention of prison education staff. My colleague Christiane Ohsan will want to talk more about the insecurity of prison education staff. We would like to see contracting and funding of prison education moulded to the type of prison and the type of prisoner, because there are different types of prison.

Local prisons, for instance, have a very mobile, fluid prison population. Prisoners come through either on remand or going through to training prisons, and the kinds of assessments that those prisoners need might be very different than in long-term prisons. We are not wholly opposed to the proposals to contract through the Learning and Skills Council, but we have some very grave concerns. One is just how much the Learning and Skills Council knows about prison education. Second—

Q273 Mr Chaytor: Before we go to the new contract arrangements, could we focus on the other ones, and maybe ask Merron about this issue of stretched lines of management—because you would have some experience of this?

Ms Mitchell: Yes, I am representing the providers, the colleges that deliver education in prisons. City College is the largest, with 21 secure establishments across the country. We have built up our portfolio of prisons during the contracting rounds from 1993. I believe that there has been a lot of good in those contracts. The initial contracting out made so much difference—from the previous, individually delivered by local education authorities. In those days there was just a 5% handling charge to the local college. Then I became part of a structured prison education service. I think that was probably the start of a quality education contract, and I do think it is important that we recognise the good that that contracting out of education did. The second round of contracting certainly ring-fenced education money and library money. That has made a considerable difference, because we have been able to plan. We have been able to plan education programmes. What we have not been able to do is plan for the future as a provider, because the original contracts were offered on a five-year basis with a promise of a five-year extension if the governor of the prison and the contractor were happy with that relationship. That did not happen. Rex reared its head, and re-contracting and re-tendering was going to go forward. I think that providers and deliverers of contracts, having had a ten-year period, were disappointed that we could not build on the success we had already made with current contracts. We have had that fragmentation. We are now in a position of not knowing whether this contract is going to last for six months, one year, or up to three years, and we are currently working within the current contract. I think that I can speak for most of the providers—we are continuing to deliver a quality education service. There may be barriers—and we are going to explore the barriers—to make education more accessible to more offenders; but I think that there was a lot in the old contract that we need to build on. However, it was input-based, not output.

Q274 Chairman: For the record, could you tell us what Rex is all about?

Ms Mitchell: My apologies. I tried not to talk in acronyms. At the end of the second five-year period of contracting out, at the end of 2004, prison education was due to be re-tendered. It was tendered on a competitive basis, on quality and on cost. That decision was taken by Susan Pember and OLSU. The Adult Basic Strategy Unit, the Government, DfES, decided—I think the words were "quite courageously"—to withdraw the competitive tendering process that was recommended by the PriceWaterhouseCooper report, until they had determined the future of prison education. During that period, contractors have had the extension to their current contract extended on three occasions—1 month, 5 months and, now, for a period up to three years—during this time we are now facing prototypes and new Pathfinder projects through the LSC. So we are still in a slight limbo of not knowing where the future of prison education contracts really lies.

Q275 Mr Chaytor: If we could move on to the future and ask about the LSC, how do you view the prospect of the LSC now being responsible for the contracting process? Do you have any observations about that?

Ms Mitchell: Yes, I think that it has to be the way forward. The LSC is responsible for post-16 education. The LSC work in communities, in the probation centres, and in adult education. I think they will have a steep learning curve, and I do hope—if I have one plea—that they consult and take the advice of the current expertise that is delivering well in prisons. I think we have a future of having the seamless progression. We were talking earlier about resettlement and the pre-release course. To me, resettlement and pre-release start on the day of somebody's reception into prison. I think that we should be working in education for the day that they are released. That has to be seamless, and the LSC has a model that could actually provide that. There may be some fine-tuning required en route. The management information system, for example. At the moment we are input-based. We are paid on hourly delivery of education rather than the outcomes that the LSC usually request. That will lead to a tremendous amount of personalisation of qualifications for individuals, rather than a set number of accreditations, irrespective of the need of that prisoner.

Mr Taubman: I would agree with everything Merron has said. I have three points. First, the LSC is not noted for its lack of bureaucracy, so I hope that contractors are not drowned in yet more bureaucracy from that. Second, there are parts of the Prison Service, parts of prison education. You can understand going through LSCs in terms of follow-through, aftercare—indeed, the non-custodial sentences that are coming in—but there are various aspects of the prison regime that perhaps do not fit that. I am thinking of the women's estate, which is smaller, fewer prisons, more mixed ages, more mixed abilities, mixed sentences, et cetera. One wonders quite how a local LSC will deal with something like women's education or maximum security prisons, category A prisons. The other problem is London and London's offenders. Because there are a

disproportionate number of them, a lot of them tend to get put to prisons well away from London. Then you would also have follow-up problems. We are going to have to approach it with care, because ex-offenders sometimes do not want to be tagged as ex-offenders. So follow-through work can be quite difficult.

Q276 Mr Chaytor: When is the new contracting round due to start? Is there a date fixed for the start of the LSC contract?
Ms Ohsan: Currently, we have the three prototypes, as Merron said. It could be at any time when they are ready. Any one of them could be ready. The arrangements will be, whoever is ready to run, they will implement it and others would join as and when. That is the nature of how things are being done. The date of January 2005 has been mentioned. The problem we have is that we are not into the loop with the LSC when they are doing those consultations.
Ms Mitchell: The proposal is that all prisons will be ready to run the new prototype in September 2006. We do not yet know how that will be. You mentioned the local and the regional—and this is perhaps a personal opinion, having run a national programme of prison education across the country—but I do hope that the LSC do not automatically believe they have to procure their education on a very local basis. As we heard from Bob Duncan earlier, the Prison Service is not yet regionalised. We do release people from London who go back to Manchester. Currently many of our Manchester prisoners are being held in Haverigg, Durham and across the country, because of overcrowding and moving on a category basis. I do hope that the LSC looks at the cross-boundary and national approach, in line with their procedures for preferred suppliers. I believe that we are not just part of further education. We very much are a specialist offender education team, and I think that we could work on a preferred supplier basis. There are some LSCs who have had no experience of working with prisons and do not have a prison in their local area. I am professionally completing a 30-year sentence in prisons, and I do remember pre-1991. There were a lot of providers that had no interest in prison education and no expertise. We have moved considerably from that standpoint, and I think that the LSCs have a good foundation on which to build the further education concept, by using current prison expertise.

Q277 Mr Chaytor: In the new prison education contracts, will they be still purely for prison education, with vocational training remaining the responsibility of the prison, or will providers be invited to tender for both?
Ms Ohsan: I think that at the moment they are still having discussions with members of the Public Commercial Services Union, whose members were very anti the previous arrangement proposed under Rex: that the vocational training and education departments should come together. There are big concerns for them, in terms of their salary, terms and conditions, and pensions, which would not be protected—an issue which, unfortunately, prison education department staff have gone through three times. We have cleared some of these problems but there was a big problem, and I believe they are having discussions with the OLSU and the Prison Service to see whether they can explore other options—where they could still work as Prison Service employees but more closely with the education department staff. The discussion is therefore not finished.

Q278 Mr Chaytor: What is NATFHE's view from the educational point of view and the point of view of the prisoner? Leaving aside the concerns of prison officers about their pensions, which is the best model?
Mr Taubman: I think a model which has very close integration between the vocational training and the education. To an extent, who runs that contract is secondary. Clearly colleges have experience in work-based training and could deliver it, but the Prison Service has been delivering it as well. Whatever happens, they have to be much more integrated, and both of them integrated in sentence planning and other education, for instance offender behaviour programmes.

Q279 Chairman: Could I ask what sort of people provide the teaching? When we were in Scandinavia, we were impressed that some of the teachers we met were teaching in the prison in the day and would be in their regular college in the evening, teaching non-prisoners. I take it that most of the people you employ to do this work only teach with prisoners.
Ms Mitchell: A lot of them have come from mainstream; a lot have come from the primary and secondary sectors, and then adult education. Some do work in local colleges. In Manchester we have people working in Manchester Prison, Styal Prison, Risley Prison, who also work in the college and who also work in the community. We do work in the approved premises and we work in resettlement units. So, yes, we do have an integration. As was pointed out earlier, once people work in prisons—I transferred from the primary sector—they do bite the bullet, enjoy it, and it does become part of them. We find that, despite a lot of the fragmentation and uncertainty of prison staff, there is a tremendous loyalty. People do have career progression. A lot of us have worked through the system and become part of the prison education management. So it is no longer the case that prison education is the backwater of education, education in prisons. People do see it as a career aiding social inclusion, and do enjoy working in that environment.
Ms Harding: We have staff moving both ways, particularly our visiting lecturers who are looking to move to a full timetable and permanent work, who will perhaps work 50% of their time in some of our local prisons and 50% back in the main college. Similarly with the prisons that are further away. That is perhaps impossible in terms of where they live, but they will work in their local college as well.

Q280 Chairman: So what you are saying is that there is this cadre of really highly qualified, professional teachers, teaching and tutoring in prisons. Will the change in arrangements lose them or not? Is there a guarantee that we will keep them, or will the contracts go to LSCs all over the country and we will lose the professional expertise that we have built up?
Ms Harding: That is a concern that is already beginning to happen. Because staff are frightened and they do not know what the future is—and they have mortgages to pay, the same as anyone else—they are beginning to look for permanent positions outside, if that is an option. A lot are really dedicated to prison work and want to stay, but they have their own personal lives to consider as well. I think that the end of Project Rex caused a lot of concern. I spent a lot of time—and I was new at the college at the time—going round saying, "Yes, we are committed to prison education", "Yes, we are behind you", knowing that there was no guarantee that we would have the contract; no guarantee about who would get the contract; or what was going to happen at that point of time. That is destabilising, and we are talking about an area of work which is difficult to recruit to generally. Teaching in FE in general is difficult; basic skills work is incredibly difficult; work in the young offenders' institutions is even harder, because they should really be schoolteacher-trained and they earn an FE rate, which is considerably less than schools—and in schools they would get an additional allowance if they were dealing with the difficult young people they are dealing with. So it is quite difficult. The staff who have remained and have stuck with it are very committed, but there is a fear that we will lose them if the contracting period is run out over a long period.

Q281 Helen Jones: May I ask a quick follow-up on that? In your view, which way is the best way for staff to keep up with developments in their own field? If we want prison education to be high quality and up to date, is there some advantage in them teaching part of their time in other institutions as well, or do you find there are ways of them keeping up with developments even when they are teaching full-time in prison?
Ms Harding: We offer staff development to all our staff, wherever they are based. So if they wish to go on curriculum development specific to their vocational area, basic skills, or general education, they can do that with general education staff from the main site, who may be teaching adults and young people. However, if there is specific work around prisoner education, we would encourage staff to take part in that. There is a very good national network which all the colleges are involved in.
Ms Mitchell: We are very fortunate in prisoner education: we have three strands. We tap into the Prison Service mandatory training of prisoncraft; we can use the college's main network, as you said—the mainstream—and then we have networks where we have seminar groups, curricula groups, for specific prison education curricula. In many ways, therefore, we have a broader staff development programme for educators in prison than we do in mainstream. We have started to take people out of our college and to give them some of the education for behavioural management for difficult students. I think that in prison education we have a lot to offer mainstream as well.
Ms Ohsan: On the other hand, it is not all contractors/providers who are able to spend the money that the big providers are spending on staff development. We have a number of reports that, in some areas, staff do not have access to staff development; they are mainly part-time. The majority of the staff in a lot of the education departments are part-time. They do not get the same amount of pay when they go on their training as they would do if they were full-time; so there is a disincentive. Some of them do not work when the training is available, even if it is being provided by the parent college with the contract. So it is a mixture. There are some very good practices, which certainly we support, and some which are not very good. We have a difficulty, given the nature of contracting, in trying to have that spread uniformly. Also, we should not forget the few private providers. It is a totally different picture, which of course does not apply to those.

Q282 Mr Chaytor: Is it better or worse?
Ms Ohsan: For some of them, we do not know—or we know very little. We do have a rapport with the colleges, because there is a history of industrial relations, of contact, of working together. With some of the private providers we just do not have that at all. Contact is nonexistent. One place where we do have contact, it is just disaster after disaster—things I cannot say here. However, it is a totally different picture—on everything we have said. I do not think there would be any agreement between that contractor and NATFHE, if we were to sit here together, about the staff, about the provision, and everything else.

Q283 Chairman: So you think we should bring some private providers in, to hear their side of the story?
Ms Ohsan: Yes, because there are about four private providers, I think.
Dr Brennan: To be clear about that, I think there are two private providers and two LEA services that hold the other contracts which colleges do not hold. So there are actually two that operate, I think—and private prisons.
Ms Mitchell: Can I clarify the private prison sector? There are some which deliver their own education in house. They do not contract out their education service. UKDS is one of those providers. The old Group 4, which is now GSL, has three prisons in the country: one at Altcourse in Liverpool; one at The Wolds in Hull; and Rye Hill in Rugby. Although they are a private prison, they do contract out their education to our college, so it is a college provider—which has recently meant that there is the standardisation of education services across the Home Office and the private sector.

Mr Taubman: Could I bring up a point about professional development and just look to the future? We are in the process of getting a sector skills council for lifelong learning, which will be dealing with colleges, universities, youth work, et cetera. I think that there will be a criminal justice sector skills council. Somehow we will need to bring those together. To refer to some of the points made in the earlier session, about the role of other prison staff, prison officers, et cetera, somehow we need to get elements of training crossing over between prison staff, prison education staff, and staff out in the community. I am sure AoC and the colleges, and certainly NATFHE, will be saying to the lifelong learning sector skills council that, once they are up and running, offender education is something they need to take into account.

Chairman: Can we turn now to the curriculum, basic skills and vocational training? Kerry is going to lead us on this.

Q284 Mr Pollard: Are we concentrating too much on basic skill, perhaps to the detriment of vocational education—bearing in mind that *Toe by Toe* reading scheme we talking about earlier on, which seemed to be quite an exciting venture?

Dr Brennan: I tried to say in my opening remarks that there is that need to shift the emphasis, and to see vocational learning as a vehicle for also tackling basic skills issues. Perhaps my colleagues would like to comment on it from an operational point of view.

Ms Harding: Outside the prison sector we would normally provide integrated provision. So we would provide basic skills education on the factory floor, in industry, and in our vocational workshops. In some prisons that is working well. In one of our largest prisons—Birmingham—we have classes and teaching alongside the vocational training. However, the targets are different in the different sectors. Prisoners do not necessarily stay long enough in any one prison to be able to get a formal vocational qualification. Hopefully some of the national developments, like unitisation of the curriculum, will help that. Certainly if we can get the tracking between prisons, that would help; but of course not every prison offers the same vocational area. Personally, my staff would like to see a much closer tie-up in the new contracting round between the two, notwithstanding all the difficulties in terms of contracts of employment, et cetera, and all the other difficulties—because that is how we operate outside.

Ms Mitchell: I have been a basic skills tutor and, as an education manager in a prison, was appalled at the idea of calling it "basic skills" or "foundation studies" for adults who had failed. I had an education programme, a curriculum, that did not have the words "basic skills" anywhere on it. I was at Liverpool Prison, and we continued to deliver the creative arts, parentcraft—any vocational area that we could get the prison to deliver, we did—but our accreditation was always the skills for life, the basic skills. I think that a lot of good managers and good colleges delivered the skills-for-life project through vocational areas. I am sure you will agree that the last thing a basic skills student—if we can call them that—wants is 30 hours in a classroom, doing basic skills. They have failed once: we do not want to give them more of the same. I really believe that we have to look to the employability, the vocational areas, to look at what the offender needs, wants, is going to use, and embed basic skills. That is one thing we are good at, as educationists. I think that governors were probably preoccupied with the outcome: it had to be level 2. It had to be a level 2 accreditation for key performance targets. We have gone through a period where some governors insisted that that was all that was taught; but there were ways of delivering it. I have to mention that my saddest day was walking into a prison and seeing on the door of a classroom "KPT class". I went in and asked the people what were they learning and they said, "KPT". They did not know what it was but they knew the governor had to get KPTs—key performance targets. In fact, they were doing English and maths, numeracy and literacy—because that was the focus of education. Whether you needed KPT or not, you were in it. Thank goodness, we are moving towards this broader curriculum, this wider approach, but with the national skills strategy at the very heart of it. that, We must establish the underpinning knowledge to enable them to be eligible for work..

Mr Taubman: I echo everything that has been said. Of course we recognise the need for basic skills, for literacy and numeracy. The figures of those without level 1 qualifications inside prison is absolutely appalling. However, I would make a very strong plea for a broad curriculum. We cannot live by bread alone. Art, culture, drama—some of you will have seen, as I did, that TV film about opera in a prison—these can give offenders a real hold on learning. It can be there first significant piece of self-confidence. We use these methods outside, in community education and adult education, of trying to get people re-involved, re-engaged in learning, through their interests—and I think that we can do so in prisons. It is particularly important in terms of cultural studies. Again, with the disproportionate number of black and ethnic minority prisoners, black studies and ethnic minority studies can give them a sense of pride in their race, in their ethnicity, which can be a really important first step back to learning, back to education.

Q285 Mr Pollard: Bobby Cummines said earlier—and it was very powerful evidence that he gave—that employability was the key to stopping recidivism. It strikes me, therefore, that if we start by vocational training, it might unlock interest in the basic skills. If you have to read a plan to build something or other, suddenly you see the relevance of that. Is that not a better way of approaching it, rather than doing the KPT, or whatever it was you said earlier? That does not mean anything to me, never mind anybody else, and we are supposed to know about these things. Lastly, we were at one of the prisons on the Isle of Wight a short time ago. They had a welding

workshop there which had been shut down for 18 months, perhaps even two years, because they could not recruit a welder. That is a key skill with which you could walk into dozens of jobs, wherever you have been before. How do we get round that? How do we encourage people to say that it is worthwhile to come into prison education?

Ms Harding: It is quite difficult in some ways. A group of staff seem to take to it like a duck to water and that is what they want to do; others do not. We have to remember that we have national shortages in welding education.

Q286 Chairman: I remember that you could not get many of them in Huddersfield.

Ms Harding: No, and we have trouble with it in Dudley as well. Similarly, we have problems in construction and plumbing—equally areas that would encourage people into employment, because there are different levels of employment and they could move through those. However, those are not the areas which, as prison education contractors, we are in control of. I think that having that as part of the education contract would encourage people, because it would provide a career structure within which it is not just a prison officer: there is an education structure; there are jobs where we could move people in and out of mainstream prison education, community education, for those skill areas. That would be a way of encouraging people in, and the pay rates would also probably be better than the training rates.

Mr Taubman: Prison education lecturers are the only staff in a prison who get no financial recognition of the fact they work in prisons. Secretaries in prisons, who have no contact with prison, get what is called an environment allowance. Prison education staff do not. I have to say some prison education staff are not even paid the same rates as outside, the college. Not all, but some. So I think that pay and security would go a long way.

Ms Ohsan: May I add to that, if you are talking about the vocational instructors—which you touched on before? There is an issue about vocational instructors not coming into education, which is to do with their own qualifications, and their feeling that they are not up to doing what the others do. I think that is something which cannot be ignored. In the same way as the earlier witnesses talked about prison officers feeling that they do not want to be seen to be less qualified or less able than their students, I think there is that dimension to be looked at. It cannot be ignored in terms of recruiting.

Q287 Mr Pollard: We have talked about the emphasis on prison education. Should we suggest that the prison governor should be called "prison governor and director of education"—so that we were setting the scene much better than we are now? If you look at the hierarchy in a prison, you see the governor, the assistant governor, and so on and, right at the very end, is the head of prison education. It seems to me that it is entirely the wrong way round. There is not enough emphasis, and that would send out a signal, would it not?

Dr Brennan: It is a very nice idea. One can see all sorts of reasons why people might not be willing to take it up, but I think that it does emphasise the importance of a change of culture, of a recognition of learning as a key component of offender development within the prison environment. If we could get to that, then the question of who carries the title is perhaps less important.

Mr Taubman: I would like to see prison education departments as learning centres for the whole prison.

Q288 Valerie Davey: How do you feel that the work you are doing, and the difficulties you have already expressed about terms and conditions, fits in with the voluntary sector work which we have just heard about in the earlier session? How does this dovetail within a prison—or does it not?

Mr Taubman: I think that it should complement what goes on in the prison. Teaching prisoners is a skill. Teaching basic skills is a skill. Over the last five years, the Government have put an enormous amount of resources and effort into training basic skills—the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit. I think that prisoners working with other prisoners, volunteering, helping, can be an incredibly useful adjunct. In particular, the voluntary sector has an enormous role in terms of resettlement, and the transition from inside prison to back out in the community.

Q289 Valerie Davey: Who then oversees how that is organised within a prison?

Ms Mitchell: The new role—and I take your point about the governor also being the director of education—has devolved that responsibility to his head of learning and skills. I think the future will see that head of learning and skills reporting directly to the governor and being his or her education adviser. The head of learning and skills has the responsibility of providing education, training and accreditation to the whole prison regime, and bringing it together as a secure learning college. I see the voluntary sector as a key part, alongside Connections, Jobcentre Plus, the education department—we are already working in partnerships. You asked about construction. We are running a bakery project at Lindholme Prison, where City College deliver the education but Thomas Danby College in Leeds—the bakery specialists—send out their bakers, their tutors. It is a partnership approach where each person, with their core specialisms, can supply and serve that prison, under the auspices of the head of learning and skills, to give a quality product. We cannot be jealous of our own patch. We have to share and give the best quality across the board.

Q290 Chairman: They are very emollient answers, Merron, but is it not a fact that, if you were doing your job properly, you would not need enthusiastic amateurs to come in and teach reading?

Ms Mitchell: I hope that we can teach people to read in prisons. We do have Link Up schemes where we train mentors—prison staff, and volunteers, working alongside education staff. I think the *Toe by Toe* stands on its own merit. That is supplementary to, and has the enthusiasm of, the voluntary sector. We all will need the voluntary sector, but we cannot devolve our responsibility to the voluntary sector. We still have to be accountable and get outcomes for teaching people to read and have the social skills to resettle.

Q291 Jeff Ennis: Supplementary to the question that Val has just asked, is there any evidence, other than anecdotal evidence, that where you have a very active and viable charity organisation, such as the Shannon Trust or the Dialogue Trust, working in a prison, that improves the educational outputs that you people deliver in that particular prison establishment?
Ms Mitchell: I think only through the ALI-Ofsted reports, where you get a report on the whole of the prison. I think you will find more interventions of the voluntary, and education, and employer. Employers now play a big part. Certainly at City College we are an employer of prison education and, where we can, we take people on to the staff. I think probably more involvement from communities—but I do not have that evidence, except reading the Chief Inspector's reports.

Q292 Chairman: Do any of you know of work that is to be done on a kind of education audit of a prison, top to bottom? Quality of the educational managers, prison officers—the whole shebang—has anyone done that?
Ms Mitchell: The Chief Inspector does that. The ALI-Ofsted team go into a prison with the Chief Inspector, and the report is overarching of all services within the prison. Education, training and skills—whether it be by a contractor in education or by any other provider—are commented on and graded.

Q293 Mr Gibb: I wondered if we had a figure for the proportion of prisoners who leave prison without basic skills.
Ms Mitchell: The Offender Learning and Skills Unit would be the body who would collate that information. We send every piece of data on individual accreditations, on a monthly basis, to the Offender Learning and Skills Unit. They collate that data and they would have it.

Q294 Mr Gibb: We know that between 60 and 70% enter prison lacking the basic skills. Do any of you four, as the experts in this field, have any feel for what proportion leave prison? Would it be the same or less? If less, how much less?
Ms Mitchell: I would have to give that back as supplementary evidence, when I have found the details. We would like to hope, in our optimism, that we do make some route to progression, if not accreditation: that there is progression, whether that is the soft targets—

Q295 Mr Gibb: You have no idea?
Ms Mitchell: No.

Q296 Mr Gibb: I am slightly surprised, given all we have been saying about prison education, that you do not have a feel for how successful it is at the moment.
Ms Harding: I think we have to remember that not all prisoners come to the education units. A large proportion do not, partly because of the finance issues that have been previously mentioned. I think that our own retention in prison education is probably higher than in mainstream colleges. Once students come, they get hooked to it and they do like to stay. They definitely see it as they have had their privileges withdrawn if they are not allowed to attend the education classes. However, it is such a small proportion of the prison population, unfortunately.

Q297 Mr Gibb: So you are saying that you think probably quite a high proportion of prisoners leave prison without the basic skills?
Ms Harding: Yes.
Mr Taubman: To add to the technical difficulties, I do not think there is any tracking of individual prisoners in this respect. So that if you get transferred from one prison to another, you could do the same thing twice in two different prisons and appear twice in the statistics of successes, but actually only one individual is involved. I think that there are therefore some real problems about the adequacy of the data collection systems in all of this. I am certainly not aware of any systematic survey evidence which would answer the question that you have asked.

Q298 Mr Gibb: Do you think we should have that?
Mr Taubman: I think that it is part of this process of having a better grasp of the totality of the service which is being offered—better tracking systems, better information about exactly what the outputs are, and how that addresses the wide range of needs that you describe.

Q299 Mr Gibb: Do you know, if we were to go round every prison this week, every class, how many lessons in maths calculus we would find being taught?
Ms Harding: The odd one or two.

Q300 Mr Gibb: The odd one or two. Is that good?
Ms Harding: It is for those individuals who are interested in mathematics.

Q301 Mr Gibb: Is that enough though—one or two in the whole prison population of 70,000?
Ms Harding: With such a large amount of basic skills work needing to be done, they have a long way to go before they get to calculus.

Q302 Mr Gibb: We went into a prison in Finland and in the first class we came to they were teaching calculus.
Mr Taubman: But I think the literacy and numeracy are a lot higher in Finland than they are in this country.

Q303 Chairman: I do not think they are. Twenty per cent illiteracy—
Ms Ohsan: Also, we are trying to say here that the budget for education in the formal setting is tiny. It is very small. The turnover of prisoners—in some places they will be there for 12 days. What can you do in 12 days? Not very much. The ability to bring the prisoners to the classes, even when they have been assessed, is not there. Your prison officers are up to here with overcrowding. The systems—the certificates do not follow people. So there are those things. You cannot just see it as, "It's not good enough" or "It's very little" or "It's not a high enough level". It is the whole package, the whole culture, the whole system which needs to be looked at. The prison education—the area we represent—is a tiny part of it. We are hoping we can work with the others to make it more holistic but, at the moment, it is very small.

Q304 Mr Gibb: Would you say that prison education is a shambles? That is what you are saying, is it not?
Ms Ohsan: I would not say it is a shambles in terms of what the staff do and what even the providers can do, given what exists. What I think does need to be done is to bring it all together, so that it works better—which we hope OLSU and the service that is being set up will do. We hope that your Committee comes up with recommendations which will address that, so that those in charge can see that there is help and support for them as they want to change it. There was the all-party parliamentary group that came with a load of recommendations. We can sit together and say everything, get all the research, get all the studies. Unless there is the will somewhere and somebody is pushing and driving it, in a way that they will be listened to, our ability to influence is still very small. We are getting there, gradually, but we could do with some help.
Mr Gibb: So it probably would not be a shambles then?

Q305 Chairman: I do not think that the witness has said it is a shambles.
Ms Mitchell: I really do not believe it is a shambles. I believe that, for those who can access it, they are getting a quality education that mirrors, and in some cases surpasses, their mainstream provision.

Q306 Mr Gibb: How do you know that? What evidence have you got for that?
Ms Mitchell: I have evidence in that the ones who come into the adult sector, who have failed in society through standard mainstream education, who do not have any qualifications, under that captive setting do achieve and can go out with a vocational skill.

Q307 Mr Gibb: Do you have some numbers for that? Some figures?
Ms Mitchell: No, we only have the positives because there is no national system for processing individual accreditation—

Q308 Mr Gibb: That is fine, but it is all assertion so far. Are there any numbers? Facts?
Ms Mitchell: No, we do not have the numbers.

Q309 Mr Gibb: Can someone get the numbers for us?
Ms Mitchell: There has not been any electronic transfer of records or data collection.

Q310 Chairman: Let our witness come back with the answer. It is their job to teach, not to collect the stats. That is the problem.
Ms Mitchell: We do acknowledge there are barriers, and greater access would bring greater achievement.
Dr Brennan: I am sure that Merron, Jeanne, and other colleges could provide you with the data which they collect on the individual learners that they deliver to. There is some national aggregation of that data, which the OLSU is able to provide; but I think Nick is quite right in that you do not have a comprehensive picture. The failings are management failings; they are not failings at the level of delivery in the teaching situation. They are failings in the system to understand the need to create a proper progression; a proper understanding; a system which assesses, delivers, reassesses, follows through into a post-release situation; understands the progression, the attainments and so on, which individuals acquire during that process; and manages the processes much better. That is what I think is missing in the present system.

Q311 Paul Holmes: This is about the collection of records and the passing on of records in terms of what is happening with prisoner education. In one of the prisons we visited they were saying, "We hardly ever get any records coming from a previous prison". NATFHE and the Association of Colleges did some research where 61% of the people who responded said they always sent such records on, but 67% said they hardly ever received any such records.
Mr Taubman: Part of it is the terrific movement of prisoners. You might send the records on to the prison that you think the prisoner is being transferred to, and they never actually arrive there: they are at another prison altogether. Numbers are swamping everything, I think. The phenomenal rise in numbers is really—
Chairman: It is numbers and change.

Q312 Paul Holmes: But, in theory, if this was electronic and computerised it would be so easy.
Mr Taubman: Yes, and one assessment at the start which could follow a prisoner through all the establishments they were in.

Q313 Paul Holmes: You are saying that prisoners have to have the basic reassessment every time they go to a new institution.
Mr Taubman: Yes.
Ms Harding: The electronic transfer would solve some of the issues that were raised about doing calculus or something. Internet access is not allowed in British prisons—the Open University programmes, a lot of distance learning programmes. Some of our prisons will not even allow us to take materials in on CD-ROM. A lot of modern education is provided using that type of technology, and that is a whole area of work where, for the more able students—and there are numbers who are more able, and numbers doing OU courses—it has to be transcribed, and they have to do the courses that are more paper-based. In order to do some of the work that might be more useful possibly to industry in the future, they have to have access to the Internet.

Q314 Paul Holmes: We did hear in Scandinavia that there were examples of allowing access to limited pages on the Internet. So it can be done, although it appears we cannot do it in England. But the original question, about transferring prisoners' educational records around—when are we going to get to grips with something as basic and simple as that?
Dr Brennan: I think that is a question you have to address to the Prison Service.
Ms Mitchell: Colleges can do it currently. We can move students' records around, however big the college. We have been asking the Prison Service to bring in electronic transfer of records for 15 years. When we manage that, we will stop the retesting and reassessment. We will move forward. I have to admit that our transfer of records is a shambles in the Prison Service.
Chairman: We got your "shambles" in!

Q315 Jonathan Shaw: That leads us on to the next point. We have a heading here, "How funding can be improved". There is always pressure and there are always demands for more money in every area of the public sector. "How can we better use funding?" might be a better heading. One of the things I want to ask you, in terms of the way the contracts might be shaped in the future, comes back to a point you made, John Brennan, in your opening statement, when you said that there was uncertainty about the lack of authority the head of learning skills would have with the new contracts. At the moment, my understanding is that they do not have any authority in terms of the contracts. How might that be? What are the possibilities, particularly if you are looking at flexibility, local prisons, and using the centres of excellence you described earlier, Merron, with the bakers? How could a head of learning and skills be able to use the local contracts flexibly, to maximise the money that is available?
Ms Mitchell: Probably in the same way that a principal can run a college. They look for best value; they look to the LSC; they are accountable for outcomes; they are the education adviser. For the first time in prisons we have governors who understand learning and skills. They have links with the community and with the colleges in their area. They have links with the Prison Service, the Offender Learning Skills Unit and DfES. Given the right amount of authority within the prison, which some have—and some are doing excellent jobs in co-ordinating the vocational training, the education, the voluntary sector within their prison—I think that the finance side is secondary to the quality side. I think that will be their ability—to look at the money available and spend it effectively across a broad range of services.
Ms Harding: One of the difficulties we have had—for instance, a lot of our prisons are currently being refitted and they are refitting their education departments, but in only one of the nine prisons we work with have they spoken to the educationists about what was needed. So they have put a lot of resources into things that actually do not work in a teaching situation.

Q316 Chairman: We went to a school like that in Norway.
Ms Ohsan: There is an opportunity now—we were talking about the prototypes earlier—where the LSC is talking to heads of learning and skills. We do not know who else they are talking to, in terms of prototypes. I think that is an opportunity for those who are involved in education to be there at the time when they are developing the specifications, the contracts, to say, "This is the sort of thing you should have, so that it works better". I believe the AoC is not involved in the consultations. We are certainly not involved.

Q317 Jonathan Shaw: This is an important junction, is it not, in terms of getting it right—and none of you are involved in this discussion.
Ms Harding: In my own LSC, we have a person who has been appointed to look at this. We do not have any prisons within the Black Country area. They have no knowledge of the Prison Service, very little knowledge of education—because they have not come from the side that deals with college within the LSC, they are an administrator really—and we had to find out who they were by accident, rather than their automatically looking at the list of prison contractors and saying, "Oh, one of our local colleges is on that list. I can go there for information". That is a concern.

Q318 Jonathan Shaw: We have not missed the boat just yet.
Ms Harding: No.

Q319 Jonathan Shaw: There is still plenty of time in which the LSC can get everyone together and sort this out, so that we have local flexibility that maximises the use of what is already there.
Mr Taubman: The most effective use of resources would be to have an individual learning plan which was integrated and ran parallel to the sentence plan, and there was an entitlement for funding of that.

Chairman: This has been an extremely good session—both the first session and this one. Because I know most of the panel of witnesses this morning so well, I know that you will keep in touch with us. If there are things that we did not cover, keep the dialogue going because we are, as I said before, determined to make this an excellent inquiry.

Supplementary memorandum from the Association of Colleges

PRISON EDUCATION

Introduction

1. AoC is pleased to submit this supplementary memorandum to amplify points which emerged during the oral evidence session on 20 October. It focuses on two aspects:

— The role of the Learning and skills Council in contracting for prisoner education.

— Prisoner learning data management and transfer.

Contracting of Prisoner Education—Potential Role of the Learning and Skills Council

2. It is understood that current plans are for responsibility for contracting for and measuring the performance of prison education delivery to be transferred to LSC. AoC has no objection in principle to such a transfer, rather it recognises that there can be benefits in terms of integrating the planning of prison education provision within a comprehensive framework.

3. However, LSC is as yet inexperienced in the delivery of education to offenders, with little or no expertise in the specialist requirements of delivering learning within a secure environment. Prison education is a specialist area and differs substantially from mainstream education. If LSC is to manage its new responsibilities successfully, it will be important that it builds capacity in this field very quickly.

4. In establishing a new approach LSC will need to face a number of important policy questions, especially in relation to

— Funding.

— Operational management.

— Data systems.

— Maintaining expertise.

Funding

5. The current LSC funding model for further education does not fit easily into the prison setting. Under that model funding is essentially output based, whereas currently prison education providers are funded for input hours. For the latter, education is delivered to as many offenders as the prison can provide to the ordered classes on a 50.2 week year basis. If the LSC decided to mirror mainstream funding mechanisms, and in doing so introduced a three year planning model of provision, that would represent a major shift in approach and could have a considerable impact on the prison regime.

6. For example, under the FE funding model there is no requirement for a fixed activity period, as performance and funding are based on accredited outcomes. Once these outcomes have been achieved provision ceases and a new class begun. There are also standard prices for defined qualifications, based on average delivery requirements. Applied without modification, in a prison setting, this could result in erratic provision, programmes unsuited to the actual learning needs of offenders, and loss of learning continuity as learners became ready to move on. In addition, it could involve staff disruption with serious inherent recruitment and selection problems. Unless the needs of prisoners likely to pass through the education department are identified prior to the funding period, there would be no possibility of matching the provision to the offenders' profiles, and benefits of the more sustained learning regime in prisons possible under an input model would be lost.

Management

7. Transfer of responsibility for the provision of offender learning raises questions about the division of responsibilities between OLSU and LSC for overall strategic management of the service, which do not yet appear to have been addressed.

8. A shift to LSC control also raises questions about the management and ownership of prison education programmes within prisons themselves—in particular, about the respective responsibilities of LSC and prison governors, and how these can interface to optimise learning outcomes.

9. Within the mainstream FE system, colleges are free to recruit students for the programmes agreed within their delivery plan, and to ensure that programmes are matched to student learning needs and offer realistic prospect of achievement of the defined learning goals. In contrast, an education provider inside a prison has no control of the student input, of numbers of students, of type of student, needs/wants of students.

10. Equally, access to learning must be managed within the exigencies of the prison operating regime. For example, the "churn effect" (movement of prisoners for population management), and the operational requirements of prison management (for example, the need for court visits, the availability of staff to escort prisoners to classes, and so on) must be taken into account by making the on-going, roll on/roll off education programmes as flexible as possible.

Data management

11. Colleges have an effective Management Information System with a high staffing profile both to support their own internal management, and to return essential data to LSC. The infrastructure of current prison contracts does not allow for this, and it will be necessary to extend current data management systems to prison education to ensure comparability of information. While this could produce a considerable improvement in the quality of the performance data available, it is likely to require investment.

Maintaining expertise

12. The approach to contracting built up over the last few years has enabled some colleges to build a substantial body of expertise in prison education. If a transfer of responsibility were to result in local LSCs seeking to procure education only from local providers (as has been evident in some other areas of provision) this could result in a substantial loss of current provider expertise, to the detriment of service quality.

13. For example if contracting was based on locality rather than expertise City College Manchester (currently holding 21 contracts) would provide education to only one prison and Dudley College (with 12 contracts) would be unable to provide education to any prisons. It also worth noting that in present circumstances there is often no relationship between an offender's prison, the local LSC, his work or his home.

14. There are also noticeable differences in the way in which local LSCs augment mainstream funding. Some LSCs provide discretionary funds for projects/outcomes to colleges which enhance the mainstream offer. If extended to prison education this could lead to a fragmented provision, with little national parity and result in uneven levels of support as prisoners move from prison to prison, with consequent adverse effects on equality of opportunity.

15. The current LSC model does not encompass these complexities, and if the transfer of responsibility is to result in improved outcomes for prison learners, it will be important that LSC and OLSU give full consideration—in conjunction with providers—to the design of an approach to funding, management and data collection which takes full account of the realities of delivery within a prison framework.

Suggestions for the future

16. Until the National Offender Management Service is fully established and there is stability within the prison/probation service, current contract arrangements to have been permitted to continue (subject to the provider being willing to do so, the Governor being satisfied with the provision and the Prison Service's Contracts and Procurement Unit (CPU) agreeing the funding arrangements).

17. If responsibility for prison education is transferred to LSC, AoC believes that this should be managed within a clear national framework which takes account of all of the considerations set out above. The establishment of such a framework would, it believes, ensure consistency of provision and quality across the secure estate which purely local or regional management may not be able to provide.

Prisoner learning data management and transfer

18. The earlier AoC submission drew attention to the need for a more effective approach to the management of prisoner learner data.

19. Unfortunately many systems have failed dramatically during the last 20 years and we are still left with the aged Green Card 2055 A(c) system which is totally ineffective. This results in re-assessment, re-testing and student frustration and disengagement.

20. One full initial assessment should inform an effective individual learning plan/sentence plan. Progression and accreditation, together with appropriate soft outcomes, can then be accurately monitored and evaluated.

21. An effective electronic transfer of prisoner records as prisoners move between prisons and subsequently into the community is essential if provision is to be tailored to individual offender need, and the cost-effectiveness of current investment maximised.

22. Currently OLSU collate all data pertinent to the screening and accreditation of offenders. At local level prison education providers are only required to record accredited outcomes therefore colleges can demonstrate individual progression but have no national statistics. But national aggregations do not distinguish the extent to which offenders may be repeating learning programmes, nor do they provide secure baselines against which the needs of offenders can be assessed or the progress made accurately measured.

23. There is in consequence a pressing need to develop data management systems which can track individual learners, and ensure that the national aggregations provide an accurate picture of actual learner development.

November 2004

Wednesday 27 October 2004

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr David Chaytor	Mr Nick Gibb
Valerie Davey	Paul Holmes
Jeff Ennis	Jonathan Shaw

Memorandum submitted by the Prison Reform Trust

1. Introduction

1.1 The Prison Reform Trust (PRT) is an independent charity that works to create a just, effective and humane penal system. We inquire into the system, inform prisoners, staff and the wider public and seek to influence government towards reform. PRT provides the secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Penal Affairs. Each year we publish a number of reports on all aspects of prison life that receive widespread media attention, inform ministers and officials and lead to changes in policy and practice. Over 4,000 prisoners and their families contact our advice and information service each year. We jointly produce a range of prisoners' information booklets with the Prison Service.

1.2 PRT is pleased to respond to the inquiry's request for evidence.

1.3 This submission firstly examines important background information in relation to prison overcrowding that cannot be ignored when examining any area of prison life. It then goes on to identify the level of educational need amongst the prison population. The main focus, however, is on a report published at the end of last year by PRT, *Time To Learn—Prisoners' Views on Prison Education* (October 2003). The key findings and recommendations are highlighted and copies are enclosed for the committee to examine in more detail. Finally, this submission considers issues concerning specific groups of prisoners, women, young offenders, remand prisoners, elderly prisoners and mentally ill prisoners. A number of references are made to other PRT publications which also will be sent to the Committee together with this submission.

1.4 It is important to note that during 2003–04 prisoners spent an average of 23.1 hours each week engaged in purposeful activity, lower than the Prison Service's target of 24 hours. The Prison Service has only met its purposeful activity target once in the last eight years. On average prisoners spent 3.4 hours in education each week and 1.6 hours in vocational work compared to 2 hours in exercise and 12.1 hours in work/workshops.

1.5 The bedrocks that should underpin education provision, sentence planning and personal officer schemes are missing in many prisons, particularly the large local establishments which hold the bulk of the prison population. Sentence planning, which is extremely important if prisoners are to use their time constructively, is often haphazard and not carried through. Similarly personal officer schemes which are crucial in order to engage with and motivate prisoners are not in place for many prisoners. HM Chief Inspector of Prisons recently reported that over the last three years the proportion of prisoners with a personal officer at HMP Leeds has fallen from 90% to 40% (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Full Announced Inspection, 30 June–4 July, 2003).

1.6 Prison has a poor record in reducing re-offending—59% of prisoners are reconvicted within two years of being released. The reconviction rate for male young adults (under 21) over the same period is 74%. For prisoners who are sentenced for burglary, one of the most common offences, the reconviction rate is 75%.

2. The Context

2.1 *Overcrowding*

2.1.1 In April the prison population reached its highest ever recorded total of 75,544 resulting in unprecedented levels of overcrowding. At the end of May, 91 of the 138 prisons were overcrowded. Eighteen prisons had 50% more prisoners than their uncrowded capacity.

2.1.2 Around 17,000 prisoners are currently sharing a cell designed for one. The vast majority will eat their meals and share use of a toilet (sometimes unscreened) in the cell.

2.1.3 A Prison Reform Trust report, *Prison Overcrowding: The Inside Story* (September 2002), revealed how over three-quarters of prison watchdogs are concerned that prisons in England and Wales are suffering from a deepening overcrowding crisis which is threatening prison safety, leading to prisoners being held in

inhuman and degrading conditions, prompting continued movement from one establishment to another and damaging attempts to reduce re-offending by prisoners. The report is based on findings from a unique study of Independent Monitoring Boards, the watchdogs appointed by the Home Secretary to monitor prison conditions.

2.1.4 Several Boards made particular reference to the disruptive effects of overcrowding on education and skills provision:

- "The problem we are encountering . . . is constant transferring of prisoners—particularly Category Bs—this does have an effect in workshops and education. The throughput of prisoners is having an effect all round, with specific impacts on reception and property, discipline office, correspondence etc." (Birmingham IMB)
- ". . . we have witnessed effects on individuals' programmes of rehabilitation, training and education and courses such as offending behaviour, when these are suddenly disrupted mid-stream and the inmate has to go through reassessment and allocation at the new establishment. Such action 'flies in the wind' of the policy to try and address individuals' problems and carry out rehabilitation to enable them to re-enter society as better citizens." (Soke Heath IMB)
- "All aspects of education and activities are at risk of being disrupted; teachers and instructors have difficulty in establishing working relationships with boys as they are constantly being moved. One boy in the middle of his A level course had to be transferred out. Such movement is demoralising and dispiriting for both the boys and the staff and is out of the control of the Governor." (Feltham BoV).
- "The increased volume of prisoner movements ties up officers to the extent there may be no courses provided for the short stay prisoners." (Woodhill BoV).

2.2 *Staffing problems*

2.2.1 Overcrowding puts staff under enormous pressures and has contributed to high levels of staff sickness. The average staff sickness rate in 2003–04 was 13.3 days, far higher than other parts of government. This is an improvement on the previous financial year when on average each member of staff took 14.7 days' sickness absence. However, the number of working days lost due to sickness absence per member of staff increased by 23% between 1999 and 2003.

2.2.2 Many prison officers leave within two years of joining the Prison Service. Of the 2,245 officers recruited between 2000 and 2003, 1,390 left within two years of signing up, a drop-out rate of 60%.

2.2.3 Prisons suffer from inconsistent and unstable leadership with a high turnover of prison governors. In the five years to March just under a third of all prisons (44) have had four or more governors or acting governors in charge. The average tenure for prison governors in HM Prison Service is one year and nine months.

2.2.4 Staffing shortages mean that prisoners do not get unlocked and taken to education or training programmes simply because there are not enough staff on the wing to escort them to another part of the prison. PRT has received anecdotal evidence from across the estate that this is happening in prisons on a regular basis.

3. Education and Skills Need and Provision

3.1 Many prisoners enter custody with a history of educational under-achievement and poor skills:

- half of all prisoners are at or below the level expected of an 11-year-old in reading, two-thirds in numeracy and four-fifths in writing;
- more than half of male and more than two-thirds of female adult prisoners have no qualifications at all;
- half of all prisoners do not have the skills required by 96% of jobs;
- nearly half of male sentenced prisoners were excluded from school and nearly a third of all prisoners were regular truants whilst at school.

3.2 There are a significant number of prisoners suffering from dyslexia. Research suggests it could be as many as 17% of the total prison population.

3.3 Education is critical for the effective rehabilitation of prisoners. Research highlighted by the Government's Social Exclusion Unit has found that prisoners who do not take part in education or training are three times more likely to be re-convicted and that basic skills learning can contribute to a reduction in re-offending of around 12%.

3.4 In 2002–03 an average of £1,185 per prisoner was spent on education in jails. This is less than half the average cost of secondary school education at £2,590 per student per year, which many prisoners have missed.

3.5 The Prison Service has made the delivery of basic skills programmes for literacy, and numeracy a top priority and in recent years it has made significant progress in this area. In 2003–04 the Service predicts it will surpass all its targets for basic skills provision. However, this achievement masks significant shortcomings in the opportunities for learning available to all prisoners across the estate.

4. Time to Learn—Prisoners' Views on Prison Education

4.1 PRT, supported by Barclays, published a unique study in October 2003 of prisoner's perspectives on prison education based on interviews with 153 prisoners in 12 prisons. *Time to Learn* says that prisoners are being denied opportunities for education and training because of a failure to prioritise learning. It states: "Despite the highly appreciated efforts of some education staff there was a desultory second best feel to prisoners' accounts of education".

4.2 The report highlights a number of barriers to learning in prison:

- a shortage of places on courses and in training workshops resulting in long waiting lists, particularly in local prisons. Overall there is a lack of vocational and accredited skills-based workshops;
- movement between prisons disrupting education due to a failure to transfer educational records and significant differences between prisons in the courses offered;
- wide disparities in education funding between prisons resulting in striking variations in curriculum. Some prisons focus mainly on target driven basic skills, others offer a wide range of educational opportunities. Overall there are limited opportunities for distance learning;
- bad timetabling forcing prisoners to make trade-offs to get to classes. This involves prisoners having to choose between education or phoning their families or taking showers or exercise;
- low rates of pay for attending education courses compared to prison work, discouraging many prisoners from learning;
- inconsistencies in procedures to assess education needs and a failure automatically to follow up assessments resulting in poor sentence planning.

4.3 The report concludes that if prison education is seen as a remedial activity to tackle perceived skills deficits at the basic level then it would best not to pretend otherwise. But it warns that this would exclude at least half of the prisoners interviewed for the study. If education and training are to become a central plank of prison life then significant additional resources are needed to making this a reality across the estate. It says that the Department for Education and Skills and the Prison Service may have understated some of the difficulties they face in delivering education and skills training to prisoners and puts forward a number of key recommendations:

- the resources available for education and training should be comparable with those in mainstream provision, including supervised access to the internet. Funding between prisons with similar roles should be made equitable;
- rates of pay for prisoners attending education and training should be comparable with the rates of pay for other work;
- the curriculum should be of equal relevance to the needs of all prisoners, taking into account the wide range of different abilities and backgrounds. It should also ensure a degree of consistency of provision between prisons, in particular between prisons of the same security category;
- in managing prison regimes staff should ensure that prisoners attending education and training should receive the same access as other prisoners to facilities and the main regime activities;
- learning passports or personal records of achievement that include targets for education and training, to be maintained by prisoners and supported by staff, should be introduced;
- successful peer-support schemes in education should be increased and the active involvement of prisoners.

5. Resettlement

5.1 If prisoners are to benefit from the education and skills training they receive whilst in custody it is critical that they are given support before release to make preparations for continuing their studies or training when they leave prison.

5.2 The Prison Service introduced a new resettlement key performance indicator (KPI) for 2002–03 to ensure that 28,200 prisoners get employment, training or education places after their release. The outcome for the year was 32,993, just over a third of the 90,000 prisoners released a year and well above the target. However, PRT's analysis of the Prisoner Service's KPIs, *A Measure of Success* (August 2003) raises questions about the accuracy of this figure.

5.3 Firstly, it includes 7,086 prisoners who only attended an interview at their local Jobcentre with a view to taking up an education, training or employment place. It is not known what actually happened to these prisoners. Secondly, the remaining 25,906 is based on a survey of a representative sample of prisoners who

were interviewed in the last three weeks of their sentence about their expectations of finding education, training or employment. It is not known if they were actually successful. The Prison Service should measure education, training or employment outcomes soon after release.

5.4 The achievements that the Prison Service would claim on resettlement are not reflective of the general practice on the ground in establishments across the country. The *Time to Learn* study found that prisoners had low expectations about the chances of finding employment or training and a general resignation about the inevitability of self-employment due to the burden of having a criminal conviction.

5.5 PRT has found that the prisons with good resettlement projects are the exceptions rather than the rule. This is supported by the findings of the Chief Inspector of Prisons who in her annual reports for the past two years has noted the "patchy" nature of provision and the "absence of a coherent and effective resettlement strategy".

5.6 The Home Office initiated a thorough review of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act in 2001. This resulted in the publication of *Breaking the Circle* in July 2002 and a subsequent commitment to find an early legislative opportunity to introduce the measures. The review recognised the crucial importance of employment opportunities, within a framework of sensible safeguards, if rehabilitation of ex-offenders was to be improved. As the Social Exclusion Unit found "Research shows that employment reduces the risk of re-offending by between a third and a half". Current legislation offers little encouragement to ex-offenders, who often feel that they have served a double sentence, with the period before an offence becomes spent continuing long after release from prison or completion of a court order. The complexity of the current arrangements is the source of much confusion for both ex-offenders and employers. PRT supports the recommendations in *Breaking the Circle* and calls for their early introduction.

6. Specific Groups of Prisoners

6.1 *Women*

6.1.1 The women's prison population is made up of a disproportionate number of vulnerable and damaged individuals. Two thirds of women in prison show symptoms of at least one neurotic disorder such as depression, anxiety and phobias. More than half are suffering from a personality disorder. Forty per cent of women in custody have attempted suicide at some stage in their life.

6.1.2 A report by PRT, supported by the Nuffield Foundation, published last year, *Troubled Inside: responding to the mental health needs of women in prison* (July 2003) highlighted the inadequate care provided for women because of the poor standard of mental health provision in prisons that falls well short of provision in the NHS. The report urged the government to ensure that the ambitions for improvements in mental health services are realised in the practice of the NHS and the Prison Service, recognising that women prisoners have much higher rates of mental disorder, drug abuse and histories of abuse and self-harm than their counterparts in the community.

6.1.3 The report of the Committee on Women's Imprisonment published by PRT four years ago called for a systematic improvement in the quality of regimes in female prisons. There is still a need to provide more opportunities for education and training that are aimed at getting women into employment or further training on release. The report's overarching recommendations were that there should be a reduction in the number of women held in custody and that a Women's Justice Board should be established to oversee all work with women offenders.

7.1 *Elderly prisoners*

7.1.1 In the last decade the number of prisoners aged over 60 in jails in England and Wales has trebled. Despite this rapid growth in the number of elderly prisoners the Prison Service has failed to respond to their needs.

7.1.2 A report published by PRT and the Centre for Policy on Ageing earlier this year, *Growing Old in Prison: a scoping study on older prisoners* revealed that education and rehabilitation programmes are not geared to the needs of elderly prisoners and only a minority pursue these programmes. It called on the Prison Service to develop a national strategy for older prisoners.

7.1.3 Due to the rising prison population and the significant increase in elderly people in custody there are now believed to be a record number of disabled prisoners, although the Prison Service does not currently collect data on disability. Disabled prisoners say that they are rarely given equal access to prison activities and some complain of poor treatment and discrimination. One prisoner recently contacted PRT saying: "I have been in three prisons and only in one have I had no problems with the treatment of the disabled. Here, education is on the third floor, so I can't access it."

7.2 *Short-term prisoners*

7.2.1 In 2002, 57% of all those sentenced to immediate custody by the courts (42,141 people) were sent to prison for terms of six months or less.

7.2.2 These short term prisoners are not usually able to benefit from education or training programmes, but as a result of imprisonment they are in danger of losing their housing, employment and stable family relationships. The Prison Service has very little to offer these prisoners in the way of constructive rehabilitation. PRT believes that these offenders would be far better off serving rigorous and effective community punishments.

7.2.3 The Home Secretary, David Blunkett, writing in the *Observer* in February 2002 stated: "Our prisons are crowded places full of people on short sentences that do not allow prison staff to do one of the things they are best at—rehabilitation work. Prison staff work hard to provide programmes which tackle poor education and skills, and help people find jobs. Those on remand and short sentences are not inside for long enough for these programmes to make a difference—but they are there long enough to lose their jobs, their family relationships, and even their homes. This can push someone off the straight and narrow for good."

7.3 *Remand prisoners*

7.3.1 In 2002 over 58,000 people were imprisoned in England and Wales awaiting trial. They endure some of the worst conditions in overcrowded local jails. There is no requirement to prepare, or begin thinking about, a sentence plan for a remand prisoner. This in turn means that their time in custody is not used to best effect. Very few are given a personal officer to inform and guide them during their time in prison and they receive little help to prepare for release.

7.3.2 Opportunities for work or education are restricted. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit has noted that that compared to sentenced prisoners, remand prisoners, are half as likely to have participated in work whilst in prison. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has found that young people on remand are 20% less likely to have attended education classes during their current period in custody. This may be an unintended outcome of the regime for those on remand, as they are not required to work or take part in education, although it is clear that for those who want to access education and training, there are insufficient places.

7.3.3 A study by the Prison Reform Trust, *Restricted Access: Legal Information for Remand Prisoners* found that prisons are failing to equip remand prisoners to prepare for trial. It found that only half (48%) of prison libraries in jails holding remand prisoners stock the standard legal texts that under Prison Service regulations they must provide. Prisoners highlighted difficulties accessing the information they needed.

7.4 *Young prisoners*

7.4.1 Three years ago the Government made a commitment in its election manifesto to develop a strategy for effective rehabiliation with the 8,000 18–20-year-old prisoners in England and Wales. This commitment has not been followed through.

7.4.2 As the Chief Inspector of Prisons reported in her inspection of Hindley YOI last month there have been significant improvements for younger teenagers but regimes have deteriorated badly for older teenagers. The Chief Inspector noted that 18–20 year olds experience long periods locked up, restricted access to training and skills, limited exercise and little or no help with resettlement.

7.5 *Mental illness*

7.5.1 Research has found that there are up to 500 patients in prison health care centres with mental health problems who are sufficiently ill to require immediate NHS admission (Mental health care in prisons, *British Journal of Psychiatry*, No 182, 2003).The Chief Inspector of Prisons has estimated, based on visits to local prisons, that 41% of prisoners being held in health care centres should have been in secure NHS accommodation (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons annual report 2001–02).

7.5.2 The Prison Service is unable to meet the needs of people with serious mental health disorders. Prison officers and health care staff struggle to cope and resources are wasted. It is wholly inappropriate for these people to be held in Prison Service custody.

7.5.3 There needs to be a comprehensive system of court liaison and diversion schemes across the country so that offenders who are acutely ill or at risk of suicide can be given hospital places, possibly under the Mental Health Act 1983.

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June 2004

Memorandum submitted by the OCR

Introduction

If education within the prison service is to achieve the goals for which it aims then it should have a coherent structure and it must provide relevant qualifications which are recognised and valued in the wider world. Without the measurement of outcomes, it can never be entirely clear whether resources are being directed in the most effective manner for both the prisoner and the prison service. Courses such as Basic Skills enable students to develop and demonstrate literacy and numeracy—key areas in which many prisoners have poor levels of achievement. Courses leading to GCSEs or vocational certification enable prisoners to gain access to the same, mainstream, qualifications as those awarded in schools or colleges.

OCR is the UK arm of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. Its roots go back to 1858 and it was created from the Oxford, Cambridge, Oxford & Cambridge, Midland Examining Group and the, vocationally-focused, Royal Society of Arts examination boards. It deals with over 7 million exam papers a year and employs 578 staff. It is the only University-owned UK awarding body. Around 3,000 schools and colleges sit OCR qualifications each year. It is one of three awarding bodies covering both general and vocational qualifications in England.

OCR's Role in Prisons

1. OCR offers a comprehensive range of qualifications which are taken up by prisons. One hundred and thirty one out of the 138 public prisons use OCR qualifications. The most prevalent are Basic Skills and the CLAIT (Computer Literacy and Information Technology) suite of qualifications. The majority of the demand is for Level 1 qualifications.

2. OCR also runs a wide programme of training events and network meetings which prison education staff attend alongside staff from other education and skills training providers. These events enable those staff to improve their assessment of prisoners' achievements and benchmark their practice against other organisations. In addition, network meetings are provided specifically for prison education staff to enable them to explore examples of good practice and discuss possible solutions to issues faced by other prisons.

3. OCR's team of centre advisors has visited a high number of prisons in order to ascertain their demand for qualifications and clarify the way in which operational constraints affect offenders' achievements. This team has also established contact with organisations such as NACRO and the resettlement services, in order to improve continuity and progression for offenders who can continue learning when they are rehabilitated, and with prison education contractors in order to confirm OCR's awareness of, and responsiveness to, the demands placed on them.

4. Since 2002 OCR has been running a project to encourage takeup of OCR qualifications in prisons improving the prisons' performance against their Key Performance Targets. This has been reflected in better assessment practice and improved offenders' attainments.

OCR's Experience in Prisons

5. In OCR's experience what has been working well is:

— the appointment of Heads of Learning and Skills, who are drawing together the learning and training activities and enabling offenders to achieve qualifications across the whole range of these activities (classroom, gym, workshop etc);

— the commitment of teaching staff who often produce materials on home PCs in their own time because of restrictions on PC use within their prison;

— contracting arrangements where the contractor is experienced in delivering education within the prison environment and is able to offer value and improve standards;

— the existence of specific performance targets for achievements; and

— local decision-making on learning programmes to ensure they meet the specific needs of the participants.

6. In OCR's experience the following have had detrimental effects:

— by the uncertainty of their current and future funding systems and criteria;

— the transition from one organisational regime to another; and

— the abrupt curtailment of Project Rex for contracting out prison education.

The consequence of the curtailment has been short-term programming centring on Basic Skills and brief "quick win" courses in areas such as food-handling and safety. The corollary of this has been a reluctance to attempt more ambitious or longer-term programmes in case they do not achieve immediate, recordable performance target achievements.

7. A significant restriction on participation is the prevalence of institutional demands and schedules, for example lockdowns, medical appointments, court appearances and solicitors' appointments. The often short-notice withdrawals from learning are very damaging to participants' learning programmes.

Recommendations in Relation to Qualifications

1. The contribution of specific qualifications towards key performance targets should be reviewed urgently to ensure actual parity between qualifications deemed to make the same contribution. For example, a one-day food-handling course is believed to have the same target value as a full CLAIT course which may take several weeks or months to complete.

2. Units of achievement should be recognised and contribute towards performance targets at all levels, not just level 2, in order to allow lower-achieving offenders to accumulate units towards a full qualification.

3. Decisions on the eligibility of qualifications to count towards targets should become consistent between prison regions. At present there are uncertainties and anecdotal indications of inconsistency in regional judgements on the eligibility of qualifications.

4. Prisoners should be entered for qualifications which are available nationally rather than for home-made or "prisons only" qualifications which have limited currency.

5. A national database of unitary achievement should be established to record all achievements which contribute towards performance targets. The database should enable any prisoner to accumulate units even if s/he is transferred without notice to another prison; in effect, operating as an achievement tracking system. At present records seem rarely to follow a prisoner from one establishment to another.

Wider Recommendations in Relation to Prison Education

6. A longer-term funding commitment for learning should be initiated by the management of the service. This would be analogous to the three-year arrangement between further education colleges and the LSC. This would enable longer-term planning and staffing decisions. Funding should be ring-fenced to education and training activities, not siphoned off for unexpected operational expenditure.

7. Prisoners should receive equal pay for education and other job roles to redress the current disincentive to participate or continue in learning when more lucrative alternatives are available.

8. The balance of full-time and part-time staffing should be improved to the same level as in the general further education sector, and the development of staff's skills should continue to be treated as a priority.

June 2004

Witnesses: **Ms Juliet Lyon,** Director, Prison Reform Trust; **Professor Augustin John,** Visiting Professor of Education, University of Strathclyde; **Mr Tom Robson,** National Executive Committee Member, Prison Officers' Association; and **Mr Paul O'Donnell,** Public Affairs Manager, and **Mr John Brenchley,** Regional Manager, South Region, OCR; examined.

Q320 Chairman: Can I welcome our witnesses this morning and say, to Paul O'Donnell and John Brenchley, Tom Robson, Juliet Lyon and Professor Augustin John, we are very grateful that you could spend time with us this morning and the Select Committee depends a great deal on the quality of the evidence that is given to the Committee. Tom, I have to express a view that we are very disappointed that, even after some considerable time of notice, we did not have confirmation of who was coming from the Prison Officers' Association until very late and I wonder why that was?
Mr Robson: I will apologise on behalf of the Association for that. It was brought to my attention through a contact of mine that this was taking place and I volunteered my services, if you like. It was at a late stage and I can only simply apologise for that. I think there is a possibility that documentation had gone astray somewhere down the line.

Q321 Chairman: From our side, we do not think that is true. Who is your President, is it President or Chairman?
Mr Robson: The General Secretary is Mr Brian Caton.

Q322 Chairman: And Colin Moses?
Mr Robson: Colin is the national Chairman.

Q323 Chairman: Normally, our Select Committee expects the most senior officers of any organisation we invite to be here. Will you tell them that we expect them to come at an early date, set by this Committee, and if they do not come I will send someone to bring them? I do not appreciate people treating a select committee inquiry lightly. This is the first and most important look at prison education that has ever been done because it has only ever been in our remit for the 18 months. We take it very seriously and we expect the POA particularly to take it seriously.
Mr Robson: I think what I can say certainly, on behalf of the Prison Officers' Association, is that prison officers and the Prison Officers' Association in particular certainly do take the education of our charges very seriously indeed.

Q324 Chairman: Tom, I am sure that is right, but I hope the message will get home that we expect to see them very soon?
Mr Robson: Yes, certainly it will.

Q325 Chairman: Thank you. Because we have got five witnesses, we cannot ask all of you to give an introductory word, but I am going to be terribly cavalier about this and ask Juliet to say something to get us going? I will give everyone individually a chance as we proceed.
Ms Lyon: As you know the Prison Reform Trust conducted an inquiry into prisoners' education from the prisoners' perspective, which was published last October, and that was our first thorough-going look at prisoner education. I was very pleased to be able to be part of that because some years previously I conducted a study for the Home Office which was about young offenders, called "Tell Them So They Listen". It was Research Study 201 for the Home Office. In that case we were asking young offenders about their career paths into crime, through prison and their hopes and fears about resettlement. It was interesting then, and it emerged very clearly from this more recent study that prisoners saw education as a kind of oasis, an important place in which things would happen, in which they would be treated differently, quite often, from how they felt they were treated in the rest of the prison, and where they would gain things, skills and qualifications, which would help them in terms of going straight, maybe finding work that would be more appropriate, etc, etc. It was a valued thing in pretty much of a desert, in terms of what else was on offer. I think what is disappointing, in terms of key things which emerge from our study, is that, despite this valued place, recognised as such, and despite a huge injection of cash from DfES and a takeover of responsibility for education, which really is to be welcomed, we are still seeing a situation where education is pretty patchy, where prisoners do not always get to classes, where courses are curtailed or cut short by their moving around the system under the pressure of overcrowding. Officials refer to this as "the churn", the movement of prisoners from one gaol to another, so you get a situation where people cannot always complete things, where people are virtually queuing up for scarce places and courses they particularly want to do. It seems, to me anyway, as if it is pretty early days for prison education, in terms of it reaching to as many people as it could, and should, do and providing the kinds of benefits which clearly it can. It is curtailed by the pressures on the system, to some extent, and by historic accident of things like the variation in amounts of money that are given to different education departments in different prisons. I cannot see a rationale for why Wandsworth would have £450 per head for prisoner education and Leicester would have, I would need to check but I think it is, about £1,800 per prisoner, per head. It is these discrepancies in terms of allocated budget which need to be looked at.

Q326 Chairman: That is a very good opener. Professor John, what is your view? You are a distinguished academic. What we are picking up, and we were in Helsinki and Oslo recently, only the week before last, looking at some of the prisons there, as we see more prisons, what comes home to the Committee, I think, I think we agree on this, is how do you insert a culture of education into a prison, how do you change the culture? We did not come back starry-eyed, that they have all the answers; they were struggling to impose a culture of education and training on a prison system. Do you think that is the serious challenge?

Professor John: I think the picture in the UK over the years reflects the patchiness that you were describing and it was not a very basic issue of what prisons are for. In the Foreword to the report, "Time to Learn", which I wrote, I made the point that if there is a prioritisation of the knowledge-based economy then education reforms should touch every part of the system, including prisons, for the simple reason that, as the statistics show, more than 50% of people in the secure state have had very poor education, certainly poor educational qualifications. The number of young people in YOIs (Youth Offender Institutions) who have either had interrupted schooling or have been excluded from school and had their education further curtailed by being in a secure state does not bode well for what the Government intends, in terms of having a more educated and knowledgeable workforce. It seems to me therefore that there must be issues around education in prisons as an entitlement, and an entitlement which can be delivered through structural organisation so that it does not become a lottery, it does not become a question of chance, it does not have to compete with other things, but, as part of a sentencing plan and indeed in relation to people who are on remand similarly, opportunities are created such that education cannot be interrupted, and where people have been out of education they could have their needs assessed and met.

Q327 Chairman: Thank you for that. Tom, one thing which leaps off the page in the evidence we have been given so far is again getting back to how you change the atmosphere in a prison, in terms of being very positive about education and training. What do you think about what has been coming up time and time again, that there is a much greater financial incentive to do rather boring work in prison rather than get an education? Do you think that differential is defensible? Why do you think that still exists?
Mr Robson: I think that we are in the situation where budgets are very important but I think that people are more important, contact between people, and I think that prison officers ought to be put in the educational link. They spend 24 hours a day with their charges, especially in youth custody, and prison officers themselves should be utilised to give skills to the inmates in their charge. I think that should be the way of the future. If you look back in time at the Borstal system, prison officers were very much utilised in the education system at that time, and I think, sadly, we are being taken out of the link, and most prison officers want to do positive work with inmates. Also, I think we are missing a big opportunity to use what I term mentoring, and that is to use inmates themselves to mentor other inmates and teach skills to them. I think that sometimes we aim too high and maybe we ought to aim a little lower and try to deal with basic educational needs in prison. I see prison officers teaching prisoners how to fill in, for instance, housing applications, various licensing applications and things of that nature, which is very basic but I believe very, very necessary information to give to people in prisons. I think the opportunity has been lost.

Q328 Chairman: That is very interesting. What is your view then of prison officers generally, the POA position on the fact that, when we were in Scandinavia, not that they have all the answers but their training period for prison officers is a year, a year's training? The evidence which this Committee has had is that it is a very, very short period of training in the UK and it has been cut, there is less training than there used to be. Somebody said that it has been cut from 11 weeks down to six or eight weeks, is that right?
Mr Robson: If a prison officer receives any training in today's Prison Service they are very lucky indeed, once they have got through the initial training, that is.

Q329 Chairman: For how long is the initial training?
Mr Robson: The initial training is seven weeks. We are talking here about people who have got a very big impact on people's lives. The mandatory training which took place for prison officers throughout their career has now been abolished and it is down to each individual governor in prison establishments as to how they utilise their budget and, out of their budget, what they put towards the training of prison officers. There has never been an element of prison officers' training that would give the skill to impart skill to others, if that makes sense to you. I think that is a man-management skill, an interpersonal skill, which one would pick up during the course of doing prison officers' work day in and day out.
Chairman: That is most interesting. We will come back to that a little bit later. Let us look at the suitability of educational opportunities for prisoners.

Q330 Paul Holmes: Looking generally at education, there is a general issue across the board, not least in prisons, that the Government is saying it wants certain things on education, it will put money into certain areas and it will set targets to make sure they get it. FE colleges, for example, are saying that they are being pushed into basic skills and level two but anything above that has to be paid for by the student or the employer. It seems to me there is a slightly parallel situation in prisons, in that there is a huge emphasis now on basic skills. Half the prisoners lack basic skills in writing, and so forth, but therefore half of them do not. Is there a danger that, by emphasising basic skills, by having key performance targets which are based around that, they are neglecting at least half the prison population?
Mr Brenchley: The figures show that there is a very high percentage of people in prison who do not have that level of basic skill. However, even a majority probably of the ones who have exceeded that level have not proceeded far beyond it, so it is not exactly an either/or situation. For me, unless you can get to the first level through basic skills at, say, level one up to level two, which we can talk about later if that is

pertinent, the opportunity for you to proceed into employment or to further your life chances in any other way is seriously reduced and in some cases totally reduced. Therefore, my argument would be, if you have not got the basic platform you have not got anything to spring off from.

Professor John: I think, as in schooling, there needs to be a concern about responding to people's needs and identifying those needs adequately. One can understand the concentration on the acquisition of basic skills. However, there are many people across the spectrum who would have had advanced training or education programmes interrupted by being put in custody, and really it is a matter of building upon where people are at the point of entry into the secure state. The issue then of how one assesses their educational needs and builds that into the delivery of a sentencing plan is critical here.

Q331 Paul Holmes: We have visited four English prisons so far as part of the inquiry and we have got the same sorts of mixed messages from prisoners and prison officers and educationalists that we talked to there. Some of them are saying there is not enough chance for people to go beyond basic skills, to do a university degree, etc, partly because they cannot access the Internet, and that type of thing, but the vast majority of people were saying that it was the basic skills they needed. If you want to provide the whole range, and perhaps there are 20% of prisoners who want much higher than basic skills, can we do that and is there enough money in the system? Is it just a question of funding or is it a matter of the attitude within the system?

Ms Lyon: I think there is a tendency to go with the lowest common multiple, that is a good one, and you have drawn attention to the use of target-driven education and I do think that is problematic. In the interviews that we did for "Time to Learn" there were 153 prisoners involved and of those around half felt that they were not being stretched, they were not able to access educational opportunities that were at the level they were, which was beyond the basic level. Certainly in an ideal world one would want to tailor education to individuals, and I think that is a hard thing to ask of a public service which is struggling to cope with the day-to-day processing of people around an overcrowded system. It does mean, as a result, I think, that the combination of targets set and the pressure on the system needs good delivery on the basic skills. Interestingly, there is not much pick-up, as far as I can see, of learning difficulties or learning disabilities. If you look at the work which is being done on mental health, that is in very stark contrast to the lack of work on learning difficulties and learning disabilities within the prison population. Although you have got the basic skills, you are not picking up people, for example, who have spent time in special education, or who have been statemented, and so forth. At the other end of the spectrum there are people way beyond that, often very frustrated, feeling that all they do is go through a series of hoops of continuous assessment. Assessment seems to have been very well developed. Delivery of a response to those assessments seems to be lagging behind.

Mr Brenchley: The other point which relates to that is length of sentence. The education people at Holloway tell me the average stay there is 22 days and that includes an initial assessment. There is precious little time then to do anything by way of getting anybody through an education programme, particularly by the time you have sorted out all those issues which have to be addressed on induction, including assessment but also including orientating the individual to a regime they are going to spend their life in for a period of time. A lot of this relates to length of sentence and my understanding of the sector is that there are different solutions in different establishments depending on the length of stay, and therefore whether it is possible to build an effective individual learning plan with an individual or just rake them in, do a test or two and let them out again.

Q332 Paul Holmes: There is a tension there between basic skills provision and higher levels of education provision. Is there also a tension though, because I think, traditionally, some prison education was seen as being therapeutic, particularly for prisoners who were in there for longer sentences? What we saw in one of the prisons we visited was an art class, where clearly the whole emphasis was personal satisfaction and therapy rather than education as such. Is that side of prison education being squeezed out now, because everybody has to help the prison governor meet KP targets?

Ms Lyon: It would be very disappointing if it were. Fifty-six per cent of the prison population now are serving four years or more. You have got, on the one hand, these people spinning through the system, very short periods of stay, Lancaster Farms Young Offenders Institution, average length of stay for sentenced young men 11 days. That has got one of the best education units that I have seen, in terms of actual physical plant, in the country, but clearly it cannot make much use of its facilities given that move through. You have got that group and then you have got this other group of people, because sentence lengths have increased markedly over the last ten years, who are getting this four years or more, a very substantial part of the prison population. For those people, clearly one has to pay tremendous attention to a period of years when they could really make amazing use of education. I can give you an anecdote. We have just had a Masters student placed with us at the Prison Reform Trust and the reason that we agreed to take him on for a year's placement was because he had this just amazing story to tell. He had spent years in prison, as a young offender and then as a young adult, and he said, "When I was in my cell reading Zola" and we were all completely flabbergasted at this notion, it did not sound very usual, "I thought, why shouldn't I read this in French?" and he learned French. He did that because the chaplain in that gaol and the head of education in that gaol formed a rapport with him and supported him to learn

French. He went on to do a French degree, slept rough in Paris in order to do that part of the placement because he had no money. A person who had really been lifted out of a situation by education and by his attachment to it and those individuals who had helped him and it was just an extraordinary story. I doubt it is the only story of that kind. Education seems to be one of the few areas in prison life which really can reach somebody and give them something which will change them markedly.

Mr Robson: I am interested in what was said about the inmate reading Zola. There are a lot of inmates who do a lot of good work, what you might term homework, in their cells, and that is a constant, because education from time to time is interrupted for reasons of security or lack of staff, etc, etc, and the governor has to make a decision as to what facility he has to trim, and quite often, in fact, it is education. There are charities which work alongside prison governors and indeed the Prison Officers' Association to provide in-cell work. Those of you who read *The Independent* might have noted that there was a quite good article in yesterday's *Independent* about fine cell work, which hardened prisoners are taking in their cells, making fine quilts and fine artwork as a therapeutic perhaps rather than educational facility. Again, I think that therapy is part of education, and very important. At least if someone is spending a lot of time in a cell then that time can be utilised usefully rather than the present trend of watching cartoon shows on the television.

Q333 Paul Holmes: My last question carries on this theme and it is about the tension between basic skills and higher skills and therapeutic education. The Chief Inspector of Prisons has said that the key performance targets lead to a focus on numbers of prisoners achieving qualifications rather than on meeting the needs of individuals. A constituent of mine who currently is serving a sentence of about seven years, I think, has got an argument going on. He wants to use the education in prison, he is very good at ceramics and he wants to use his computer skills to write poetry, but the prison is saying, "You've got to get CLAITs level so-and-so, you've got to get skills," so that is leading to certain problems. Who guides a prisoner into what is the most suitable form of education, and are the KPTs stopping a lot of that and saying, "No, you've got to do this short course because it helps us tick our KPT box"?

Mr Brenchley: Certainly KPTs direct what happens in prisons, there are no two ways about that, and my source for that is the various education officers and heads of learning and skills that I have spoken to, something like 20 of them in the last fortnight. Often, achievement of a KPT, even if it is fairly mechanical, through the initial education process, then triggers life-changing experience and achievement. One example for us would be that there has just been announced a winner for OCR's Recognising Achievement awards, of which we have about 20 spread right across the whole spectrum, who is a prisoner in a prison in Wiltshire, who started off on basic skills and has now worked his way through a Firm Start qualification, which is the basic understanding which enables you to set up your own business, which you can do even if presenting yourself to an employer turns out to be unsatisfactory when you leave. That would just be an example of where the initial level of achievement then enables achievement at higher levels and enables an element of self-realisation in the individual which can have the rehabilitative and resettlement effect, and it is considered much more strongly by heads of learning and skills and various support agencies they work with outside the prison. I quote that as one example. The other example I wanted to quote really was, that kind of life-changing experience can be created within the education department but it can be created in all other environments within the prison. One I wanted to quote was HMP Manchester, which I visited recently, where one of the major driving forces is actually the chap who runs the industry workshops, which include a range of, for example, commercial selling contracts for other prisons, where they do an entry level three in manufacturing, which involves an element of research. Interestingly, in the light of what you were saying just now, the one area where they have difficulty achieving that qualification within a prison environment is the area which requires them to research what is going on in the broader world, which they could do by Internet and they are doing by having visitors from local industry, and so on, liaising with them and discussing employability opportunities. It is not just education-driven, clearly it is driven by the other areas within the prison, in this case particularly an individual instructor in the workshop, and also by the physical education instructors, who are able to do similar things in a different environment, and so on and so on. For me, the good news is the way in which other sectors within prisons are developing an understanding of how prisoners can be enabled to achieve and feel more confident about contributing to that process.

Q334 Paul Holmes: You have got shining examples there, where you have got the prisoner learning French so he can read Zola in the original, but are they not the tip of the iceberg? Are not the majority of prisoners either not taking part because they do not want to, or because there is not the space, or the prison officers can move the education classes, or they have been excluded as a punishment because they are seen as being difficult?

Mr Brenchley: Yes, they are the tip of the iceberg. I was talking to a group of four education managers and heads of learning and skills in the North recently and the education manager from Leeds Prison. I was saying, "Give me examples of life-changing experiences that individuals have had in prisons," and they quoted me Ali who had come into the country and could not speak English and now is running his own hairdressing business, and all the other examples. I could see the education manager from Leeds just sort of bridling a bit at this and he

said, "John, it isn't the individual cases, it's all of them." That was the crucial message he wanted to get across to me. What he was saying was that every single one who is enabled to achieve and is able, what is more, to progress through the levels, in relation to the dichotomy you raised earlier, is saving the country money, it is saving individuals across the country grief, and so on. There really are high stakes being played for when they take somebody on the first rung of the ladder and enable them to climb it.

Q335 Chairman: The evidence is that it is still reaching only a very small proportion of the prison population, even those who are on long sentences?
Mr Brenchley: Yes; agreed. We would love there to be more and we would love them to be able to achieve better than they do now in all the environments of the prison, not just within education, which is doing its bit towards that.
Professor John: It seems to me that in order for that progress not to be interrupted there must be a system whereby the learning which is taking place, or which begins in one institution, can be recorded. In one of the recommendations we make in "Time to Learn", we argue for the sort of learning passport which can follow the prisoner to wherever, indicating what they have done, whether that was based on an assessment or not and what could be built upon. Since the degree of movement across the secure state is a given, I would have thought that positive story could only be sustained if indeed such an arrangement were in place so that there could be continuity, wherever people may end up, from where they were before.

Q336 Chairman: What can be done to reduce the churn then? Is this inevitable? The picture which comes over from the evidence you have given so far and the evidence we have taken and the visits we have been on is this highly mobile state of the prison estate and mobility in every case. We can come to this a bit later but the number of prison officers who are recruited and then drop out within two years, the average stay of a prison governor in the job in one place is very, very short. Whether you have got prisoners whizzing round the system, you have got staff whizzing round the system, it is a wonder anything can be accomplished in a management system where everything moves. Is it inevitable, or can we do something to change that?
Ms Lyon: From the Prison Reform Trust perspective, one solution clearly would be "Let's build more prisons," put forward variously. In fact, in the last ten years, another 13 prisons have been built and nine of them are overcrowded already. It is hard to see that as a solution. I think the solution has got to be in looking at groups within the prison population to work out whether they actually need to be there, and there is some cross-over there with groups which are not getting access to education. If you look at the remand population so a large group of prisoners, at any one time they represent around 12,000 prisoners, but over the years 58,000 people enter prison on remand. Of those, a fifth are acquitted when they get to court, more than half do not go on to serve anything other than a community penalty, so arguably they need not have been incarcerated in the first place. There are parts of the system which are particularly messy; remand probably is one of the messiest because it involves so many different sectors—courts, CPS, police, probation, prison, etc—and there are breaks at every point in the system. We have just produced a report called "Lacking Conviction" which is about women on remand, which has shown clearly the way in which the system is failing at different points. The messiness, I think, makes it hard to address, but if one were to address the overuse of remand, if one were to remove people who have severe mental health problems and put them into health treatment settings, rather than prison settings, it would be possible gradually I think to pull down numbers, along with a Government commitment to rebalance the system, and have more effective community penalties for people who have committed comparatively minor offences. If one can get to the position where prison is genuinely a place of absolute last resort, for serious and violent offenders only, then work can go into making it a place of excellent last resort. I do have some fears. I think it is an unintended consequence of reform that, because we have failed in this country to reserve prison as that place of last resort when improvements are made, whether it is in health, drug treatment or education, there is a slight danger, more than slight in some parts of the country, of the courts making decisions about disposal. It is tempting to think, "Ah, those things have improved, better education, some health treatment and detox," and then there is a lack of that in the outside community and other disposals, then to use prison for that purpose, which of course is not what it was intended to be used for. I am sorry to give you a kind of global answer, but I do think that one cannot look at this without seeing it in that wider context.
Chairman: That is most useful. We will come back to some of the more global questions about drug addiction in relation to the difficulties later.

Q337 Mr Gibb: I am interested in Mr Robson's views on a lot of things. Would you share the view of the Prison Reform Trust that the answer to this continual movement is to release more prisoners, or is it the POA's view that we should build more prisons? Have you been lobbying for more prison-building?
Mr Robson: I think certainly the big problem facing all of us is the issue of overcrowding. It seems that various solutions have been tried, one being the tagging and early release of a certain amount of the population. How you look at the figures depends, I suppose, on how successful it has been. I do not think it has been terribly successful. It would seem to me that if you can tag someone who has already been committed to prison we should be able to tag someone rather than remand them into custody. I think that is something which may well be looked at, to try to keep down the population on remand,

which, as Julia said, is very heavy indeed. If that cannot be found as a solution then the only solution that the Prison Officers' Association can put forward is a properly-sized prison estate to hold the size of the population that we seem to have and is ever-increasing. There was one other point made and that was about governors who seem to spend not a long time in charge of establishments, and that is something which has concerned the Prison Officers' Association for many, many years. Quite simply, governors are recruited nationally and the promotion structure is such that they need to move up and down the country in order to attain the highest level of employment, and that is understandable. However, there are levels of management below governor which could be more stable within the Prison Service and I think that the whole promotion structure would need to be looked at in order to achieve that.

Q338 Mr Gibb: What is your understanding of the percentage of prisoners who cannot read when they enter? We have heard about a very good assessment system.
Mr Robson: I did have some figures regarding that. We are talking about people with interrupted education, and the like, being something like 47%. I would question that figure as maybe being too low, but the Prison Officers' Association has not got the means to be able to survey that ourselves. From the experience of prison officers, the incidence of people who have got a very, very basic or below basic education is extremely high.

Q339 Mr Gibb: What about reading, in particular?
Mr Robson: In particular, with reading, the basic skills, numeracy and reading.

Q340 Mr Gibb: Forty-seven per cent do not have those skills, is that right?
Mr Robson: Yes.

Q341 Mr Gibb: What percentage do not have those skills when they leave prison?
Mr Robson: Again, I have not got any figure for that, but various incentives have been taken, not only within our education departments. For instance, it is no use having exceptional facilities for education when, because of inappropriate staffing, or whatever, they are not always fully operational. Again, I would turn to charitable organisations which are making use of prisoners' time in cells where they are teaching those basic skills. There is the Shannon Trust, Toe by Toe and others. I think that they are very useful, but unfortunately I cannot give you figures. I do not know whether any of my colleagues might be able to.

Q342 Mr Gibb: The representative body of the prison officers in this country does not know how successful your reading teaching is in prison, is that what you are telling me?
Mr Robson: We have no established way of being able to produce those figures.

Q343 Mr Gibb: Why not?
Mr Robson: We have not got the resources. We rely on the Home Office and the Prison Service to produce those kinds of figures.

Q344 Mr Gibb: Is not that rather uncaring, that you do not give a damn really about how successful your teaching of reading is, in prison?
Mr Robson: That might be an opinion that you have, but I can assure you that the Prison Officers' Association does give a damn and prison officers also give a damn. They work day in and day out trying to improve the lives of people who are sent to us.

Q345 Mr Gibb: How do I know that though?
Mr Robson: I know that because I have worked in this operation for 20-plus years. You would know that, I assume, by speaking to people such as myself and my colleagues in this forum, who will tell you that is a fact.
Mr Gibb: If you do not have facts about the proportion of prisoners that leave unable to read, what is your—
Chairman: Nick, I understand your line of questioning but even I, as Chair, would suggest that if anyone should know those figures it should be the Government or the Prison Service.

Q346 Mr Gibb: Surely we can ask them too. I think people who work in prisons ought to know as well. Do you have a feel for the proportion of prisoners who leave unable to read? Sometimes does it go down?
Mr Robson: I think that we have tried every which way. I think that our educationalists have tried, I think prison officers have tried and prison governors have tried. I could not sit here and say that we have had a magnificent impact but what I think I can say is that we have had a significant impact. There are many stories such as the anecdotal ones told by colleagues that I could relate to you, but I could not give you statistics.

Q347 Mr Gibb: What about Juliet, do you have a feel for what proportion of prisoners leave prison unable to read?
Ms Lyon: I know how many achieve basic skills, which I am sure you know too, because the Prison Service published in its Annual Report that the numbers achieved were 89,200 key work skills awards, which was nearly double the Prison Service target, and 41,300 basic skills awards. What is not quite so clear, and it is difficult, and this is partly the tangle of having KPIs which have to be met, is that there are figures given for the number who go into work, which we have challenged because they appear to relate more to people who have got job interviews set up for them rather than people who are known to go into employment. The calculation of how many are leaving prison with a qualification and going into work is not necessarily quite what it

seems. We know essentially how many have interviews are established for them rather than how many go into work.

Q348 Mr Gibb: In your experience of the Prison Service, is it your fear that, that 47% who enter, that goes down to, what, 25% when they leave who cannot read, or would you say it stays at round about 47%?
Ms Lyon: To be honest, really I do not know. Given the length, as we said earlier on, the very short stays of half the population who are flying through so fast, logically very few of them are going to be able to change their literacy level in that period of time, or indeed in the series of short hits, because obviously very many of them are back in again for another short sentence. We know the reconviction rate averages out at 59%. If you look at the young offenders, the 18s to 20s, that goes up to almost three-quarters, 71%, at the moment, half of whom are going to be back in prison, so you are getting a series of short, interrupted periods in gaol where they might get an injection of education each time. In the current system, they might go right back to stage one.

Q349 Mr Gibb: As custodians of the taxpayers' money, how do we assess the effectiveness of basic teaching in prison if we do not have any figures for the leavers?
Ms Lyon: It has always amazed me that there are very few outcomes that you can actually check in a measurable way. One of the things about the movement of governors, to which the Chairman referred earlier on, is that it cannot increase your morale if you do not have any ability to determine whether your institution is succeeding. There is not any "per prison" set of figures for outcomes, so you do not know whether your prisoners leave and are less likely to reoffend than somebody else in a comparable gaol somewhere else in the country. That is partly because prisoners are moving around the system and partly because the nature of the record-keeping at the moment does not actually allow you to have that information. You will get a ballpark figure for age bands in the prison population but you will not get it tied to an establishment, so you will not know, as a governor, whether you are running a successful establishment, you will not know as head of learning and skills necessarily the kinds of outcomes which would help you feel that you were doing a decent job.

Q350 Chairman: I am thinking of the parallel of added value. Those colleges and schools that were very angry, in terms of GCSE and O level results, where they were finding it difficult to show the wonderful added value that they brought to students who came in, say, at 11 and did wonderfully well although they did not reach the high scores in five GCSEs A to C, and so on, is there the possibility of having an added value score for a prison so that you can get a healthy evaluation?
Professor John: I suppose it would be difficult to construct one. The lessons from schooling, I think, are pertinent here, in the sense that a measure of someone's progress might take account of the development of other social competences apart from academic learning as such, or the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills, so that the individual might perform better as a social individual as a result of the quality of the mentoring they received from education staff, from other prisoners, from prison officers, so that their social competence is enhanced. There are ways of measuring that, in terms of a "before and after" scenario. Indeed, one of the recommendations we make in the "Time to Learn" report is that key performance indicators for education and training should be based on the progression of individual prisoner learners and not on absolute performance as measured by exam results. I think the key issue here is how are these performance indicators going to be constructed? I take the point behind your question, surely it must be sensible for prisoners to know that the progress they make on all other indicators or indices is acknowledged because it goes to the issue of their overall social competence.

Q351 Chairman: Would it be sensible then to pay a prisoner as much to get an education as to do routine work in the workshops?
Professor John: That again is one of the things we have noted. There should be an incentive for prisoners to access education and to see progress with an education plan being as important for them, in terms of their own incapacity, as for other things that they might want to do. Some prisoners, as you know, are having to juggle, or indeed give up, the opportunity to earn if they want to pursue education programmes, because of the way in which the whole thing is organised, and I think that element of it needs to be removed.
Ms Lyon: What we found in the study was, one issue was about the financial incentive, and people have said to us, "Well, you know, outside in society people make a choice; if they want to go into further education it's going to cost them and they're going to have to lose other opportunities in order to pay for that one, or to gain access to that one". I do not think it is a relevant comparison, in that choice is not an issue in a prison really and money is not either, except that what little money you can earn, and it is just a few pounds, of course has an incredibly high value because that is all you have for your phone cards or whatever small things you are going to get from the prison canteen. We are not talking large sums of money. I think differential rewards for different sorts of work, particularly some of the more mundane workshop work, is a positive disincentive and it should be removed. I cannot see a justification for it. The other commodity that matters, and "Time to Learn" picked that up very clearly, was time, time out of cell, and levels of purposeful activity in a prison estate. For the last eight years the Prison Service has not been able to make its own KPI of a minimum of 24 hours a week

purposeful activity per prisoner. In fact, in the last ten years, the increase in purposeful activity amounts to round about ten minutes per prisoner per day, that is the level of increase, which I think is a very stark way of thinking about what this influx of numbers has done. There has been a fantastic injection of hours of education, other opportunities, training, put into the Prison Service but it has been mopped up by the numbers, so the actual overall movement is fractional. I think, if you are making choices, as prisoners interviewed in "Time to Learn" found, between queuing up to make a phone call, getting a shower, going to the gym, going to worship, any of these sorts of things, if you are having to balance these sorts of things with trying to find a bit of time for education, that again is another disincentive.

Q352 Mr Chaytor: I want to ask about key performance targets and ask first of all what the difference is between KPT and KPI, or are the terms interchangeable?
Mr Robson: As far as I am aware, there is no difference at all between a KPT and a KPI, it is simply different terminology.

Q353 Mr Chaytor: How are the key performance targets established? Presumably there is a global total established by the Home Office which is fed down into the regional offices of the Home Office which are then distributed to individual prisons. Do individual governors have some discretion over this or is a target simply imposed on them?
Mr Brenchley: If I can answer that, on the basis of the recent conversations. I understand there are something like 43 key performance targets across the prison as a whole, of which a small number relate to the provision of education in its broadest sense. Those are split into skills for life, which are basic skills, in common parlance, and work skills, which have a definition of what kinds of qualifications are eligible to be counted towards these work skills. The good news, I suppose, going through the figures, is that prisons are doing extremely well and hitting those targets, but whether or not they were the right size in the first place, of course, is anyone's guess at the moment. I understand the process by which it works is a break down from national level, this is simply in terms of the two education targets, at regional level and then further down to institutional level, based on factors of which heads of learning and skills are not aware, necessarily, but they are something to do with the size of the prison and the number of prisoners going through. Certainly there is an element of opaqueness around the decision-making at the individual institutional level, as far as the feedback we have from the sector is concerned.

Q354 Mr Chaytor: There is an issue around the sense of ownership of the individual prisons of these targets and the relevance of the targets to the size of each prison?
Mr Brenchley: My understanding is that they are not negotiated, they are simply provided, and the prison does its best to meet them. As I say, that is the intelligence I have, through the sector.

Q355 Mr Chaytor: Therefore, the consequence of that is, what does that say about the appropriateness of the targets and the way in which each prison can select qualifications to hit the targets?
Mr Brenchley: If I can quote you an example from HMP Styal, in Cheshire, one of their arguments is that they have a number of repeat visitors, therefore somebody will get a key performance target at a particular level, a Level 1 or a Level 2, or whatever, and will achieve it and everybody is very pleased. They go away, they come back again, there are no key performance targets for them to attempt subsequently, so somehow they are less of a priority for a programme than they would have been had they been more able to contribute to a key performance target. There is definitely a skewing effect there.

Q356 Mr Chaytor: Do you think it is the case that, given this phenomenon of churn and all this transfer of prisoners, presumably a prisoner can go to Styal, do their Level 1 qualification and contribute to the key performance target and then be shifted down to Holloway and do exactly the same again and count as a KPT for Holloway? Does that happen and, if so, how frequently?
Mr Brenchley: I guess it could, because they might not even show up on any of the awarding bodies' records as the same person, for example, there would not be necessarily any reason. I know that one of the issues which affects a number of heads of learning and skills in particular is that somebody can do the bulk of their learning programme in one prison, they can be bumped off to another prison, they can pass the initial test at a particular level because they have done all the work somewhere else and it is the receiving prison which gets the credit for the KPT. I do not want to suggest that there is furore around the sector about all that, but certainly there is a kind of quiet resentment that one prison has done all the work and another has got the KPT.

Q357 Mr Chaytor: It is fairly clear that this Stalinist, top-down approach to KPTs is wide open to manipulation and abuse, is it not? Would that be a fair comment? If I were running a prison, on the evidence of our visits and the evidence we have had here, I could think of at least 15 ways of manipulating the system to the advantage of my prison which was not necessarily in the interests of prisoners.
Mr Brenchley: I think there is no doubt that pragmatism comes into play then and realism comes into play, and that is certainly the feedback we get from individual heads of learning and skills in particular, and then they say how they hope, within that pragmatic environment, to be able to respond to the needs of individual learners. At the moment it is

a relatively new regime, it is a relatively new phenomenon, and I think they are still working it out in some way.
Ms Lyon: Just a clarification. There are 19 KPIs set by the Prison Service and then the KPTs are refinements of those KPIs so that they are more detailed.

Q358 Mr Chaytor: The KPIs are the broader-brush headings?
Ms Lyon: Yes. The Service sets those in the business plan.

Q359 Mr Chaytor: There are 43 KPTs?
Ms Lyon: I think so. I have not got the figures, but there are 19 KPIs set and they are agreed and they are top-down, they are set centrally, but there are calibrations, as I understand it. There has been some shifting of targets done, based on acknowledging that particular groups would find it particularly hard. A clear example of that would be levels of assaults, for example, that you would expect because of a more volatile population in the young offender group, that you would have a higher assault rate in a young offender institution. Consequently, the expectations have been tailored to match that, to some extent, rather than requiring it to match adult prison.

Q360 Mr Chaytor: In terms of the KPIs and KPTs relevant to education and training, is there a standard model across the country? Does each prison, and each region even, submit the same qualifications to meet their KPTs?
Ms Lyon: There is the overall target for basic skills qualifications, which has been set nationally, then there are regional plans drawn up. I know they are drawn up by the regional managers, but whether they are drawn up with education bods as well, I would hope that they are but I do not know that. Your point about skewing, I think, is an important one. If you take an example of the governor who set up Lancaster Farms, he said, "I want to train my young men to know how to use complaints systems properly, and my complaints are going to go up and that's not going to be so very good and I'm going to have to discuss this with the area manager who won't like it. In effect, these young men need to know how to negotiate their way through a system and represent themselves properly." That means you need a governor who is prepared to stand out against things and not mind if his complaints shoot up because of that good work done.

Q361 Mr Chaytor: From the Prison Reform Trust's point of view, are you satisfied that the KPIs and KPTs relevant to education and training are the right ones? You have had some criticism of the way in which the figures are calculated but in terms of the broad headings, or the specific sub-headings, are you happy that those are perfect?
Ms Lyon: I think probably it is quite early days, actually. I would expect them to be more sophisticated and better targeted once the DfES takeover of education has bedded down and people have had a chance to look at it more thoroughly. It is not a very sophisticated system at the moment.

Q362 Mr Chaytor: In terms of the OCR's contribution, what proportion of the total work of prison education does the OCR accredit? Do you have a monopoly, or a virtual monopoly, or is there competition with other awarding bodies?
Mr Brenchley: That is a bit difficult because we would not know necessarily what all the other bodies are doing. What we do know is that we are dominant in terms of education provision, that is to say, what is run in the education department, but that other awarding bodies are equally dominant in respect of workshop provision, for example, in manufacturing or in PE awards or in industrial cleaning or catering, or qualifications like those, where there are a number of reputable specialist bodies.

Q363 Mr Chaytor: In terms of basic skills you are dominant, but you do not have a monopoly necessarily?
Mr Brenchley: Yes. Of the 41,000 basic skills, I think I have got the figure right, which Juliet mentioned earlier on, something like 23,000 are OCR's.

Q364 Mr Chaytor: Whose are the others?
Mr Brenchley: I could surmise it might be City and Guilds, it might be an organisation called ASSET, and so on. They tend to trickle off after that.

Q365 Mr Chaytor: Is it up to each individual prison governor or head of learning and skills to determine which awarding body is used?
Mr Brenchley: Yes, absolutely. One point I wanted to mention about the parity of KPTs was that the same value is attached to a full level one CLAIT certificate, which takes a fair amount of time to achieve, as is attached to, for example, food-handling or manual-handling, health and safety type qualifications, which can be done in between four and eight hours. There is definitely room for a more precise calibration of the KPT structure.

Q366 Mr Chaytor: If someone wanted to pursue this issue of double counting of individual prisoners, in terms of their contribution to KPTs, it would be possible to interrogate the database of OCR or Asset or City and Guilds, would it not? If someone really had to pursue this, it would be possible, would it, to check the relationship between the global totals which the individual prisons are putting forward and the records of the awarding bodies to see if there was any double counting? Secondly, on this issue, how would one find out whether people are submitted for Level 1 qualifications who are already well in advance of Level 1, because presumably this is a temptation for individual prisons to do as well, is it not?
Mr Brenchley: It depends on whether they already have that Level 1 achievement. I think the simple answer to your question about tracking an individual prisoner is that if that prisoner shows up

with a different candidate number from a different centre there would be no reason for OCR to be alerted to the fact that potentially it was the same individual. That should not happen, because the records that I am told go from one prison to another when a prisoner moves are supposed to be precise enough about achievement, I think it is called the "green file", or something, that is transferred, but it struck me that there is a very significant improvement which could be made to ensure that this did not happen in the future. That would be an effective electronic database, preferably by achieved units, of the achievements of individual prisoners, and that could be transferred electronically so you were not worried about this phenomenon of throwing a large brown envelope in the back of a van just as it goes out of the door. That way, you could be much more confident that the experience of a prisoner who is being churned around the system is consistent and coherent and that what they have managed to achieve in one prison, even possibly down to the level of a single unit, is being carried forward to accumulate to a full qualification somewhere else. At the moment, although a lot of establishments are assiduous about how they manage this process, just moving a lot of paper around the system is bound to be a faulty process and it would be far better if it were tracked electronically.

Q367 Mr Chaytor: The charges which OCR make for accreditation are exactly the same presumably as they are to any other part of the education world, there is no differential charging for prisons?
Mr Brenchley: Yes.

Q368 Mr Chaytor: It must be a significant factor for individual governors in the managing of their budgets, as it is for a teacher, as to how much they spend on awarding bodies. Is that an issue? Do you sense that there is some resistance in individual prisons to doing more education and training simply because of the cost of accreditation?
Mr Brenchley: No. The cost of the qualification is a tiny proportion of the expenditure, and I am thinking of not only the demands of having a tutor on the premises but the demands of Tom's members and moving them around, and so on. The cost of the qualification is a very small part of that and we are not aware that it is causing any impediment, that actually any prisons are reluctant to put prisoners through qualifications because of the cost.

Q369 Mr Chaytor: Other than the establishment of the electronic transfer of student records, funder records, is there any other single improvement to the system of accreditation or of measurement of success of the system that you could suggest?
Mr Brenchley: It is essential that the qualifications which a prisoner gains in prison are reputable outside, that they are not sector-specific. The reason for that is, clearly, they must have credibility elsewhere and they must be on a par with the sorts of achievements gained by people outside, and the National Qualifications Framework is the best proxy we have for that at the moment. If a qualification is on the National Qualifications Framework then it gives some kind of parity. That is the first thing. The second thing I will mention briefly is about units. If qualifications operate in units then it is possible to accumulate them even in different prisons on a known structure. All those concerned know that it is one unit of a five-unit qualification, or whatever it is. The third area I would wish to push is the availability of qualifications across the whole prison, not just within the education department. Certainly there are one or two examples I have been able to see so far where prisons have been able to develop qualification structures which have involved members of the Prison Officers' Association or members of other uniformed staff, or whoever. They have been able to change the culture, which goes right back to the Chairman's very first question, and almost convert a prison into an organisation which is there as much for learning and rehabilitation as it is for a punitive purpose. That enables, I think, the individual prisoner then to see himself, or herself, in a different light.

Q370 Chairman: Where has that happened?
Mr Brenchley: The best example I quoted you was Manchester, with that entry level in Manchester.

Q371 Chairman: How do you set up qualifications which are appealing to the staff?
Mr Brenchley: It is the evangelists within the prisons, actually. There is no standard pattern. Again, I hear somebody say, like the head of that learning workshop, "It's just the way we work here."

Q372 Chairman: It is luck; it is the individual, is it not?
Mr Brenchley: It is luck. I think it is a mindset, a mindset at different levels. The Head of Learning and Skills at Reading, which I know the Committee visited not long ago, said to me, "Perhaps I'm just lucky here," so he used your word, in that he can talk to a governor in a particular way, he has got facilities there. My guess is that probably, and I was there on Monday of this week, they have come on even since you visited them, in terms of the quality of information technology, and so on.

Q373 Chairman: You have been in this business for a long time, as OCR, you are the preferred provider of qualifications. Even the little charity that we had giving evidence last week, the Shannon Trust, has built up a relationship with the Prison Officers' Association and in prisons, and the Toe by Toe thing is really making a difference, I know it is only small. What has the OCR been doing and why do you not have an arrangement with the Prison Officers' Association going back years, where you have to take prison officer education and qualifications seriously, in a meaningful way? What have you been doing all these years?

Mr Brenchley: We have had a history, which I am not sure I am fully aware of, in terms of previously running custodial care qualifications and suchlike, but really it is only in the last 18 months to two years that we have identified specific requirements which operate in the prison sector. Prison education departments, or whoever, were simply centres, in our language, they were simply organisations which ran various qualifications, whose staff might attend training, which we would visit for quality assurance purposes. It is probably in the last two years or so that the intelligence which has come back, initially to me, in the first instance, on standard, routine quality assurance visits to prisons, has shown that there are particular sector constraints and requirements which OCR, as an organisation, must address.

Q374 Chairman: You have been in this business for years. You are the examination board of Oxford and Cambridge and the Royal Society of Arts, it is that combination, is it not?
Mr Brenchley: That is right.

Q375 Chairman: Basically, you have seen this as a nice little earner for all these years. Is it not strange that two of the best-endowed universities in the country see providing this to prisons and prisoners as a nice little earner, whereas surely long ago you should have said, "Come on, what can we do as a partnership to do something more positive"?
Mr Brenchley: I think we are just about getting to that stage. You will gather that the issue has only recently come through because of the quality of the reports we have had back from prisons and the opportunity to look at them and think "There is a sector here which needs specific support." That is why, for example, we run network meetings which enable the practitioners from the prisons, the heads of learning and skills and the education managers, to share practice with one another in a way which seems not to have been available before. In a sense, we are there with the education practitioners and really it is the experience we have gained in those meetings and those discussions and visits which is opening up for us a view that prison officers, who previously would not have been, as it were, part of the sector that we would have had to address, actually have a part to play. I think we are very early on that road, at the moment.

Q376 Chairman: Has Oxford or Cambridge ever thought of twinning with a prison?
Mr Brenchley: It is an interesting thought. The short answer would be no, but I am not going to walk out of here and not take note of that point.

Q377 Chairman: Tom, you would be a bit worried perhaps if you had got a couple of academics from Oxford coming in and running the prison, would you?
Mr Robson: I think I said earlier that, from a prison officer's perspective, we need to pitch our level at a realistic level, and I do not think Oxford and Cambridge is realistic to us.

Q378 Chairman: I am sorry to correct you there, Tom. There is a fine tradition of external education and life and learning coming out of both those universities with appropriate courses for part-time learners, so there is a potential for real partnership there?
Mr Robson: I understand that and we do not want to be rivals with education, we need to integrate together. I was going to go on to say that the quality of man who is in prison who has got a decent educational standard, I think, has enough self-esteem to be able to find out for themselves where the opportunities lie within prison and make use of that, where it is available. I think that we need to pitch our time, as prison officers, to try to help those who are less able to push themselves forward, people who have lacked confidence, who are ashamed of the fact that they cannot read and write, and they are the people that my members generally are needed to be involved with. That was what my statement was about regarding academics.

Q379 Chairman: Professor John, it has always interested me that there are about the same number of higher education institutions as prisons, you could do almost a one-for-one twinning. If might be pretty good if we are trying to get a culture of education imbued into a prison, it would not be a bad idea to have a twinning arrangement, would it?
Professor John: I think you are quite right and it could piggy-back on the Government's Widening Participation agenda, for example, there is no reason why it should not, in my view, so that the whole thing could come full circle. The last question I think which Mr Chaytor asked resonates with something you said earlier, Chairman, the question you asked about added value. It seems to me that the efficacy or appropriateness of these targets and key performance indicators needs to be tested, there needs to be the most rigorous evaluation of how all of that is working, in order that one could look at the range of competences people are acquiring which relate to what employers ought to be looking for right now, and I believe that universities could assist greatly in that. The idea of twinning, I think, is a persuasive one, and it may well be that, at the very least, a relationship between outreach and extramural departments, where those still exist, and the Prison Officers' Association, if no other part of the system, would be particularly advantageous.
Ms Lyon: There is a precedent, a bit of a one, in relation to Goldsmiths College, and I think it is Dover Young Offender Institution, which was brokered originally by UNLOCK, the National Association of Ex-Offenders.

Q380 Chairman: UNLOCK was a bit unkind about the more established pressure groups in the prison reform area. I do not know if they were talking about you but they said "There are too many of these groups who have been here a long time, publishing lots of research and glossy pamphlets but who don't actually do anything." Did you smart when you heard those remarks?

Ms Lyon: I was wondering if I was going to escape some criticism or not.

Q381 Chairman: Do you think you are a bit complacent? Lots of you have been around for a long time and if you did performance indicators on you lot, there is NACRO and yourselves, and you have been going for many, many years, the Howard League, you have not done very well, have you?
Ms Lyon: I think there were some startling failures. I am not sure you can lay this entirely at our door, but our twin aims are, one, to reduce the prison population to what Lord Woolf called an unavoidable minimum.

Q382 Chairman: I think you have missed that performance indicator.
Ms Lyon: We have done pretty badly on that one. The other is improving the treatment of and conditions for prisoners and their families, on which I think we have done somewhat better. We count particular things we are able to achieve. In terms of public information, I think we achieve a significant amount of good quality, accurate information, disseminated to Parliament and the public, through the All-Party Group as well to which we provide the secretariat. In terms of individual particular gains, we have achieved a health policy agreed for older prisoners, having published a report about older prisoners. This particular report, on education, we were pleased that it was taken up and used as a backbone to the curriculum review, and I am interested now to talk to Lord Filkin about whether he feels it has been fully responded to. In terms of where it went and how many bodies considered it and looked at it, we were pleased that it appeared to inform a lot of debate and discussion. Maybe that is a very small aim, because clearly most of us would not come into the business of working in a pressure group if we did not want to make major changes, but sometimes we have to knock up some minor ones.

Q383 Chairman: Do you engage enough with the press? We notice here that as soon as we start an inquiry into prison education hardly any press turns up at all.
Ms Lyon: We have independent press monitors, so we know, in terms of the printed press, how many people we reach. In January and February it is 22 million each month; for September, it is 15 million.

Q384 Chairman: You would almost think one of your jobs might be to get more people to come and hear your evidence?
Ms Lyon: We did not actually press release on this, in part because we try not to overdo it. We are just producing a report about 18–20 year olds.
Chairman: I think press releases would have been the minimum. I think some very large men, muscular men, might have been more useful. We are going to move on and talk about prison staff.

Q385 Jonathan Shaw: Short-term sentences seem to be the problem, in terms of staff, in terms of prisoners and governors. We have heard that governors stay, on average, 21 months. Juliet Lyon, what impact does that have on the commitment to see educational programmes through?
Ms Lyon: I would not have chosen a school for my children, if I had the choice, leaving out what that headteacher was like. It seems to me that is an important parallel. In terms of the culture of an establishment, the governor in a hierarchical set-up has an enormous influence on the kind of institution it is. If you have got that break in leadership and that constant movement, it is a nonsense I think, frankly. It is one of the key things that one would like to see change. Over the last five years, up to March of this year, 44 prisons had four or more governors or acting governors. If those were schools, people would be going berserk. On the previous point about the press, it would make every headline, you know, "What's happening to our heads?" We do not have headlines about "What is happening to our governors?" or "What is happening to our prisons?"

Q386 Jonathan Shaw: Parents would be waving placards, would they not, quite rightly?
Ms Lyon: They would, indeed. I think the point is well made. The other thing is, we did do another survey, called "Barred Citizens", which I would like to submit, if I may, after this meeting.[1] It was a scoping study of opportunities for prisoners to take part as volunteers and to be involved as citizens of the prison community, if you like. We looked at examples of good practice and in particular looked at the Samaritan "Listener" scheme, where the Samaritans train prisoners to respond to suicidal prisoners, and we looked at the Inside Out Trust. They are the two biggest examples of very positive work which engaged prisoners as givers of services rather than recipients. The reason I am telling you that now, in relation to governors, is that it was a landscape where there were some startlingly good examples and some completely barren areas where nothing much was happening. It was not to do with security classification, it was always to do with whether the governor, he or she, subscribed to that activity, supported that activity and supported the staff who initiated and ran it.

Q387 Jonathan Shaw: On that, did you see any correlation between the churn of governors and the impact upon those sorts of programmes for the institutions?
Ms Lyon: Certainly things fall away when a new governor comes in, very often, and equally it is true of the individual reformers who are running a particular thing. For example, they may well get a Butler Trust award and it is something the Butler Trust, I know, feels very strongly about, we did a joint conference with them last year about Prison Service performance recognition. They reward exceptionally able staff for doing programmes of this

[1] Not printed.

kind, but so often after they have been rewarded for it they are moved on or promoted to a different area and that is lost along with the individual who has put it in. There is a lack of integration, is what I am saying really, I think, and things hang on individuals.

Q388 Jonathan Shaw: Is it a profession that finds it reasonably easy to recruit, is it a popular profession to go into? I am talking about governors.
Ms Lyon: It is a simple fact that there are not enough good governors to go round and this explains the reason for movement. It is not just to do with the promotional structure, which I think needs investigation. At the moment the planning is, as Tom was saying, to reward people for moving rather than for staying and it is only the exceptional governor, like Paul Mainwaring when he was at Huntercombe who negotiated to be able to stay at a young offender institution for five years and to be rewarded for staying. It was a special arrangement attached to that one governor, who put forward a case for needing to maintain consistency with young people, which was admirable but it should not have been him having to make a special case.

Q389 Jonathan Shaw: The reason is that there are not enough good governors so they have to move them around all the time?
Ms Lyon: If you have a large London prison that is in trouble, a Brixton or a Holloway, that is very near to ministers, very near to the press. It is a high profile institution, it will not be a good thing if it gets into serious trouble, so the tendency will be to move a good governor in from another, regional prison as fast as possible, often with absolutely no notice. In that case you have to back-fill the appointment, so if you moved from the Midlands you have to back-fill into the Midlands, and each large governor move may require another five or so moves, like dominos. There simply are not enough good governors. There was a scheme to attract in new people.

Q390 Jonathan Shaw: Thank you very much. Can we go on to targets?
Mr Robson: In support of Juliet's answer, there was a very high profile case regarding Wandsworth some years ago, we are going back possibly five years, when the Chief Inspector's Report found that actually there had not been a governor in Wandsworth for some two years. The situation was that the government of Wandsworth was so high profile and so well thought of within the Prison Service that it was forever being taken out of the establishment to shore up a poorly-performing establishment or to cover for people in head office and, as a result, Wandsworth was sadly neglected. That is a situation, in a smaller way, which occurs up and down the Prison Service day in and day out.

Q391 Jonathan Shaw: This is about education; nevertheless, I think the parallel with a headteacher is one that I wrote down as well, Juliet.
Mr Robson: It is to do with continuity, of course.

Q392 Jonathan Shaw: Absolutely. Can I ask you about the appointments of learning and skills, Tom Robson. How was that received by your Association?
Mr Robson: First of all, our Association welcomes any initiative that will give quality time to inmates. The worst thing that can happen to my members is for prisoners to be idle. I am talking about initiatives, whether they be, as was talked through earlier, a myriad of things that happen, we are talking about cell work, vocational training and education, so the Prison Officers' Association welcome quality time out of cells for inmates. The worst thing that can happen to my members is to have to lock people up for 23 hours a day, which I think is the standard press response to what happens in prisons, and to watch inmates, day in and day out, playing table-tennis or hanging around. Anything that is quality for inmates is quality for prison officers.

Q393 Jonathan Shaw: Have things changed in the last few years?
Mr Robson: Yes, they have. I think that we have a different style of prison governor. I think that there is much more hands-on by the Prison Service, prisons are not being left to do their own thing any more. Certainly there is more monitoring, which again we welcome. However, what goes hand in hand with that is, in some areas of the country, a difficulty of recruiting prison officers, so not only is there a lack of continuity with governors there is also a fairly high turnover of prison officers in some areas as well. I think the Prison Service has changed in that way. I think we do need to have a more stable staff, although that has been addressed and it is starting to improve now, certainly in London, which has always been a more difficult area.

Q394 Jonathan Shaw: How is it being addressed, what are they doing that is making an impact?
Mr Robson: I think that we have gone into a situation of local recruitment, recruiting people who actually live in London rather than bringing in people from outside, and I think that is having an impact. It is in its very early stages now. I would reserve judgment as to whether it is going to be a permanent situation or not but, so far, the local recruitment I am talking about appears to be working.

Q395 Jonathan Shaw: Juliet Lyon, has that been your feeling, that the staff, the prison officers, have embraced the recruitment of the heads of learning and skills in institutions?
Ms Lyon: Certainly our sector has, the voluntary sector.

Q396 Jonathan Shaw: What is your perception of it?
Ms Lyon: I think there is a fear, which Tom voiced earlier, that prison staff will be reduced to turnkeys, that they will be locking and unlocking doors, while

other people come in and do the more interesting things, the more interesting things being education and other sorts of activities.

Q397 Jonathan Shaw: I do not know whether you are familiar with the contract. We have heard that REX has collapsed and there has been some discussion about the inability of the head of learning and skills within prisons to have much influence on the contract, particularly importing, using local education providers. Is that something on which your organisation has got a view?
Ms Lyon: We have contributed to the consultation on the contracting procedure.

Q398 Jonathan Shaw: What were you saying in the consultation?
Ms Lyon: We were saying, it is an area on which we do not feel strongly informed, so we did not say as much as we might have done. What we have said in relation to heads of learning and skills is, we welcome their appointment and we welcome the level at which they are placed in the senior management team, clearly that was important and that was a significant change. In terms of contracting, I remain unconvinced that the process is right yet. I was in Durham Prison last week, looking at new education units but being told by the Governor that there were no people to staff them because of problems with the contract. Really I could not understand what this was about, where you can have facilities and nobody using them and no staff to run them.

Q399 Jonathan Shaw: Tom Robson, is that something on which your organisation has a view?
Mr Robson: Turnkeys were mentioned, and that is absolutely right, but we have got no fear, we believe that we should be integrated and that we are major players within the Prison Service anyway. I think I mentioned earlier that there are education centres of great quality up and down the country where, because of lack of staff, governors are not able to keep them open for the hours that they should be, and sometimes that is because of a shortage of prison officers, sometimes because of overcrowding. When a prison is overcrowded it is more likely that people will self-harm and have to be sent out to local hospitals, which takes staff away, etc. There are 101 reasons why an education department might suffer brickbats in that way.

Q400 Chairman: Tom, can I push you on this. Can we have some detail? I was getting off the train last night and I saw a poster which said "Why don't you teach? Minimum 22k." What do you get to start as a prison officer?
Mr Robson: It is difficult to tell you actually. I might have to write to you with those figures.[2]

Q401 Chairman: Give me a ballpark for a prison officer's starting salary?

Mr Robson: The starting rate in London for a prison officer is round about the figure you have just quoted, £22,000.

Q402 Chairman: What is the minimum qualification for that?
Mr Robson: The minimum qualification is simply the university of life. There is no minimum qualification to be a prison officer. They sit tests, a written test, a practical test, and go into the Prison Service. There is no standard qualification.

Q403 Chairman: Once they start, we know there is a 60% drop-out rate within the first two years. You do not have to have any qualifications to be able to start and you get a reasonable salary but you do not have training after that period. You do not have a very long period of training, you said seven weeks, did you not?
Mr Robson: Yes, but of course you are in a 12-month probationary period, as you would understand, and that is a pretty intensive situation. I came into the Prison Service from an engineering background and people come from all sorts of backgrounds these days, some people with very, very good and high qualifications become prison officers, but it is a difficult environment to work in. I think it is a difficult profession to take up and you work with difficult people. I think the drop-out rate is sometimes to do with the fact that there are quite a lot of rival industries that pay similar wages, but also I think the drop-out rate is often because it is, I was going to say, an acquired taste, but I think it is a difficult job to work your way into.

Q404 Chairman: It sounds like being a politician, Tom. Do you see what I am driving at? I am very interested in management. If I were looking at the Prison Service and any other organisation I know, if you want to keep men and women and motivate them and retain them you have to have good, stable management and management that cares about the development of the staff, and that nearly always means upgrading, training, performance review, training out of the business and in the business. It just seems to me that what has been explained to us by other people is that not enough investment is put into training and getting the best out of this talented workforce you have got. If you do not try to get the best out of them you do not get that link with doing other than turnkey, you do not get that as much as you would like. Is that not true?
Mr Robson: I have a feeling that we have been there during the course of today's discussions. The biggest problem within the Prison Service, other than drugs, and I know this is not a forum to discuss drugs, is the overcrowding. Not only has the prison department had to dispense with mandatory training, as I explained to you before, and it is very much down to the quality of a local governor as to how much of his budget he can spare, also it is down to the fact that there is not the time in the day to pay to the training

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of prison officers. It is a very, very busy profession to be in at this moment in time, it is very difficult indeed.

Q405 Valerie Davey: Professor John, having heard this conversation about the needs of the Prison Service, what do you think ought to be the main contribution that we should be commenting on, as a Committee, in terms of prison staff? We are talking at the moment about prison staff. What should we do and what should we recommend?
Professor John: I think that is multifaceted, really. To continue from where Tom left off, it seems to me that the conditions have got to be created wherein prison staff could have an investment made in them so that they could acquire the capacity to assist offenders and aid the rehabilitation process. The kind of custodial management which is taking place just now, for all the reasons that Tom has given, in my view militates against that. That relates partly to the whole business of contracting that we were just discussing. Up to 1989, when I became Director of Education in Hackney, I was in charge of the education provision in the five London prisons as an Assistant Education Officer in the ILEA. We were able to have a coherent approach to prison education and indeed to working with prison officers in those establishments and, to a very large extent, the programme that we introduced supported the development of those prison officers. It was idiosyncratic in the sense that it did depend very much on the disposition of the individual prison governor; nevertheless, the way in which the whole thing was organised made that possible. The current contracting arrangements, in my view, do not assist that necessarily and the expertise of further education colleges and education facilitators in the post-16 sector cannot always be drawn upon, again for reasons of contract and cost and the differential levels of pay that people who work in the Prison Service have, as distinct from those who work in colleges, and so on. Therefore, the extent to which prison officers can be facilitated in their own development such that they are not just turning keys but are able to contribute to the development of prisoners is really very limited. One has got to do something about overcrowding. There has got to be a link between the contracts of prison officers, as part of the contract that they receive there should be some element of their staff development, so that, while they may not have expertise in particular areas of education provision or delivery, they should have some general competences in terms of facilitating people's development.

Q406 Valerie Davey: Within that, would you also say identifying the needs of prisoners, particularly in terms of education, and that is the context? I know that what Tom said earlier means that many prison officers want to help the individual but if they have not got the training to identify those needs then they are unable to be as helpful as they might be. It is that aspect. It is not just the delivery, which perhaps further education colleges or the specifically designated education team can offer, but it is that identification of what the needs are?
Professor John: That is again a pretty complex and, I would say, specialist area too. It is right that prison officers, given the degree of interface they have with prisoners, should be able to take part in that, but then they would need to be trained to do that, yes.

Q407 Valerie Davey: Thank you. Could I ask Juliet very specifically because of an answer to a question earlier; you said that we were not doing well when there were specific education needs identified. Could you tell us first of all who is actually assessing and identifying these needs, and I am particularly interested, I will tell you now, in dyslexia, and, secondly, what are we or are we not doing about meeting those specific education needs, which do not even tally in terms of the basic need, essentially, or initially?
Ms Lyon: There has been very little work done on this. I would say that to start with. We have begun to try to find out what is known already. There has been a study in Scotland, of which I will submit details so that the Committee can be informed by that study, but there is not a comprehensive picture of how many people in the prison population have specific learning difficulties. We know roughly how many had disrupted education because the Social Exclusion Unit did that piece of work in its report on preventing reoffending. There is no comparable work, say, in the mental health area, which I said earlier on. I have never seen a figure, for example, which tells you that in the prison population there are X percentage of people who have been statemented, which I know is not a fantastic measure but it is a measure of their need, whereas I do know the percentage who have been in care as children. I just do not think it is an area that people have bothered to look at in the way that it should be looked at.

Q408 Valerie Davey: Should it not be a target to identify, in fact, the specific education needs of prisoners and then you would have some basis on which to judge outcome, you would have some basis on which to judge the delivery of the needs of those prisoners in terms of their education?
Ms Lyon: It would have to be a different target. There is already a requirement to assess, but I think we are talking about something more specialist, as Gus said, than just simply a quick assessment, and I think antecedents would be important, so finding out from business whether they had paid any attention to educational deficits or learning disabilities would all be part of that. A person who is rather good on this is Dr Sue Bailey, who works in the Manchester area and has picked up various learning disabilities by looking intensely at a small group of young offenders, and also physical impairments, such as deafness, which had not been picked up previously, which clearly are impeding people's ability to learn while they are in gaol.

Q409 Paul Holmes: Can I return to explore a little further some of the comments which were made earlier. I think Juliet said that prison officers were getting worried that they would become just turnkeys, they would put people in the cell and lock the door, unlock the door and all the other bits. The interesting bits and the bits where you got more involved with the prisoners would go to somebody else, like the Education Service. Tom commented, right at the start I think, that it was a shame that back in the old days, in the Borstals, for example, which I think Tom started working in, the prison officers were quite closely involved with the prisoners and now that is becoming less and less so. How important is it that the prison officers should be people who are closely involved in delivering education, given that they get only six weeks' training to be a prison officer, whereas somebody involved in teaching, for example, has one to four years' training just to be a teacher?

Mr Robson: I think it is very important, for a couple of reasons. Prison officers, by the way, are people with vast experience of life. In general, they are people in their late twenties who are employed as prison officers. They build up a rapport with prisoners every day of their working lives, they get to know the prisoners very well and the prisoners get to know them. I think that is perhaps the number one issue, that there is trust built up. The downside is that if there are any nasties to be done to a prisoner, if there is any punishment to be handed out or restraints to be applied, then obviously it is the prison officers who have to do that as well. In general, they do build up trust and a working relationship with prisoners, which I think is probably more vital than any other relationship anywhere else in the Prison Service, other than perhaps the camaraderie between the staff themselves. I think that is very important, it is something which bears fruit in a lot of ways. We do various offender programmes that prison officers are involved with, particularly the sex offenders treatment programme, which is a very stressful situation for prison officers to be in, and that is coped with. I think that trust and working relationship, the man management and the support situation is something that is being leached away, if you like, and not being utilised by anyone at all. A lot more thought needs to go into that. Prison officers are individuals, and there will be obviously some prison officers who would not give a brass farthing for educating prisoners, the vast majority want interesting work and they want to try to make prisoners better people. Frequently, simply by spending five minutes of their time with a young man, or a young lady, can give huge dividends, and that, to me, is part of the education of a young man or a young lady.

Professor John: I do not think that what Mr Holmes is asking for, or indeed what Tom is suggesting, could be achieved within the timeframe that is set typically for training prison officers. One of the concerns that I and many of my colleagues have is to do with the awareness that prison officers develop of issues to do with equality and diversity. As someone who has been involved in training on the implementation of the Race Relations Amendment Act, for example, there are major issues in terms of how prison officers are equipped to understand and grow their awareness of issues to do with gender subordination, to do with race discrimination and other aspects of equality legislation which are simply skimmed over, in my experience, in the training that prison officers have. If we are saying that this is a service which deals with the whole core community and the whole population of multi-ethnic Britain then it seems to me that the kind of interface we wish prison officers to have with prisoners sensitively, given the overrepresentative number, for example, of black people in the secure state, must mean a greater concentration, a greater amount of time spent equipping prison officers with those kinds of skills.

Ms Lyon: I want to address, in principle, what the CRE is telling us. They are saying to us that there are more black young men going to prison now than there are entering university, which I think is an awful thing to know. That is just an extraordinary fact. If that is the case, there is not any room for complacency because we are in danger of losing a generation of very important young people.

Q410 Chairman: What is the percentage of ethnic minority officers in the POA?

Mr Robson: The percentage is very small. I cannot give you the actual percentage. I could write to you and give you that.[3] I would have to say that it is very small, with the exception of Pentonville, I think, which has got the biggest percentage of black or ethnic minority prison officers in the Prison Service. There have been various attempts to try to recruit into that particular area and there are difficulties in doing so. In some cultures, it does not appear to be made an attractive job, although a lot of time and effort have been put into that.

Q411 Chairman: Can you tell me, Tom, for those who do not know this, if you are a prison officer is there a career path into management, into becoming a governor?

Mr Robson: Yes, there is.

Q412 Chairman: That is a career path which is fairly normal?

Mr Robson: Yes. I have to say again, it is more the exception than the rule now that someone makes it to Governor of Wormwood Scrubs from a basic grade prison officer, but it can be done, yes, and it is welcome.

Ms Lyon: The current Director General of the Prison Service took that route through to the post he has now, which I think is an important model for the Service. I did want to say just a little bit more about the management issues and the training of prison staff and again to echo what Gus said. We have become increasingly concerned about the low

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priority ascribed to training prison officers, whether it is basic entry level or whether it is people coming in at direct entry, or people managing for the first time. At one point the college had, I think it was called, Managing for the First Time or Governing for the First Time; that course has been discontinued. Efforts to train governors and support governors was something done at the Tavistock Clinic some while ago. As far as I know, that has fallen apart now. There is not even as much attention paid as there had been to supporting and training people at every grade entry level or promotion change in the Service. That just does not seem sensible, because obviously you need to enable people to manage, which is going to be different from working as an officer. That effort to look after others and attend to their development has got to feed into thinking about prisoners and their development. I do not think you can dissociate the two.

Q413 Chairman: It sounds a rather old-fashioned management structure in the prison because, if we are hearing evidence today that there is this instability as governors move on, where is the concept that there is a management team which a governor leads, and that stays with it even though the governor moves on? That is a model we are familiar with in the private and public sectors, but does that not happen in prisons?

Ms Lyon: There is more of an emphasis on SMT, the senior management team, than there used to be, I think, but there is a similar level of turnover there, because a large number of that SMT will consist of the fast-track junior governor grades who are doing just that, fast-tracking.

Mr Robson: My point would be that quite often the governor has no control over who his management are and who they consist of, because everyone is striving to better themselves within the Prison Service and quite often they have to leave that establishment and go to another to do that, so the governor has no control.

Q414 Jeff Ennis: We have focused already on the issue of overcrowding in prisons as being a stumbling block, to some extent, in making progress on improving academic achievement, educational achievement, in prisons. Overcrowding is cited, obviously, as one of the main reasons that we have prisoner churn. I think the statistics you gave us, from the PRT, were that currently there are about 17,000 prisoners sharing in cells designed for one, and the issue of prisoner churn affects primarily Category B prisoners. If we cannot overcome this problem of overcrowding in the short term, I wonder whether we ought to be considering looking towards some form of standardised curriculum within the prisons, primarily because of this major stumbling-block. Have any of you got any views on that?

Mr Brenchley: In a sense, there is a standardised curriculum because it is determined by KPTs plus whatever the prison can provide and that will vary from place to place. There is a core, that we are aware of, of basic skills, key skills, CLAIT, basic IT qualifications, there are others available as well, and then there is a sort of tail of other qualifications. The concern which was expressed earlier on about the broadening of the range of experiences which can be made available to prisoners certainly applies in those contexts, because they are very much determined by whatever a prison has been able to set up. For example, in Reading now, they have got a new catering kitchen. I have never seen or heard of anything like that in a prison, maybe that is my limited experience, and it looks to me to be to a pretty good industrial standard. Somebody who has done their work there can go out somewhere else. I do not know whether there should be catering kitchens everywhere else, but certainly there should be something which has that level of industry-standard facility and training potential in it. I suppose really it goes back to what was said before about the management team. I was quite keen to come in on that because there is now a crucial combination of people in post, with a governor and a head of learning and skills, which I think is just about the greatest innovation in around 20 years in the prison sector, in terms of opening it up as a learning and skills environment, and people like the prison workshop managers I have met, and so on. If that group of people have got their act together and are able to affect the culture, going right back to the beginning of the discussion, then I think there is a prospect for a prison starting to affect Tom's members or starting to affect other staff there in a way which does start to ramp up the sense of the organisation as being a learning environment. For me, it is partly about equipment but it is driven very much by that group of crucial people in managerial positions who form a management team, and they can make it happen or they can kill it dead, depending on the chemistry between them.

Mr Robson: I would support a curriculum if it did not debar people from entering that curriculum at particular points and at particular levels, if it did not debar charitable organisations, for instance, to be able to come in and do decent work. As long as it was all-embracing I would support that. The second thing is what John says about the industrial kitchen. Again, that is nothing new. Someone mentioned earlier prison officer PEIs, doing vocational work with prisoners, giving qualifications in various levels of PE, which they are qualified to do. It is not many years ago when, in our prison kitchens, in our prison workshops and, in fact, to maintain our prisons, prison officers were the people who did that, as specialist grade prison officers. They would take groups of prisoners with them while they were doing that work and they would have qualifications themselves to be able to teach prisoners to NVQ standard, for instance, in the kitchens and in the workshops. That policy has been reversed for prison maintenance to be done by private individuals, or by, if you like, not prison officer grades, who do not actually take prisoners, supervise and teach, and I believe that skill and that facility has been lost. It is something that we would urge this Committee to have a look at, please.

Q415 Jeff Ennis: Every set of witnesses we have had so far that has given evidence, including you people today, has focused on the need to establish some form of electronic tracking system of record of achievement, which I think is definitely going to be one of the recommendations we come out with. I was intrigued with what you said earlier, Professor John, about the concept of a passport that prisoners would take with them when they moved from one establishment to another. Do you see that learning passport as supplementary to the electronic transfer of information, or would that form the basis of this system?

Professor John: I would see it very much as being integrated within it. It seems to me that there must be ownership of that instrument by the learners themselves. In addition to it being a management tool passed around the system electronically, the individual learner must have access to it in some form, I would suspect it would be mainly hard copy, in order that they could celebrate their achievements as well as have an indication as to how it tallies with whatever individual learning plan or sentencing plan they may have had.

Ms Lyon: There is a precedent for that at Wandsworth. We were working alongside the St Giles Trust in Wandsworth Prison and they are training prisoners to be housing advisers and they are getting NVQ qualifications in housing advice. We introduced a system of prisoner passports there, which has been picked up in one or two of the women's prisons, I understand, but it is not a system yet in the whole Prison Service.

Q416 Chairman: It has been an extremely good session and the Committee has valued your evidence a great deal. Is there anything that any of you would like to say that you think we have missed? You have the usual offer, of course, that we would like to remain in communication with you, and if you are on the tube or the bus or driving, or wherever you are going, and you think "I wish I'd said that to the Committee," do e-mail us, write to us, phone us, but is there anything of a burning nature that you need to tell us now?

Mr Brenchley: Two points, if I might, Chairman, because they have not naturally slotted into the conversation earlier on. The first one is that I know in your journey around Scandinavia you discovered Internet access being used quite widely.

Q417 Chairman: Yes, in Norway.

Mr Brenchley: My understanding is that there are means of making this happen electronically, there are one or two people who have explained to me how it might work and I did not understand a word, but they know these things. I would not want to leave the room without having used the word "Internet", for research, and so on. The second one was about the interface with the Resettlement and Probation Services. I think the infrastructure of the Service at the moment does mean that it is possible to envisage continuity in the learning experience of a prisoner who is leaving prison through some of these other organisations, in a way which probably they would not have been able to before. For me, education in prison, in a sense, is just part of the story, because it is education back into whatever they do afterwards, which is going to consolidate it and put the lid on it. From that point of view, I hope that the Committee is entertaining the sorts of continuity back into resettlement that will enable prisoners to change their lives in that way.

Chairman: It is interesting where different sessions lead. I would like to have spent a little bit more time on the relationship with drugs, the full package of after pursuit and care, and a lot of other things. We did not get everything today. As I say, it has been high quality evidence. Tom, I was cross with the POA when we started, but that is not to undervalue your evidence, which has been first-class and we have very much enjoyed your performance. But do tell your Chairman and Chief Executive that we want them here and we will ask them soon. Thank you very much for your attendance.

Supplementary memorandum from the Prison Officers' Association

CURRENT AND RECOMMENDED PAY LEVELS FOR PRISON OFFICER GRADES AND SUPPORT GRADES

Grade		*Current pay scale* £ *per annum*	*Recommended pay scale from 1 April 2004* £ *per annum*
Principal officer		29,194	29,895
		28,291	28,970
Senior officer		26,738	27,380
Prison officer	2nd long service increment	25,183	25,788
	1st long service increment	24,692	25,285
	Maximum	24,285	24,868
		23,072	23,626
		22,338	22,875
		21,767	22,290
		21,194	21,703
		20,623	21,118
		20,136	20,620
		19,645	20,117
		18,891	19,345
		17,609[1]	18,032[1]
	General entry minimum	16,500[2]	16,896[2]

ETHNIC CATEGORY SUMMARY, 30 JUNE 2003 AND 30 JUNE 2004

	30 June 2003		*30 June 2004*		*Variance*	
Recorded Ethnicity	*Number*	*Per Cent*	*Number*	*Per Cent*	*Number*	*Share of Total*
White	40,136	85.9	41,678	86.1	1,542	0.2
Asian	651	1.4	685	1.4	34	0.0
Black	1,155	2.5	1,289	2.7	134	0.2
Mixed, Asian/White	72	0.2	74	0.2	2	0.0
Mixed, Black/White	109	0.2	128	0.3	19	0.0
Mixed, Other	126	0.3	142	0.3	16	0.0
Other Ethnic Background	327	0.7	341	0.7	14	0.0
All Minority Ethnic	2,440	5.2	2,659	5.5	219	0.3
Not Stated	3,983	8.5	3,921	8.1	–62	–0.4
Non Respondents	184	0.4	145	0.3	–39	–0.1
Total	46,743	100.0	48,403	100.0	1,660	–

3 December 2004

[1] Minimum rate for entrants regrading from the operational support grade.
[2] General entry minimum rate. However, a higher entry rate may be paid when appropriate under the *Headstart* arrangements.

Wednesday 3 November 2004

Members present

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr David Chaytor
Valerie Davey
Paul Holmes
Mr Kerry Pollard
Mr Andrew Turner

Witnesses: **Mr David Bell,** Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, **Mrs Miriam Rosen**, Director, Education, Ofsted, **Mr Robert Green,** Director, Corporate Services, Ofsted, **Mr Maurice Smith,** Early Years Directorate, Ofsted and **Mr Jonathan Thompson,** Director, Finance, Ofsted, examined.

Q418 Paul Holmes: Ofsted is coming back next week to look in more detail at our inquiry into prison education but because David Bell cannot be with us next week we thought we would ask one or two things today. You have had the duty of inspecting all 16–19 education since 2001 which includes, therefore, young offenders' institutions, training centres and secure units. When you are inspecting education within young offenders' institutions do you apply any different yardsticks to what you would use for the equivalent age group in a college or a sixth form?

Mr Bell: No, in the sense that I think it would be wrong to do so. However, you have to take account of the particular circumstances that those young people find themselves in, particularly in terms of pre-education experience. One of the things that we do highlight in our work is, as is a well-known fact, that many young people who are in prison or in secure establishments have a very low level of educational attainment. We do look at the quality of education and the quality of teaching offered to those young people. I think it would be wrong for us to have different standards of expectation because surely one of the important things that prison or secure accommodation can offer young people is the opportunity to improve their education. I will just cite, if I might, the example of a report that we published jointly with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons on girls and young women in prison. There were issues there that had to be raised but for me one of the most depressing things that came out of that report was a young woman saying, "For all the difficulties we have in education in prison, it is just so much better than what we had previously". For many of these young people prison education—if I can put it that way—offers them a chance to get on the ladder. I think one of the issues that is worth looking at, if I might suggest, Mr Holmes, in terms of this whole issue is what happens when young people get to the point of leaving a secure establishment? We have picked up on a number of occasions that lack of support, guidance and follow-through. It is very good to get started on the ladder of educational achievement but when you leave you find there is nothing there for you. I think there is a big issue about the general transition from prison to freedom, if I can put it that way, and a particular issue about ensuring that educational opportunities are afforded to youngsters who have already started along the path.

Q419 Paul Holmes: One of the issues that we picked up more with prisons than young offenders' institutions is the number of prisoners who are there for a pretty short period of time anyway, as part of the sentence, but the fact that they move so quickly from one prison to another. Therefore the people we have talked to in prison say that it is very difficult to actually get them to complete a course because they are moving so quickly. If you are applying the same yardstick to success as you would with a school or a college, is that not going to lead to some unfair judgment because of that background?

Mr Bell: We are not necessarily saying that somehow prison education is responsible for the fact that the prisoners are moving because that is obviously a matter of penal policy, to move certain groups of short term offenders. I think it is for us to report on the quality of teaching, for example, against the same measures that we see. I think it is right and fair to say that we have seen some excellent examples of high quality teaching even with young people who are in prison for a relatively short period of time. I think it is useful, however, for us to be able to say that where there is transition—whether that is transition within the prison education system or transition from prison to the outsides world—that needs to be handled better than it is. If you look at our report consistently across secure establishments, the juvenile security state and into prisons, that is a consistent theme. I think it is also fair to say that I would be very interested to hear your findings on this subject but I do not think I have heard prison education staff feel, as it were, hard done by because of inspection; in fact, I think very much the opposite. They have welcomed the fact that their work is looked at in the same way and it seems to me that it is only right that it should be. To go back to a phrase used earlier, I think we act as a force for good by saying that we are going to inspect provision for youngsters in colleges, schools, sixth form centres and if they are in prison we are also going to inspect that to see that they are getting a decent deal.

Q420 Paul Holmes: One of the differences we have noticed quite a lot from the Scandinavian examples we looked at is where they buy all the prison education in from the local colleges basically. In the British prisons we have been to we have noticed you get a whole range. You have prison officers doing education, you have outside instructors employed by the prison and then you have college staff as well.

In one prison you can have all three of those working side by side. Do your inspections reflect any of those different gradations or do you have any comments on how effective it is or not, as the case may be?
Mr Bell: I would like to come back to you on that issue. I am not aware off-hand of us making those fine distinctions in our analysis. In one sense it would perhaps not be appropriate for us to do so because what we should really be saying is: what is the quality like, whoever is providing it? I will have to get back to you on that because I do not have an answer for you today on that.[1]

Q421 Mr Chaytor: In the *Improvement through Inspection* report I could not find a single reference at any point to inspection in secure establishments. My question is, does that reflect something about the priority Ofsted gives to them?
Mr Bell: To make an important point, we do not carry this work out, as it were, under our direction. We are invited to do this work either by—and mainly by—HMI Prisons or by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in relation to secure training establishments. That is not an excuse but it is a point of detail. I think we do comment on joint work that we carry out with other inspectorates. We have a good tradition of working particularly with the previous social services inspectorate on a range of functions. It is activity which is in one sense at the margins within Ofsted. We do not have a huge number of people doing this. In fact, we really only have a couple of people in the main, one person in particular who I hope will be with you next week to be able to talk in more detail about this. That is the nature of our engagement with this but I would hope that you would accept if I say that this is important work for us to do even though it may be a very marginal part of our activity. I commented earlier that one of the things that I think we can do as an organisation is shine a light in those areas perhaps which others do not look at and I would say that prison education and education of youngsters in hospital are examples of where we have worked. However, I do accept your point and I take your work for it unless Robert can suggest otherwise.
Mr Green: I take Mr Chaytor's word for it as well.

Q422 Chairman: It is a little disturbing because this has only come into our remit and your remit relatively recently and we would hope you will take it very seriously in the sense that many of our failures in education end up in prison.
Mr Bell: It is a very important point. We know that low educational attainment at primary school leads to poor progress at secondary school which often leads to truanting which in turn leads to exclusion which leads to criminality which leads to prison. I think we can in one sense track the consequences.

Q423 Chairman: Do you carry inspections out yourselves in prison?

[1] *Note by witness.* We do not have any evidence that differentiates in this way.

Mr Bell: In prisons we do them in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectors of Prisons, particularly with young people, but we do it with the CSCI in relation to secure training establishments. It is not our remit. To be clear about that, this is not our direct remit to do this; we do this under invitation. We have no problems with that.

Q424 Chairman: What do you mean, under invitation?
Mr Bell: It is the responsibility clearly of HMI Prisons to carry out the inspection of prisons. It is for HMI Prisons to determine whether special expertise is required and we are invited to provide staff where there are young people in prison and the Commission for Social Care Inspection does that. Please do not misinterpret what I am saying; these arrangements I think are absolutely appropriate. I am not angling for us to take leadership; we work very well together.

Q425 Chairman: We can already see the situation where prison officers with six or seven weeks' training, with no qualification for the job and they get no training on their job throughout their lives, it is the quality of the culture of education in prison establishments that we hope to help shine a light on.
Mr Bell: I wonder if I might just highlight two issues that the Committee could perhaps pursue in other places on this subject that seem to be particular interesting beyond the ones I have raised already. One is that there is increasing evidence that it is harder and harder to attract staff to come and work in prison education. I think, given what you have just said, that should really worry us, in other words, getting specialist trained teachers to come and do this. So that is one issue. The second issue which seems to me to be particularly of concern is the extent to which young people themselves can access the training and support not just when they are in prison but afterwards. That seems to me, from our evidence, also related to where young people then go to live. We know that one of the issues for ex-offenders is appropriate housing. What incentive do you have to carry on with your education if you do not get appropriate housing? That is, in a sense, the cycle, but I would draw that to your attention because that is clearly a major inhibitor when it comes to young people carrying on because they just have nowhere to live.

Q426 Mr Chaytor: Can I ask one further point about the responsibility for inspection. Accepting that it lies within the prison inspectorate and given the specific responsibility for education in prison recently transferred from the Home Office to the DfES, would it not be logical for the specific responsibility for the inspection for education in prisons to transfer from HMI Prisons to Ofsted? We are just raising the logic of this arrangement.
Mr Bell: Personally, if we had major problems with this area of work in terms of our relationship with HMIP or anybody else then maybe we should consider that. I do not think there is an issue. I think

we work extremely well and it will be for Miss Owers to give her perspective of that as the Chief Inspector of Prisons, but I do believe that these arrangements actually work quite well. From my point of view, unless there is a strong argument to change, I am not sure that we should necessarily change anything.

Q427 Mr Chaytor: There were two separate issues. There is the question of the professional relationships between two different arms of Government and there is the question of the quality of what actually happens, what takes place in the prison. It is perfectly possible to have superbly amicable professional relationships and yet jointly preside over a disaster. My question is, therefore, if the evidence emerging from our inquiry was that there were significant shortcomings of what provision there is for prisoners in secure establishments, is that in itself an argument for re-considering your view?

Mr Bell: You will know from our annual reports in previous years that we have commented on this as part of our range of responsibilities; we have commented on prison education. I think it remains to be seen in some ways whether the transfer of responsibilities to the DfES will bring about greater priority on prison education, but you are still going to be left, are you not, with the fundamental issue that the Home Office is the department of state responsible for prisons even if the DfES is responsible for the education provision. I think it is an open question, whether giving that to the department of state responsible for education would give greater priority to education. I do not know the answer but I think it is one well worth pursuing.

Wednesday 10 November 2004

Members present

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr David Chaytor	Helen Jones
Valerie Davey	Mr Kerry Pollard
Jeff Ennis	Jonathan Shaw
Mr Nick Gibb	Mr Andrew Turner

Memorandum submitted by HM Inspectorate of Prisons

1. The Chief Inspector of Prisons is appointed by the Home Secretary from outside the Prison service for a term of five years. She is required under the Prisons Act 1952, as amended, to report directly to the Home Secretary on the treatment and conditions for prisoners in England and Wales and such other matters as are directed by him. The Chief Inspector also has a statutory responsibility to inspect immigration removal centres in England, Wales and Scotland. In addition, she inspects by invitation: immigration short-term holding centres; the Military Corrective Training Centre, Colchester; and prisons in Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and certain Commonwealth and Caribbean territories.

2. As a result of the announcement of the creation of the National Offender Management Service, bringing together prisons and probation, the Chief Inspector of Prisons is leading a joint programme with the Acting Chief Inspector of Probation to ensure that the two inspectorates are appropriately aligned or amalgamated to inspect the new arrangements.

3. Adult prison establishments receive a full, announced inspection every five years and, depending on a risk assessment, an unannounced follow-up inspection in between. This will be conducted jointly with other appropriate inspectorate bodies, for example the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). In addition ALI will conduct their own follow-up inspections where they deem this appropriate. Juvenile establishments receive a full inspection every three years, conducted jointly with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), with a follow up inspection and an education and training inspection in the years in between.

General Methods

4. Prison inspections are conducted against published inspection criteria or "Expectations". These set out the criteria—with references to domestic and international legal sources—that inspectors will use to assess the health of the establishment concerned as well as providing guidance on how inspectors can find the evidence for their judgments. Sources of evidence will be a combination of prisoner surveys, focus groups of prisoners, interviews with staff and prisoners, analysis of documentary evidence and observation.

Methods of Inspection for Education and Training in Prison

5. Inspection of education and training in prison is conducted jointly with Ofsted and/or ALI. This minimises unnecessary duplication and maximises the use of appropriate expertise.

6. Ofsted and ALI have their own methodologies and assessment frameworks to assess the effectiveness of education and training in prison. These will no doubt be described in detail to the Committee by the respective Chief inspectors. However, Ofsted and ALI also contribute to Prison Inspectorate reports to ensure a holistic picture of a particular establishment—while also producing separate reports where they deem it appropriate. Thus Ofsted and ALI will ensure assessment of the quality of prison education and training while assisting prison inspectors to assess the appropriateness of the entire regime of which education and training are only two elements of purposeful activity.

Views of Prisoner Learners

7. As indicated, to support inspectors to evidence their judgments the Prison Inspectorate's Research and Development Team undertakes comprehensive surveys of prisoners prior to a full inspection, including attitudes to education and training. This material provides an interesting description of prisoner learner perceptions of education and training in different types of prison, which may inform the Committee's deliberations.

June 2004

Witnesses: **Ms Anne Owers CBE,** HM Chief Inspector of Prisons; **Mr David Singleton,** HMI, Deputy Director for Education, and **Mr Bill Massam,** HMI, Head of Prison Education Inspection, Ofsted; and **Mr David Sherlock,** Chief Inspector and Chief Executive, and **Ms Jen Walters,** Inspection Manager, Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), examined.

Q428 Chairman: Can I welcome Bill Massam, David Singleton, Anne Owers, David Sherlock and Jen Walters to our proceedings and can I say that it is a pleasure to have such a distinguished group of witnesses. I have to single out Anne Owers, as I am very impressed by Anne, as I said at a recent conference we both spoke at. I am something of an admirer of yours and also your predecessor's as I think you do a wonderful job, but that is the only nice thing I am going to say to you! We take this inquiry into prison education very seriously. It has only been part of our remit for a comparatively short time and it is something that we are committing quite a lot of energy and time to. Indeed we have just decided that we will be taking evidence in a prison shortly as well, so we are looking forward to that opportunity. Anne, when we have five or a large number of witnesses, we do pick on one, so do you want to say anything to open up our questioning and if you would like two or three minutes to do that, you would be very welcome.

Ms Owers: Thanks very much and thank you for your kind words. In turn, I would like to say on behalf of the Prisons Inspectorate how much we value and how much I think the inspection process has gained by the colleagues on both sides. The Adult Learning Inspectorate and Ofsted, I think, have raised the game of the inspection of education and training in prisons quite significantly and they have also done a very important thing which we look for in all aspects of prison life, which is to demand that what is offered in prisons is equivalent to what is offered outside. Whether they look at the education of under-18s, juveniles, which obviously is Ofsted's bag, or the further education and training available to those over 18, they are looking for the same standards and they are applying exactly the same criteria as they would apply to places outside. For too long in aspects of prison life prisoners have had a very second-rate service, so I very much welcome that. I think that is one of the positive developments that has happened in relation to prison education and that has been followed too or paralleled by a very helpful ring-fencing of education and training budgets within prisons, which has meant that governors cannot just poach it for other purposes, as well as a professionalisation of the delivery of education within prisons with the appointments of heads of learning and skills, the use of FE colleges to deliver education and training and so on. Therefore there are some positive developments, not least the significant additional resources that have gone into under-18 education in prisons through the Youth Justice Board which we very much welcome. We recognise, as undoubtedly the Prison Service will have told the Committee, that the prison system is probably the largest deliverer of remedial education in the country and they will point to the significant targets that have been reached. I think, though, that we would be unwise not to recognise some of the drags on that process which are still apparent. I will rely very much on the expertise of colleagues on both sides to tell you about the quality and the professional aspects of the delivery of education and training, but I would point to three things that are difficulties within prisons just now. The first in this as in all other areas that I report on, is the effects of overcrowding and population pressure, the fact that there are too many prisoners within the system, that the resources to provide what they need are quite thinly spread and that prisoners are moving around the system quite regularly. We were at a young offender institution not very long ago which had turned over the equivalent of its whole population in three months and where only seven per cent of those in workshops were staying long enough to gain qualifications, and that was in an 18–21 institution. That is not untypical, so I think the effect, and I can say more to the Committee about that, is very apparent. The second thing is that prisons are geared towards security, quite rightly, but that sometimes means that they are not sufficiently geared in their heads towards education and training being critical, so prisoners are not always delivered on time to the resources that exist. At one prison we were at recently, prisoners were routinely arriving 90 minutes late for workshops and sessions, and that is because the prison as a whole is not signed up to education as an integral part of it and that is a task that needs to be done. The third block, I would say, is what I call the "before and after block". We are using in this country our prisons as what I have called the "too difficult tray", the place where we send people that we do not know what else to do with in outside society and that is as true in education as it is in other areas. Many of those who arrive in prisons, particularly young people, have been excluded from school or have truanted from school. They have been avoiding, or been avoided by, education for most of their lives. Prisons are picking that up and trying to deal with it and they are dealing with some of the most difficult and damaged people which the rest of society has not been able to provide for, so when we look at what is happening in prisons, we critically need to look at what has happened or not happened before and, very importantly, what will happen next. There is no point in providing people with education and training if they are not able then to make use of that when they leave and if they are rejected by the rest of society and do not have the support and the links that they need to use that afterwards. Those are the points that I would want to begin the session with.

Q429 Chairman: Thank you very much for that opener. The Committee would be very grateful if there are parts of your reports that have dealt particularly with education and training which you could flag up to our team and even perhaps the speech you gave at the conference that I also spoke

at perhaps because that, I think, follows through some of the points you have made today, so if we could have a copy of that too, that would be most useful for our report.
Ms Owers: Certainly. I am in the process of preparing my annual report, so I could let the Clerk have some of the material from that which could be helpful.[1]

Q430 Chairman: So there you are, sitting there as Her Majesty's Inspector, and you are surrounded by, a bit like a chorus of *The Producers*, and winged by four other people who are also inspectors, and the question I am going to ask you is this: is there not a feeling that there is some confusion here against most other inspection situations, and we know Ofsted and ALI very well from their other roles in other parts of the sector and we know that is their remit, that they are the inspectorates for those particular establishments, but they only can go into institutions with your approval, as I understand it, that you are the person who gives the approval for their inspection work, but why is that?
Ms Owers: That is not strictly true because under the 2000 legislation I think both Ofsted and ALI can go in on their own account and indeed ALI now has a system of follow-up inspections, which I am sure David will want to talk about.

Q431 Chairman: Where does, "at the invitation of HMI for Prisons" come from then?
Ms Owers: Well, that was the case, but my understanding is that the 2000 Learning and Skills Act, and I may have got the name of it wrong, actually gives a right of entry and certainly the Prison Service is very open to inspectorates going in on a sensible basis, so what ALI has negotiated now, quite rightly, with the Prison Service is that having gone in with us on the full inspection, they will then do their own follow-up of education and training, depending upon the grading that the prison has got in that area, so I do not think it is so much of a confusion. I would say that in fact when we do full inspections, what is important in a prison context is to get an holistic view of what is going on in a prison. For that reason, we inspect healthcare and we are shortly going to enter into a protocol with the Healthcare Commission to make sure that what we are doing fits in with what they are doing. That is why I think it is important that we all go in as a piece because, as I said earlier to the Committee, what happens in education on its own needs to be seen in the context of whether the prison as a whole is a supportive environment for education and training where what is being provided there links in with the initial assessments, links in with the sentence plan, links in with the whole ethos of the prison. For that reason it is helpful if we go in together, but that ALI and Ofsted have their own ways of being able to follow up if they need to.

[1] Not printed.

Q432 Chairman: Okay, there is some diversity of inspectors and thanks for clearing that up, but what about the question about who owns education in our prisons? There are several calls on that, but who do you think owns education? Could I ask the two Davids who owns it? Is this not a split responsibility in a sense?
Mr Sherlock: I do not feel so. I would echo absolutely what Anne says, that the important thing is to get a view of prisoners learning in the context of the whole of the regime. As Anne has said, the choice is of going in alone, but I think that would be a step backwards. I think the strength of this whole process is to look at a number of specialist aspects of the life of a prisoner and see how they fit together into a total regime which supports them hopefully to go back and not reoffend. We are perfectly clear that the overall responsibility for learning and skills lies with the governing governor. I think the learning and skills managers as part of the management team of the prison are a real step forward but it is not universally the case, I have to say, that they are full members of the senior management team. But nevertheless that is where the responsibility lies, with the total regime of the prison and with the governing governor.

Q433 Chairman: Who is likely to be there on average for about 15 months.
Mr Sherlock: Something like that.

Q434 Chairman: So he or she is the main person?
Mr Sherlock: Yes.

Q435 Chairman: And below them?
Mr Sherlock: The learning and skills manager and then the staff of the education and training parts of the prison. Often, as Anne has already said, those do not fit together quite as well as they might.

Q436 Chairman: We have been to four prisons in this country now and one in Finland and one in Norway, so we are building up our expertise a little, but is that not a problem, David, in terms of the part of the prison system you look at, this inability to say, "Here is the full responsibility for education and training in the prison" or a young offender institution?
Mr Singleton: I think I first want to echo what David has said. If it were the case that we had the statutory powers to go it alone, as it were, we would not dream of doing it because we do think that the whole thing needs to be looked at holistically and we need to look at education in terms of all that is going on in a prison, so that is, I think, agreed. I think the question is about the follow-up to our inspections and about all of the responsibility for that is always quite clearly allocated. I think there are a number of fingers in the pie, and Bill may want to talk about that.
Mr Massam: This is a really important issue for Ofsted in the sense that we fully recognise the contribution that is being made by the heads of

learning and skills who have recently been appointed, but there is some confusion, as far as the juveniles are concerned, about the roles of heads of learning and skills. In some cases they do not actually sit on the senior management team within the establishment and would perhaps report to a head of resettlement rather than just being a member of the senior management team. The other confusion that comes through is that on occasions staff are unclear about the responsibilities of heads of learning and skills *vis-à-vis* the education managers, so it is a very important post. Strategically, I think the YJB has got it right in introducing the posts, but as yet there is that settling-down period with the change in culture and understanding that is required, so there is some progress to date, but further work really to be done to interpret the role and understanding of heads of learning and skills, but quite clearly I agree with everything that has been said, that the governing governor is such a key person in getting the mood right and also supporting education. The quote that we have had before about attendance, for example, we have inspected a young offender institution recently where about 25% of the teaching time was being lost each day because of poor attendance and punctuality and that is quite a serious issue about the regime.

Q437 Chairman: The mind boggles when you say that there is poor attendance in prisons for education. Does that mean that the staff do not deliver them or they stay in their cells and say, "I don't feel like it today"?
Mr Massam: The problem in this establishment is that the regime itself has difficulty in getting young people to education on time and to leave at the approved time in terms of the contract, so, for example, with a two o'clock start, young people would drift in and teaching would not really start until 2.20 or 2.25, and then they are being called back to the wings well before the end of the teaching time. Therefore, a significant amount of teaching time is being lost mainly because there are regime issues and I think that in many ways is down to the governing governor and how the whole regime is managed.

Q438 Chairman: How are we ever going to get a real education ethos in prisons if you do not have a holistic approach where everyone in that prison is part of that education ethos? Can you have that? In Norway and Finland we saw prison officers who were trained for a year before they became full prison officers, whereas I understand it is down to six or seven weeks' training in the UK and then very little training during their career.
Ms Owers: There is an issue of prison officer training that we have raised quite frequently and I think it is probably at its most stark in relation to the under-18s, who are children. If you think of the qualifications you would require anywhere outside of prison to get anywhere near working with a child, we are asking people who are dealing with the most difficult and damaged children in our society to do so on the basis of very little specialist training, so I think that is an issue. Nevertheless, I have seen prisons, and I know that my colleagues have, where the ethos has been turned around and the place does see itself as a place that is focused around education and training. It is often about the governing governor, it is about the whole management team, it is about the whole staff team, but you need to get around three things which are critical. One, which Bill has mentioned, is that the regime in prisons is often something around which prisoners have to fit and you have to make the regime around the needs of the prisoners and particularly the education needs. You need to have officers on the wings who are positively encouraging particularly people who have spent their lives avoiding education and not simply letting them serve their sentences on their beds. You have got to have that all meshed together with the education department and if those things work, you do see results. If they do not, you see the kind of things that we have described.

Q439 Chairman: But this Committee has had evidence that there are some very good things going on in prisons, that there are some very good prisoners who are highly motivated, with governors who care about this sort of thing, but what we wonder about the system is why this is not systemic, but it is sporadic, it is patchy and we keep getting this evidence about the patchiness of the system. Surely a well-managed prison system should be better than this and why is it that Bill can tell us just now that the learning and skills person is part of the senior management team in some prisons, but not in others? What on earth is going on where we do not have a system that is built into the constitution, if you like, or at least the organisational rules? Why is that, Anne?
Ms Owers: There are two things from the prisons' point of view and David was talking to me earlier about ALI's perception which you may want to ask him about. One is that the prison system, the Prison Service, has moved within the last decade or so from being one where prisons were almost the personal fiefdoms of governors where the governor decided almost entirely what happened in a prison to a much more organised and centralised system, but the mechanism for delivering or trying to deliver consistency across the piece has been targets, key performance targets, and, as I am sure colleagues will want to say, we have some issues with those about whether they are flexible enough and whether they really record what is going on. We have seen in prisons examples where targets have been met that are inappropriate to prisoners or targets have supposedly been met by counting, for example, leaning on a broom in a corridor as a purposeful activity, so I think that the next step is to get a more coherent, a more flexible management system within the Prison Service. As I say, I know David from the education perspective has a very particular take on that.

Chairman: I am thinking of the parliamentary equivalent of leaning on a speech in the Chamber as describing a purposeful activity! My job is to warm you up really and we are now going to drill down with some really searching questions.

Q440 Jonathan Shaw: You said that in terms of inspections, you look at the prisons holistically, every part of them, but the Prison Service, do you look at education across the piece? It feels like it is very much sort of piecemeal where you have one prison and then another prison, but actually what I and the Committee would be interested to hear is whether the inspectorates have an overview.
Ms Owers: I think you are right, that the process of inspecting prisons does mean that you get an holistic view of a particular institution. Putting it all together into a picture of what is happening in the system is more difficult and we do not do a great deal of that, although that has happened. Ofsted recently, for example, has done two thematics looking at learning and skills, one about girls in education and one about learning and skills, which have been very helpful. My remit, certainly as it is at present, does not extend to inspecting the Prison Service, so I cannot easily within my statutory remit go beyond individual prisons to the central parts of the prison system. ALI, I think, and Ofsted can more readily do that.

Q441 Jonathan Shaw: Is that a discussion you have had either with the Director General of Prisons or the Home Secretary?
Ms Owers: It is a discussion that has been going on for quite a considerable time. There are, as the Committee will probably know, some discussions going on at the moment about the whole issue of inspectorates and I am not sure, in what may be a reorganisation or may not, we are still not sure what is going to happen what will happen about the remits of different inspectorates.
Jonathan Shaw: Well, you say you are not quite sure what is going to happen, but you will be part of that process. What are you saying? What do you want to see happen?

Q442 Chairman: Are you referring to Number Ten's Policy Unit's—
Ms Owers: Well, there have been various proposals around criminal justice inspectorates including Number Ten's proposals. There has been a lot of discussion about the role of inspectorates. My view is that certainly on occasions it would be helpful to be able to look at service-wide issues, but I think it is important to recognise that the key role of the Prisons Inspectorate is to report on the conditions and treatment of those held in incarceration and I would not want that key role to be diluted by too many other tasks that inevitably would not be accompanied by the resources that you would need to do them as well.

Q443 Jonathan Shaw: Can I hear from Mr Singleton?
Mr Singleton: I think your analysis is exactly right, if I may say so. I think there are two sorts of questions. We ask a lot of questions about education in prisons as elsewhere, but they fall into two categories, I think, clearly. One is what is the quality of the education department in itself, does it provide an adequate quality of provision, is it properly managed, is the teaching okay and so on. The second question is about whether it is functioning effectively as part of the service or a system which is actually delivering what the young people need. I think at the moment the answer to the first question is slightly clearer than the answer to the second question. The answer to the first question about the adequacy of the education department has been that there has been quite a lot of progress. There are better resources, there is more capital investment, more staff, reinforced management and so on, but a lot more needs to be done. In 2001, for example, we contributed to a report on basic skills provision which described a very poor position in young offender institutions. The Youth Justice Board has done a great deal about that, but we would say, and we are about to say again, that not enough has been done, but, nevertheless, there has been clear progress which we have been able to track. On the second question, which is essentially, are we effectively helping the young people not to reoffend and, if so, how are we doing it, what's working and what isn't, well, we think we are probably as far away as ever from getting a clear answer to that and on the whole it looks as though the fundamental difficulties about prison education are not being overcome and they are the prior experience of the young people themselves with very short custodial sentences, quite often, it appears to us, not accompanied by effective support in the community outside the custodial bit of the sentence, variation in the priority given to education and difficulties in attracting and retaining key staff.

Q444 Jonathan Shaw: If you were taking a parallel with schools, for example, where a school is failing, then Ofsted would put the school into 'special measures'. Do you go around prisons and put their education and training departments in special measures?
Mr Singleton: Well, we do not, but we do visit them very regularly.

Q445 Jonathan Shaw: Mr Sherlock says he does?
Mr Sherlock: Well, we do essentially.

Q446 Jonathan Shaw: You say you do and they do not?
Mr Sherlock: Would it be helpful to give you some statistics?

Q447 Jonathan Shaw: We always like those!
Mr Sherlock: Last year ALI participated in 33 inspections of prisons and young offender institutions. In just over 60% of those, the overall education and training provision was found to be inadequate to meet the reasonable needs of those

who were partaking of it and that is a substantially higher proportion obviously than you would find outside the Prison Service. Where that happened, we reinspected within 12 months. On a pilot basis, we are also offering the services of the Provider Development Unit, which is a unit of ALI, in order to assist them to raise those standards. There is a lot of work being done in order to shift the standard of education and training areas in prisons and to upgrade them and in fact the Offender Learning and Skills Unit has, I think, potentially a key role to play in that, and that is certainly one of the steps forward that has happened in the last few years with the transfer of the funding for learning and skills to the Department for Education and Skills.

Q448 Jonathan Shaw: I am right in saying that the Adult Learning Inspectorate and Ofsted have different assessment frameworks and methodologies?
Mr Sherlock: No, you are not. We all work to the Common Inspection Framework. What we have is separate remits by age group.
Mr Massam: I just have one point of clarification on that and I think it is an important point really. We do not have a formal system for placing establishments in special measures, but we do visit them on an annual basis. There is an annual inspection programme and we do follow up the recommendations made on an inspection the following year. ALI's programme of visits is less frequent. They are on a three-yearly cycle, I think, so it is slightly different in terms of emphasis.

Q449 Chairman: How many institutions have you got? It is all right saying you visit every year, but you have got a small number, all for the under-18s.
Mr Massam: That is right. Within Ofsted we have responsibility for inspecting 14 young offender institutions, male, and a changing number of female establishments. We also inspect the secure training centres and the local authority secure children's homes, so in total we would inspect a total of 30 establishments a year.

Q450 Jonathan Shaw: One of the major things that has been said time and again, and you said this to us as well, Anne, is about changing the culture. Now, you go back each year, keep going back, it improves a little bit, but not significantly, but you cannot sort of slap a special measures notice on the education and training, so if it were a school, it is likely that the headteacher would be down the road, but that does not happen with a governor, does it?
Ms Owers: It can do, but it is not necessarily the solution. I think there is a structural issue here about the levers that are there to improve education and training in prisons both within the prison and also more generally within the service and those are not yet sufficiently clear. The second bit of my answer to the Chairman earlier was going to be that I think prison governors now have a quite different job than the one that prison governors used to have only five or ten years ago. They are now managing some sophisticated and professional services which they cannot directly influence, and that is true now in their healthcare, which is now being run increasingly by primary care trusts and, quite rightly, being professionalised, and it is true in education with the heads of learning and skills. Therefore, what they are now having to do is to manage almost second-hand these properly professional, skilled services within their prisons rather than simply being able to use the chain of command and say, "Do this", and it gets done. That is quite a different way of managing locally within prisons and it also requires a more sophisticated approach from the Prison Service generally and I do not think those things are yet in place either nationally or locally.

Q451 Mr Gibb: So the governors do not own the education then? You said that they did.
Ms Owers: They are responsible for it, but they are not responsible for it in the way that traditionally governors have been by saying to the person next down in the chain of command, "You do it". They need to manage a contractor, they need to negotiate with a head of learning and skills, they will have the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit requiring things, and, if they are a children's establishment, they will have the Youth Justice Board requiring things. It is a much more sophisticated management model.

Q452 Jonathan Shaw: You mentioned the contractor. We know that Rex had the plug pulled on it all of a sudden and we will be speaking to people about that next week. What I would like to hear from the inspectors of prisons is your view on what should replace Rex and how should prison education be organised, as it once was with local colleges, so that there is a local knowledge base as to the skills required and the labour market that is available, or should it be done as it presently is through the private contractors? I would like to hear the views of all of you, please.
Mr Sherlock: I personally think it was deeply regrettable that the Rex project was pulled. Certainly the time it had taken had caused a great deal of damage, particularly among civilian instructors on the training side, a number had left and so forth. However, I suspect that most of that damage had already been done at the point that it was withdrawn and there was a good deal of potential, I think, from Rex to rationalise a number of the problems which we had been finding, which both Ofsted and ourselves had found over a number of years.

Q453 Chairman: David, in a sense you are talking in a bit of code here. Tell us, what was Rex intended to do?
Mr Sherlock: Rex was intended to bring education and training together and plainly they needed to be brought together. The two lines of contracting where prison governors were responsible for the training side, the occupational training, and colleges were dealing with education and never the twain met—

Q454 Jonathan Shaw: Prison staff were not very keen on that.
Mr Sherlock: Well, the staff never met really. The training staff tended to be locked up in a workshop with a group of prisoners all day and the education staff were normally employees of a college with which they had very little contact because it was at the other end of the country, so you had a group of professionals who were deeply isolated both from one another and from the professional infrastructure of which they needed to be a part in the world outside. Now, Rex should have dealt with a great deal of that; it should have allowed integrated contracts to be formed for the whole of the education and training regime and it would have allowed perhaps things to have been done on an area basis so that rather than a single institution having to go on its own with a limited group of skills at its disposal, it might very well have been able to call on a much wider staff pool, a much wider expertise on an area basis. I think there were all kinds of possibilities with Rex which at the moment are in abeyance and which need to be tackled again. At the moment we are in a kind of Never-Never Land really.
Ms Walters: One of the issues we have observed is that the responsibility for education and training still really lies at a very local level and at the moment we are involved in talking more with the area managers for prisons to see how we can further that so that the responsibility can be broadened, and the area managers are certainly very interested. One thing that we have noted this year is the responsiveness and the commitment of both governors and area managers in raising standards of education and training and they are very interested to come together.

Q455 Jonathan Shaw: You have given us a commentary on Rex, but what is your view? What do you think should replace the current regime?
Mr Sherlock: I think probably some sort of area-based regime where learning and skills are seen as an area activity, where staff can be transferred between establishments in that area, where particular establishments specialise in particular parts of the learning and skills regime so that, for example, the local prisons which are, generally speaking, taking in people for a very short time should specialise in initial assessment rather than in training. Therefore, they do not need to have basic skills targets to achieve as they need to be achieved on an area basis, not on the individual establishment basis, with a proper range of opportunities available within the area, properly staffed with people moving between them. I think that is probably one way forward. One of the things that I think you mentioned, Mr Shaw, the system level, it seems to me that the system has not been properly designed so far as the Prison Service is concerned and that there are quite a lot of issues which heads of learning and skills, however good they may be, however committed they may be, however positive their governing governors might be in backing them, cannot resolve on their own and that decisions need to be taken about what needs to be done at an area level and about what can only be done at a national level.

Q456 Jonathan Shaw: And what can be taken at a prison level as well?
Mr Sherlock: Indeed, absolutely.

Q457 Jonathan Shaw: One of the complaints from the heads of learning and skills is that they have no influence whatsoever over the contract.
Mr Sherlock: That is right.

Q458 Jonathan Shaw: Do you think that there should be flexibility within that contract for the heads of learning and skills to be able to make adjustments according to the prison population?
Mr Sherlock: Absolutely.

Q459 Jonathan Shaw: And that is achievable, is it?
Mr Sherlock: In fact they have quite substantial budgets now and very little choice over how they might be spent and that does not seem very sensible.

Q460 Chairman: In terms of this area aspiration, are these areas coterminous or anything like coterminous with learning and skills regions? Is there not a move for learning and skills councils to have much more involvement in this?
Mr Sherlock: Yes.
Chairman: Could you tell us about that?

Q461 Jonathan Shaw: And I would like to know what the view of Ofsted is about the new contract.
Mr Singleton: I would not dissent from what David has said, but I think it still leads to some systemic difficulties not tackled from the point of view of juveniles, and I will bring Bill in to give a more expert view of that in a moment. One thing that has emerged certainly from the survey report we did on young women in prisons recently was that the link between the custodial and non-custodial aspects, detention and training orders, for example, is not secure and that one does not sufficiently support the other, so although some of the provision that we saw in the prisons was perfectly adequate or even good, the support which the youngsters received outside was insufficient actually to take them forward. Now, the contract issue does not seem to me of itself necessarily to bear on that.
Mr Massam: The issue for me really is that, as far as the young people are concerned and thinking of that group selfishly, I am attracted by the area model. If it means that the young people, many of them, are way, way from the 50-mile radius that the YJB stipulates, and that concerns me. I do have particular concerns about the new girls' units which are being established because the majority of them are in the south of England and there is only one, I think, in the north of England, in Wakefield, and there are issues there. A fundamental question is the very complex set of organisations that are already in place and I think that does create problems for establishments because they do have responsibilities

to the Youth Justice Board, to the Prison Service and to the OLSU. Therefore, to bring in another regional level I think is important, but that needs to be done alongside some sort of rationalisation and much clearer lines of reporting because at the moment there is this fuzziness and lack of clarity which in some senses the inspectorates compound because we are involved in inspection and the establishments are also involved in audits and monitoring visits, so there is a very complex set of arrangements. I do support the notion of some area provision as I think it does make a lot of sense as far as the young people are concerned, but there is a big "but". It is not in addition to existing structures, but it needs to be co-ordinated and improved upon.

Ms Owers: I am also attracted by David's area model. It is the way that resettlement work in prisons, for example, is working best, when it is taken on an area level rather than an individual prison level, but there are two big "buts" to it. One is that it would be lovely if each area had its own juvenile establishment, its own women's establishment, its own young offender establishment, but they do not and prisons are not sensibly located within areas. The second is that whilst, yes, ideally it would be lovely if local prisons only did assessments, there will be people in local prisons who will never move outside a local prison, some short-term prisoners will serve all their sentence, a lot of people on remand in local prisons, and if we do not offer them anything substantive at that level, then they get nothing at all.

Q462 Chairman: What is the relationship between what you would call an "area", what we might call a "region"?

Ms Walters: I think the tensions will be between what the learning and skills councils, when they take over the funding, consider their areas and how that will apply to prison areas because there will be a crossover and I think there are going to be some tensions there. I think the other tensions will be in the development of a curriculum for an area and then developing a core national curriculum as to which one will come first because at the moment there are prisoners transferring to different prisons, unable to carry on their studies and there is a need, I think, to look at the whole basis of the curriculum that is offered right across the prison estates and, whether that is done firstly on a national basis or an area basis, I would suggest, and my view is, that it would be better first off on an area basis and building it up to a national level and, therefore, I think the LSC funding can follow that.

Q463 Chairman: Can any of you here give us the areas we are talking about in terms of prisons?

Ms Owers: If we are talking about prison areas, yes.

Q464 Chairman: We are going to have to be able to look at prison areas and learning and skills areas and really look at how this will all map out, but you still have not answered the question as to who pulled the plug on Rex and why—who did it?

Mr Sherlock: As far as I am aware, the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit pulled the plug because of concerns about the harm that it was doing in terms of staff leaving and so forth within the Prison Service, hence I made the point that in fact I think that many of the people who were going to leave had left and at that stage, if it were to be done—

Q465 Chairman: But it did not go higher than that?

Mr Sherlock: Not as far as I am aware.

Q466 Jeff Ennis: The Chairman's last reply actually leads very nicely into the question I was going to ask Anne in terms of her opening remarks when she said that there are a number of challenges facing education in prisons, one of which was the fact that prisoners seem to get moved, for no apparent reason, from one institution to another and the last thing that is taken into account is the educational course that the prisoner is on. Is there a need actually to raise the sort of priority of education in terms of when governors are looking at transferring a prisoner from one institution to another?

Ms Owers: Absolutely. I think it is the case that in some prisons you see that happening. We have been in quite a number of prisons recently where governors do put a hold on people who are on courses and try their very best to make sure that those people are not transferred. On a separate, but not unrelated, tack, we have been in prisons where governors ensure that the wages available to prisoners who engage in education are not significantly lower than for those who engage in quite unproductive contract working, but we also still find prisons where neither of those things is happening, and that, I think, goes to the Chairman's point about consistency.

Q467 Jeff Ennis: The other point I was going to make, Chairman, because we are looking at the co-ordination of inspection in prisons, is that it appears to me from evidence we have already received that there is a missing link here and that is the suggestion that was made by a previous witness to the Committee, that there should be an inspectorate for aftercare because the main problem is that while they are in prison, some of the students are actually following courses and then, when they leave prison, they actually then put them to one side and there is not a real need here to establish what this witness said was an inspectorate of aftercare. I just wondered, Chairman, if our witnesses have got any views on trying to establish an inspectorate of aftercare and, if there is a need for it, who would be best placed actually to administer it?

Ms Walters: One of the things that we do when we are inspecting prisons is to look at the number of prisoners who have been released within the last six months and try and track and see whether any of

them have continued their education and training or what jobs they have actually managed to secure and whether there has been training attached to any of those jobs. I think the numbers currently are very low because there is no system in place to properly check that through, so I think there is a need to establish a form of aftercare to take that on and to enable particularly the sub-contractors to hold some responsibility for that which at the moment the contracts do not, it is purely compliance and does not require them to supply that support.

Ms Owers: There is of course an Inspectorate of Probation which is responsible for such organised aftercare as we provide which is only for prisoners who are serving sentences of 12 months or more. One of the things we are doing with probation is we are working up a methodology for better inspecting offender management through the prison gate, in other words, to try, in probation inspections, to look back at what has happened in prisons and, in prison inspections, to try to point forward at what might happen. I think the National Offender Management Service and the way that we might inspect that does have some potential gains in this area. However, one of the problems is that what we are often pointing to is a gap and you cannot inspect a gap. If nobody is picking up aftercare, there is nothing to inspect and in some cases I think it is also the responsibility of other inspectorates outside criminal justice to pick up how the institutions they are responsible for, whether that is local authority housing, further education or whatever, are discharging responsibility in relation to ex-offenders.

Q468 Mr Pollard: Could I just explore something that David Sherlock said earlier when I think he said that 60% of your inspections were below par and you went on to say that you revisited, but you never completed the answer by saying what happens then. Had there been a dramatic improvement?

Mr Sherlock: About 50% of them are satisfactory or better after we go back. Again that is well below the proportion outside. We would expect at least 85% of providers in the world outside the Prison Service to have improved very substantially, so the question then is what happens to the other 50%. We have been asked by the OLSU to work with those 50% in terms of providing a service to help them raise standards, so that is what is happening. I think it is a bit too early to say how successful that is going to be, but obviously there is no choice, but to get them right, so we are involved with OLSU in trying to get them right.

Q469 Mr Pollard: I am worried about this holistic approach. You have repeatedly said that you have to have a holistic approach, and I understand that, but is there not a danger that one of these drags that you were talking about earlier on, Anne, could result because you were having a holistic approach, so the movement forward is so slow as to be almost imperceptible, when I think everybody recognises that education is the key to getting for young folk some job prospects at the end of it all. Education—move that forward quickly rather than saying, "Well, if we don't all move forward together, it will drag".

Ms Owers: I can see the danger that you are pointing to, but unless you get the establishments signed up to it, you are simply not going to be able to deliver the quick gains in education that you want. Nevertheless, I think that the way that we have both inspected and the way that the systems have been reorganised have provided the possibility for some quick gains in education, what David is describing, for example, in terms of follow-up and what Bill was describing in terms of additional resources available to the Youth Justice Board. This is one of the areas in prisons which has visibly sharpened up and moved forward and I do not think inspecting it as a whole is going to place a drag on that. What I do think it does is to contextualise it and to say to the whole establishment, "It's your responsibility", but also to recognise that, in spite of the disappointing figures that David is producing and that Bill and the other David have produced, prisons are working with some extremely difficult and damaged people who have spent their lives avoiding, or being avoided by, education and that the gains will be slow. What we ought to be measuring much more than we do in terms of prison education, instead of targets of how many people have reached Level 1 and 2, we know those are important, but we also know that they are not important for all prisoners, what we ought to be measuring is value added, and we do not measure that nearly enough.

Q470 Mr Pollard: I was in youth justice some years ago and we visited a place called Hollesley Bay and I was so impressed with that. They took young people there, they ran a farm and were doing good work, and for the first time many of these young people had some self-respect and dignity, but we do not seem to do that anymore and that, it seemed to me, was a cracking scheme. The prison governor thought it was wonderful and what he said to us was, "What I want to do is get these lads jumping up and down, working hard all day long, absolutely tired out and straight off to bed at eight o'clock at night, and also to be able to read a letter from home and write a letter back home", simple. Should we not be concentrating on that basic skill and giving them self-respect?

Ms Owers: One of the difficulties, one of the tensions in this area is the fact that self-evidently around 70% of people coming into prisons lack the basic skills that will make them employable and they need fundamental teaching in literacy and numeracy. The difficulty is that if we get into that as the sole thing, then there would be a lot of particularly young people in our prisons who will not buy into that and certainly will not buy into it immediately. I am encouraged by the fact that basic skills are increasingly in prisons being delivered in the context of work, in learning pods in workshops, so the young people are doing something that they consider real work such as bricklaying and in the

course of that they will have to learn how to count and they will have to learn how to write up their projects. I also think we should not lose sight of those other soft areas, working on farms is one, but also drama, all of those things which give people, particularly young people, self-respect. I was at Brixton this week looking at something called the Dream Factory where prisoners were performing Shakespeare with Sinatra. This is the sort of thing that gives them the kind of self-respect they had never had. Let us not be so focused on useful skills that we forget the routes that are needed to get people to drink at the trough once we have provided it.

Ms Walters: It is in our reports. In virtually every report we report on self-esteem and the building of confidence and the change in the individual. It is not just about measuring what they have achieved. It is about measuring how they are progressing in developing themselves and it is something we take very seriously in our reports.

Q471 Chairman: How is this all linked to the other things which happen in a prison, given the self-respect and self-esteem and all that, which this Committee has heard a great deal about? How does it link with the pretty awful work that goes on in workshops? Does that give self-esteem? They get more money for that to do drudgery as I see it rather than education or anything else. Do you inspect all that: the workshops, the work, the education and the training?

Ms Owers: Yes, everything.

Ms Walters: Even when there are no qualifications.

Q472 Chairman: So your reports do say regularly, "This is not joined up. There should be more incentive to do it in education"?

Ms Walters: Yes.

Ms Owers: Yes, the words "missed opportunity" occur very often in our reports.

Mr Singleton: Can I make a point that takes us back to Mr Ennis's question about inspecting aftercare? You do see some wonderful things which raise young people's self-esteem and take them forward dramatically, but that can all disappear very quickly when they go back into the community. Your question about aftercare is very well put. We have done some inspection of aftercare. When we did our inspection of girls in prisons we interviewed the young women on detention and training orders while they were in custody and then followed up those interviews afterwards. The aftercare was by no means of the same standard as the education they had received in prisons, and therefore much of the effect of what happened in the prison was largely dissipated, it seemed to us. It may well be that we ought to be doing more of that work. I know you feel very strongly about that.

Mr Massam: In terms of priorities it is something we would like to do. We did a small-scale exercise when we looked at the girls in prison but if we are going to be true to the Detention and Training Order perhaps we need other inspectorates to consider a review of the total Detention and Training Order because that is the experience of young people, ie, they spend the first part of their sentence in custody and then there should be a smooth transition into the community. One of the disappointments, Chairman, even though there are some examples of good practice, has been the lack of support from the Connexions partnerships because it is one of the issues that many of the Connexions partnerships do not feel that these establishments belong to them because many of the young people do not come from their home areas. I think that has been a key factor in that the whole quality of support and guidance at the time of transition is something that we would say is a major weakness. I would pick up Mr Ennis's point and fully endorse and support that.

Q473 Mr Turner: Perhaps I could pick up one point from my own experience, which I agree is unusual. Very few prisoners are local, very few indeed, and yet we seem to have this idea that prisoners can be accommodated in areas where FE colleges will be delivering a service to them after they leave as well as while they are in prison. What is the truth of that?

Ms Owers: It is, sadly, the truth that although there is an aim that all prisoners, and particularly young prisoners, should be held within 50 miles of their home that aim is a long way from being realised. We did some research recently for our annual report looking at prisons' own population profile information and what we established was that around half to 60% of prisoners in local prisons come from within 50 miles of the prison. It reduces to about a third when you are looking at training prisons, which of course are the prisons that really should be focusing on education and training, and certainly in David's area model would be the ones that did. There is a real problem within our present overcrowded system where there is little headroom to move people to where they would like to be or where they should be, or indeed to move them to a place which offers the kind of course that they need.

Q474 Mr Gibb: I am interested in this ownership of education in prisons. I am always staggered by the way the managers in the state sector seem unable to manage as clients their sub-contractors in a way that in the private sector is quite routine. I get the impression generally in the Prison Service that there is a crisis of management going on with governor grades moving every 15 months. There is something very seriously wrong as far as I can see from the evidence we have taken so far on this issue. Mr Singleton, in your report it says, "Too many young people fail to receive an education that meets their needs and prepares them for the transition from custody to the community". That is a devastating indictment of education in prisons. Can you tell us a bit more about that? What led you to that conclusion?

Mr Singleton: Could I ask which report you are referring to?

Q475 Mr Gibb: The 2002–2003 Ofsted annual report. Is that no longer your view then?
Mr Singleton: No; it is still our view. Despite the improvements that we have seen in prison education and education for young offenders recently that still would be our view. If the objective is to put young people in a position in which they can realistically expect to survive after a period without support in the community, we are still not there. I have already suggested some of the fundamental systemic difficulties which prevent that happening. The inspection that we have done most recently is a reprise of our 2001 report on the provision of basic skills in young offender institutions and that again shows progress but not enough progress.

Q476 Mr Gibb: Can you just give me some facts about why you came to this conclusion; not what the dynamics are but what the facts are which led you to this conclusion?
Mr Singleton: The facts are that far too many young people still have insufficient basic skills for employment. The education which they receive in prison, partly because of the sentencing policy which places many in custody for a very short time, does not allow them sufficiently to develop those skills. If the objective is to give people the basic literacy and numeracy that they need for employment then it is not being done and arguably it cannot be done in the time that they are there.

Q477 Mr Gibb: And even those that are there for a longer time, are they getting good training in these basic skills?
Mr Singleton: I think on the whole they are not. It would be fair to say that there is a great deal more progress that needs to be made. The Youth Justice Board has issued a specification nationally which defines an entitlement for young people to have, for example, five hours of basic literacy and numeracy a week and many of them are not receiving it.

Q478 Mr Gibb: The reason we have been given as to why it is not happening is that they are moving prisons, but even the ones that are not moving prisons and who are therefore there for a sufficiently longer time are still not getting five hours a week education in basic skills?
Mr Singleton: No.

Q479 Mr Gibb: Why is that, do you think?
Mr Massam: Can I answer it in terms of the evidence? There are a number of issues which link to that which we need to highlight. There are staffing issues in terms of the establishment and not having adequate numbers of staff in some establishments and also staff with the appropriate training and background. That is a key issue to the conclusions. We are dealing with, yes, some of the most challenging and difficult young people but we are also, for teaching purposes, putting them into age groups which go from 15 through to 18 in the same group. We are also finding that not all but significant numbers of teachers do lack appropriate qualifications either for specialist areas or in terms of basic teaching qualifications in some areas. We also find in establishments that the resources that the young people have access to vary significantly. The Youth Justice Board has put a lot of funding resource into new accommodation blocks but there is great variation across the estate in terms of the provision. We have also got the nature and quality of support of the education contractors that you made reference to before. The colleges vary in their commitment to and support of the education contracts. I am not saying that they are all poor but they do vary in many respects. When you look at the educational experience of young people, and we have already talked about this word "churn" and the movement of young people through, we know that the average length of stay is just over four months, so it is very difficult. A key finding we are coming up with is that the provision for those young people at Level 2 and above is quite limited. Because of the emphasis on basic skills and because of the way the programmes are timetabled many of these young people are being rotated around courses at a particular level with little chance—

Q480 Mr Gibb: I will just try once more to establish some facts. As far as Ofsted is concerned what proportion of prisoners coming into prison cannot read properly?
Mr Massam: Our figures would be linked to the Youth Justice Board figures, which I think in previous evidence to this committee were that about 50% of young people have problems with reading and writing.

Q481 Mr Gibb: What about when they leave? What proportion in your opinion still cannot read when they leave?
Mr Massam: Evidence is difficult because one of the problems we have made reference to already is the question of value added. I was in an establishment last week where they test young people on arrival and on departure and make some judgments against the progress made in terms of reading age, but that is quite unusual. It is difficult for some establishments because of the churn and the movement around to test people before departure because in some cases the departure is quite hurried; it might be an early release, so we do not have the quality of data available at the moment that gives meaningful information on value added.

Q482 Mr Gibb: Do you think we should have that data?
Mr Massam: I think it is essential that we do.

Q483 Mr Gibb: So do you think that should be one of our recommendations?
Mr Massam: I would hope you could do that.

Q484 Mr Gibb: Can I turn to Anne Owers? We have just heard that prisoners even on long sentences are not getting five hours of training in basic skills, we have just heard there are not enough staff, we have just heard that teachers lack the basic qualifications. What are you doing about this in your report? Are you highlighting these things and making a stink

about it because this to me looks like a shambles that is going on in our prisons? I am not just talking about the prisoners that are moving around, and I understand that that can be problematic, but even those that have longer sentences are not getting even five hours' education a week in basic skills, such as teaching them to read. Will this be the headline of your next report?

Ms Owers: It is raised in all our reports and it is raised in the separate reports that ALI and Ofsted do on the prisons that they inspect. It is something that we refer to constantly. It is a major problem. It is not a problem that prisons on their own can solve. It is about the way that we sentence particularly young people because actually there are very few under-18 young prisoners serving long sentences. As Bill said, the great majority are serving an average of four months inside. We have to ask what we can reasonably do to the kind of damaged young individuals who end up in our prisons in that period of time. We have to ask questions about the recruitment of teachers and about the unpopularity of working in prisons in some areas. We have to join it up with what is going on outside. In our reports we continually highlight it. I do not think it is a shambles. It has improved from an extremely low base with the injection of some professional standards of management, but it has got an awfully long way to go and it is that joining up, it is establishing the right levers, that still is not happening.

Q485 Mr Gibb: Why can we not give all young offenders five hours' lessons a week, even if they are only there for four months? I do not understand why they are not getting five hours' training a week.

Ms Owers: For the reasons that Bill said: sometimes the establishments cannot get the teachers in order to deliver this. They cannot get properly qualified teachers.

Mr Gibb: It just seems a shambles. They cannot get the teachers? What about all these contracts, all these FE contracts?

Mr Turner: They are breaching their contracts.

Mr Gibb: There is an insouciance here.

Chairman: We are talking about the Inspectorate now.

Q486 Mr Gibb: I know, but when I listen to the inspectors on Radio 4 I do not hear these things being mentioned. This is catastrophic. There are 24 hours in a day, eight hours of working time in a day, and they cannot get five hours' training a week in an institution.

Mr Massam: I think "shambles" is a bit hard but I understand the point. What we have seen over the last two to three years is a significant injection of funding from the Youth Justice Board through heads of learning and skills, and we have seen the appointment of learning support assistants on a ratio of one assistant to ten young people, and we are starting to see some major benefits stemming from those appointments. We are seeing, not only in terms of learning and support assistants helping out with basic skills but also in a one-to-one setting helping out with all sorts of pastoral support issues. What we are also seeing, however, in some establishments where they do have problems in staff recruitment is that they are not able to meet the specification and the targets that are being set for them at this stage by the Youth Justice Board. It is improving. There are concerns in some establishments and there are particular concerns that we are going to raise in our report in relation to basic skills, but I do not think it is as bleak as you are suggesting.

Q487 Mr Gibb: So what do you think would be a good number of hours a week, if it is not bleak?

Mr Massam: I think the hours are realistic in terms of a target but the issue that we are having, and it happens in FE colleges too, is that there are problems in finding specialist staff who are able to work with young people in relation to the development of their basic skills. It is not just an issue for the prison estate. I think it is also an issue for the colleges and it is reflected here. Again, some of this work is not all that attractive to people in terms of the options. If they can find work in a local FE college, to work in a prison establishment is not attractive to some people and it comes back to the question of recruitment and retention of staff. The targets that have been stated at the moment are appropriate. They are not being met in some establishments but we have also seen significant progress and improvements in the quality of support in terms of basic skills for juveniles over the last two years.

Q488 Mr Gibb: There is a thing called the *Expectations for Inspection* that you have and there is a whole list of things, like learning plans should be into integrated into custody plans, and yet we hear that prisoners are continually arriving 90 minutes late to sessions. We are talking about a pay structure where there is still a gap in many prisons. We are talking about continuing their courses on release and transfer, and this is not happening as well. It sounds like what is going on in prison education is a million miles away from this list of expectations. What is happening about trying to bring this within some proximity to what you are expecting?

Ms Owers: A million miles is probably a greater distance than I would say. Our *Expectations* document is what we think should be happening in prisons. We would not need to inspect as regularly as we do if they were happening. In all aspects of prison life what we do is hold the prison up against what we expect it to be doing. That is the whole point of the kind of detailed inspection that we do. We can get beneath what managers would like to believe is happening in their prison and point out what actually is happening. That process of inspection, of trying to pull institutions up towards what we expect them to do, is the business we are engaged in.

Q489 Chairman: We must move on but, very quickly, there is one thing you have touched on. You keep saying that four months is very short. That is in very different circumstances than you regularly inspect. What pedagogy has been developed, what research

has been done, for an appropriate form of education and training for this very specialist type of student? Are you not just carrying what you see in colleges and other adult learning outside and delivering it into prisons inappropriately? Should there not be a specially trained group of teachers and trainers and a special way of teaching that is appropriate for people who are only around for a short period? How much innovation is going on in terms of teaching method?

Mr Sherlock: I think there are other contexts where people are there for a very short time. Military initial training is one of them; aspects of the New Deals are another, and Jobcentre Plus activity is another, so I think there are plenty of areas where one might find some precedents, but I am not sure they are carrying over.

Ms Walters: One of the main issues that we have identified is the lack of an appropriate curriculum for short term prisoners. We are talking about a curriculum that may be able to give someone accreditation for an hour's learning, for two hours' learning, a week, whatever it is, and that they can take that with them and it can mean something when they leave the prison and perhaps when they go into employment. We are working with the OLSU and with awarding bodies to try and set up a structure that will satisfy all prisoners serving sentences regardless of the time. I think the area structure will allow this to happen much more easily. Talks have begun with different awarding bodies to try and set this up.

Q490 Helen Jones: I want to come back to the question of staffing if I may because I think that is linked with effectiveness. One of the problems I keep coming back to, which we had with the prison officers, was that there was no adequate career structure within that service for staff. It seems to me we have a similar problem in the education sector. To attract good staff and staff who keep in touch with developments in their area, who can interact with other staff and so on, we need to have a much more effective career structure and much more effective links with local colleges so that staff can move in and out of the system. I would like to hear your views on how we can best do that because it seems to me we are very poor at doing it so far. We have got some very good, very dedicated staff but they are very isolated.

Ms Walters: In regard to the sub-contracting arrangements with colleges, often colleges have many prisoners within that contract with colleges over 150 miles away. This is an issue that relates to staff development and I think that one of the solutions to this would be looking at the area model which would allow much more frequent visits between the prison staff and the college and staff development arrangements. We are broadening that out and also for them to take part in the Prison Service staff development opportunities, and the two need to be dovetailed to bring the best possible advantages for the staff delivering that education and training in prisons, which is not happening at the moment and which we have highlighted in reports.

Mr Massam: We endorse what you say. A key factor is the quality of the staffing and the staff development opportunities. It is surprising on occasions to think that many of the contractors are FE colleges but in many ways there is very limited contact between the main college and the establishment itself. It seems to me that there are issues around development in terms of the curriculum, issues to do with individuals in their own career development etc, which are being neglected to a certain extent. I would not want to take away the commitment of the staff in terms of the work itself, but I think you are right: it is a major area for development. Part of it is to do with the fact that because of the staffing issues we have identified there is always a reason why people should not be involved in staff development, because of the day-to-day happenings in the education department. There are some examples of good practice but again it is something I would endorse.

Mr Massam: I do not think there is anything wrong inherently in staff working for the Prison Service. Instructors work for the Prison Service. There is nothing wrong with that as a model and I do not see why sub-contracting is necessarily part of the mix. Were all education and training staff working for the Prison Service, were there a structure within the Prison Service right the way to the top with a head of learning and skills for the Prison Service, that might work perfectly well. We are talking about a lot of staff here. It is a big enterprise.

Q491 Helen Jones: But it would cut them off from developments in education and training outside their own sphere, would it not? A lot of FE colleges are developing some very good models for dealing with young people. The worry I have about what you are suggesting is that the institution then starts looking inwards. We saw that with health and that was a real problem.

Mr Massam: I think that is why I was suggesting that deployment on an area basis might well work perfectly well. I really do think that there is at the moment very little being gained from the apparent wider community of education to which education staff belong.

Q492 Helen Jones: Can we look at the actual effectiveness of the education, the targets that people have to meet? Anne referred earlier to the value of what we call some of the soft skills—drama, art and so on—in building up people's self-respect and then in preparing them to learn. Do the targets that we have currently in your view militate against people gaining those skills and, if so, how would you change the targets? I get the impression that a lot of the system is not delivering effectively and therefore we are going to have to set targets for it. The question is how you define those soft targets. As someone said before, we have a very difficult group of young people here in many cases, and a very difficult group of adults, and a lot of the work is about preparing them to learn, it seems to me. Do you have any comments on that?

Ms Owers: I have two. The first is to refer back to what I and others have said about value added. A sophisticated way of looking at it is what comes in the prison gate and what goes out the other end. That value added needs to be based secondly on an individual assessment of the needs of each person. At the moment we are adopting very much a one-size-fits-all approach. We know that it is a size that many people coming into prisons need because we know that overall we are looking at around 70% of prisoners who are deficient in basic skills and without those basic skills it will be very difficult for them to gain employment, but we are pushing everything into that pot and I am seeing, for example, in some open prisons, where prisoners tend to have better qualifications than others, that there is no opportunity for anything above Level 2. At some young offender institutions there is no opportunity for anything above that level. There are some who will struggle to get to Level 1 and there are many others, as you have said, who will only come to do education by a fairly circuitous route, and that route needs to be mapped out for them. What we need to do is look at individual needs assessments where education is, as Mr Gibb was saying, attached and brought into everything else that is happening to that young person within the prison, but also where we look at what value prison has been able to achieve even if it is only a two-hour module that gives them some sort of certification in something they have been able to do probably for the first time in their lives.

Q493 Helen Jones: What about employability though? It seems to me that one of the keys to preventing people re-offending is getting them into work when they leave prison. There is a tension between talking about the soft skills, if you like, and also saying that we want people prepared for work when they come out. Do there need to be more effective targets in prisons for linking education, employability, for involving employers perhaps, and do you have any suggestions to put to the Committee about that? We saw a very effective project in Reading with people working for British Gas, but it is very small-scale. Would you be able to make any suggestions about how we can build into the system more of that sort of approach?

Ms Owers: I think it is critical. I think the Transco project in Reading is extremely good. It works for a relatively small number of prisoners who will be high achievers, but that is not to discount it. It is the notion of working out what the local job market requires, which may be fork lift truck drivers in some areas, or is almost certainly likely to be plumbers. The problem with farms, for example, is that there is going to be very little work available on a farm for most young people. It is absolutely about getting those links with the local job market, getting the buy-in from outside. A lot of what we have been talking about this morning has been that organisations outside prisons should engage with their prisons, should not just assume that these are places which do their own thing but that they should be part of their local community. I absolutely agree with that but, again, when we are looking at employability we need to be sophisticated about what we expect and what is actually happening. If we set too rigid and mechanistic targets where employability means that someone turns up for a job interview we are not solving anything. What we need is to make people employable so that they can hold down employment, and that is about the whole area of self-esteem. It is not about being able to hang on to a job for a day or a week. It is about being able to engage fully and properly in the job market which people have never properly done before.

Q494 Valerie Davey: We have looked down the telescope at the institution and I want to follow on my colleague's emphasis on the individual. You have been quite right in recognising the importance of a sophisticated approach and I would like to ask you about that initial assessment: who does the initial assessment, in what depth is it done, what happens to that record, especially when a young person moves, indeed when anyone moves.

Mr Massam: I will talk about juveniles in terms of the initial assessment. It is common practice that on admission a young person would be asked to complete a basic skills assessment. One of the issues would be that if that person has been moved from another establishment it could be the same or a very similar assessment that he or she would have done previously. With the appointment of the special educational needs co-ordinators we have identified some improvements in initial assessments over the last year because in some establishments we are seeing an attempt to look at the person in a much broader context, ie, to look at their learning styles and other aspects of their particular needs. What they all should have is an asset form that has been completed by the youth offending team. We do find that the asset forms are very limited in their usefulness because these forms really should reflect a young person's prior educational attainment and experience and they are very patchy and of very limited use. Really, therefore, initial assessment in most cases is from a fresh start. Sometimes it is the guidance staff who conduct the initial assessment; sometimes it is teaching staff. That information is brought together and then forwarded on to subject teachers. Occasionally at that time there will be some attempt for the guidance workers or those involved in assessment to try to conduct some sort of dyslexia screening, but that varies again between establishments. The process then is that the information is forwarded to the subject teachers and the subject teachers, depending on their approach, would conduct some assessment in terms of the mathematics, the science or whatever that they are responsible for. We have seen improvements. We have seen the special educational needs co-ordinators intervening when young people have not reached a particular level in terms of literacy and numeracy and that triggers individual guidance interviews and also an entitlement to one-to-one support through the learning support assistants. It is an improving picture as far as the young offender institutions are concerned but it is still very limited in terms of its scope.

Mr Singleton: There is a "but" as well, and that is that the assessment is not always sufficiently carried through into the design of the programme, so the youngsters can still end up not getting quite the provision that they need.

Q495 Valerie Davey: I recognise that many of these youngsters have not come from schools straight into prison but is there any opportunity to look back at their record at school? Is any of that forwarded? Is there any way in which that can be used?
Mr Massam: There are instances where, say, a person has been admitted and has been involved in a school programme taking GCSE and you see transfer of work and some communication between the school and the establishment, but it is very difficult to give specific guidance. In some establishments it would happen; in others it would not, but there are case studies where that does take place.

Q496 Valerie Davey: How confident are you in the expertise of the assessor? You say that in some cases dyslexia is screened. I have a particular interest in that area but there are some very special needs which in some cases I believe have led to the disaffection of these young people. How sophisticated is it because it would seem to me to be cost effective to put huge expertise into this initial assessment? Secondly, it appeared that you were saying that this is then done at the next establishment and the next establishment and it may not be a common factor. For goodness' sake why are we re-assessing somebody on possibly different criteria? Should not this initial expert assessment be done and then the information transferred?
Mr Massam: Perhaps I can take the second question first. The major problem in transferring information about young people between establishments, not only in terms of initial assessments but also in terms of their performance in subjects, is that they could be moved after two or three months on to another establishment. It is a major problem in terms of management information systems that are in place to transfer information from one establishment to another. In terms of your first question, the issue for me is that the initial assessment process is quite mechanistic, that you arrive and you have to meet certain deadlines and target dates that have been set by the Youth Justice Board and you go through the basic skills assessment. Again, that could be quite mechanistic. We find some young people who are just not ready to complete it because it could be their first sentence and within a matter of days they are being asked to sit down and people are making judgements about them and all sorts of things are going on in the mind of the young person for the first time in custody and so on. The timing is quite crucial in some senses. For some people it is all right but for others it does not provide any meaningful data because the young person is not able to complete what is being asked of them. It is quite a mechanistic process and if we are going to look at value added what we need to do is to have a very detailed, sophisticated approach to the initial assessment which we are able to respond to in terms of provision, which is not always the case.

Q497 Valerie Davey: I am sorry to come back to you. I am still not sure who does this assessment and what qualifications they have to do it.
Mr Massam: Again, on some occasions the guidance worker is appointed by the education contractor and their specific task would be to be involved in initial assessment and guidance, so they would have a guidance qualification. In other establishments it would be teachers, members of the teaching team who would be allocated time to be members of the initial assessment group. It varies. It could be a trained teacher or a guidance worker.
Mr Singleton: We will be commenting on this in our forthcoming report on basic skills and we will be saying that virtually every, if not every, young offender institution has at least one member of staff who is trained in and can deal with dyslexia, so there is some expertise available.

Q498 Valerie Davey: Could I move on to the adult side? We do seem to be improving at the young offender level with the SENCO. Should there not be that kind of development at adult level as well?
Ms Walters: Yes, I concur with a lot of what Bill has said. The issue in the adult institutions is that there is no system for transferring information from prison to prison when a prisoner is transferred. When prisoners come into a prison they do not have to undertake initial assessment; it is their choice, so our calculation is that no more than 80% of those prisoners take an initial assessment and of those probably only 15% get any delivery of initial assessment, and so the numbers are very low. Also, when they come into the prison the initial assessment is given as soon as they come into the prison where emotionally, physically and mentally they may not be able to cope with that. As Bill said, the timing is absolutely crucial as to when that initial assessment is given. The initial assessment until recently has been a very brief initial assessment and has concentrated on getting them into the basic skills programmes in order to meet the key performance targets rather than looking holistically at what that person needs as well as the initial support in literacy and numeracy and language. In adult prisons they have recently been introducing assessments of dyslexia and dyspraxia needs but that is very new. There have been improvements; they have been happening relatively recently and the heads of learning and skills certainly have been very aware of this and many of them are acting quite forcefully in the systems they are putting into place.

Q499 Valerie Davey: Would you mind sending the committee the details of the dyslexia and dyspraxia initial work that you started and where and how it has been done?

Ms Walters: Yes, we will do that.

Q500 Valerie Davey: In Bristol last week Lord Chief Justice Woolf came to congratulate those who were involved in a scheme looking at prolific offenders, and this is essentially looking one-to-one. It seems to me that there are lessons to be learned here, that it is this lack of individual assessment, this lack of individually taking matters forward which leads to the lack of prevention of re-offending. I think the initial benefits of this have repercussions for our education style and perhaps it is that we are looking forward. Is it true, do you think, that we are looking too much at creating an ideal institution which would not benefit the individual unless we know what the needs of the individual coming through the door are?
Ms Owers: I would agree with that and, as all of us have said, that actually relates to what is going to happen next. We are rightly critical of our prisons. My job is to hold prisons up to the standards that we require of them and on some occasions find that those are not met. What we have to recognise, however, is that prisons are dealing with people who have come to prison with a history of disasters, chaos and dysfunction in their lives, people that the rest of society has often given up on. We are somehow expecting a short period in prison, a matter of weeks or months, to be a magic fix that will suddenly turn them into well-educated and fully functioning citizens when they go out. It is not realistic. We talk about a holistic approach within prisons but what we need to have is a holistic approach to what is happening to people as a whole—they are people as well as offenders.

Q501 Mr Pollard: Stop them getting there in the first place.
Ms Owers: Exactly. There is upstream work that needs to be done which, to be fair, in terms of young people, the Youth Justice Board is doing, but there is also downstream work that needs to be done. We are talking about people who have been failed many times in their lives and in some cases the worst thing you can do is to make assessments that you cannot carry through in prison or to offer promises about what is not going to happen later. That is almost worse than not doing anything.

Q502 Jonathan Shaw: Twenty three per cent of males and 11% of females sentenced to prison attended a special educational needs school compared to 1% of the population. We have heard that there are SENCOs at young offender institutions. It is not the case, we understand, in adult prisons. Is that something that you are recommending? If people have all these high levels of disability, it is vital that people have the skills to assess them.
Ms Owers: Yes, I would welcome advice from the ALI on that.
Ms Walters: There is a need and an opportunity now to provide a structure whereby there are specific pockets of help within the adult prisons for both males and females. One of the things that we have identified is that in some prisons, where the majority of those prisons are short term serving prisoners, there is an opportunity for a strategy to be put in place which becomes an elongated initial assessment and diagnostic assessment centre where you can put this SENCO arrangement into place so that you are preparing the whole person rather than just dealing with the key performance targets.

Q503 Chairman: We must, to do justice to the Prison Governors' Association, move on. There is just one thing before we finish this session, which has been an excellent session. I hope all of you will maintain a relationship with the committee because we want to make this an extraordinarily good report. It is a very important report to us. If you think of things that we should have asked you or things you should have said, do communicate with the committee. When we were in Oslo and Helsinki something that went right through the discussions we had with people about prison education was drugs, and none of you has mentioned drugs, that 60 or 70% of people in our prison establishments are abusing alcohol or other substances. We saw a wonderful aftercare service in Oslo that seriously tried to address the drug-taking problem. Is that not a problem that runs right through our ability to educate and train people?
Ms Owers: It absolutely does. Both Jen and Bill made the point about initial assessments. One of the things that happens is that you are assessing people who are still coming off drugs in most cases, but it also goes to the point that all of us have made, that you cannot just treat education as if it was a separate thing to the life and needs of the person as a whole. Those will include the need for help and support with substance abuse and other kinds of abuse, and family links, all of those things that need to go together. Education on its own is not going to change people round.
Chairman: Thank you very much for your evidence.

Memorandum submitted by the Prison Governors Association

1. The Prison Governors Association represents Prison Governors, Senior Operational Managers and Operational Managers in the United Kingdom. This submission will restrict itself to circumstances in England and Wales.

2. There are over 75,000 people currently being held in prison in England and Wales. They cover almost the full spectrum of educational ability, but are heavily skewed towards those with low levels of attainment.

3. Accurate assessment of the individual needs upon reception (not upon conviction) is vital, but some who are familiar with the tests, over-perform while many, who may be traumatised by their circumstances, or who are under the influence of drugs may be unable to perform to their true ability.

4. Basic Skills Agency Assessment Tool is in common use. This gives a basic indication of educational level in literacy and numeracy. It does not indicate the prisoners "spiky profile" which is required for accurate learning planning. This has to be conducted later and is time consuming and expensive.

5. No assessment of other learning needs is conducted, such as social skills, parenting ability or job related skills. No assessment of specific learning difficulties or syndromes is funded or conducted.

6. Most establishments lack specific roles to carry out assessment. Where this is provided on the Education Contract, it is an expensive function.

7. Specific Funding should be provided to conduct a full range of learning assessments to be delivered by trained and qualified staff, the results of which will inform the prisoner's Individual Learning Plan. This should be an integral part of the prisoner's custody/sentence plan.

8. Most prisoners will be held for relatively short periods , so time is of the essence. But considerable gains for the least able can be made in quite a short period of time.

9. Since Education Contracts were introduced in the early 1990s, a small number of organisations have specialised in "Prison Education". They now bid, in effect, for large clusters of prisons rather than for individual establishments, as was originally envisaged by the service. Consequently, the term "local contracting" is largely misleading, although the contract is an individual one between the Governor and the Principal of the College.

10. The contract is 10 years old. It is out of date and lacks credibility. We purchase teaching hours with no link to achievement or to quality. No requirement is included to recruit, retain, complete or achieve with prisoner learners, just to deliver the contracted hours. Contractors do achieve all of the above! This seems to happen rather by good fortune than by a contractual requirement.

11. A sole provider is not the most efficient, effective or best value option.

12. The recruitment of staff has become more difficult as the sector salary has improved and terms and conditions of service have stabilised. Many members of staff have been involved in prison education for a long time. The connectivity with mainstream post compulsory education can suffer.

13. The way forward is to engage local provisions which meet the needs of the prisoner learner, which are clearly linked to retention, completion, and achievement, utilising the available provision and are using best-value contracting principles.

14. Funding will be—and should be—routed via the Local LSC, which will manage the allocation of provision to ensure that the most appropriate providers are engaged to deliver.

15. The role of prison staff in supporting educational activities varies widely from prison to prison. Formal education classes are taught mostly by contracted teachers. Trade Training and Behavioural Skills Training will usually be led by Prison staff. In both cases, Prison Officers also provide a "policing" role and ensure that inmates (students) get to their classes on time and in good order.

16. Funding for capital projects (where it is provided) becomes available with little notice. This prevents detailed planning and reduces the flexibility required to provide training which meets the individual needs and responds to labour market intelligence.

17. Much vocational training in prisons is carried out in accommodation that was previously used for the purpose of delivering prison work. Much of it is totally unfit for role.

18. Little funding is available to update facilities and to provide appropriate training facilities. Any such update which is carried out often fails fully to meet the needs either of the training staff or of the prisoner learner.

19. Each establishment now has a designated Head of Learning and Skills, an E Grade Manager, with responsibility for the development of learning delivery. Education delivery is an integral part of the establishment regime, and is fully supported.

20. Uniformed staff and industrial/instructional officers are involved in the delivery of learning, much of this work is well delivered and effective, but most of the staff involved in the delivery is not qualified.

21. Members of staff involved in delivering learning must be given the opportunity to train and to acquire appropriate qualifications to ensure that all delivery meets ALI standards of quality and excellence.

22. Some of the work is funded by C2W funding and provides excellent links to future employment. However, no sustainable funding is available for the continuance of this work.

23. The majority of other activities in this area is *ad hoc* and relies upon locally negotiated provision with little financial support.

24. Attempts are made to link vocational learning opportunities with local labour market intelligence to ensure that what we do deliver has an employment-related outcome. Arrangements with Business Link and with the local LSC help with this issue.

25. It is vital to provide continuing guidance and support for ex-prisoners after release. It is also difficult to provide this effectively.

26. There are some examples of good practice regarding this type of support, funded via external bids on specifically targeted funding pots, related to employment issues.

27. Efforts are made to provide suitable guidance to prisoners upon their release about local or national learning opportunities and, wherever possible, contact is made with providers to ensure that a seamless progression is available. Much of this *ad hoc* provision is not funded and, as a result, is ineffective.

28. Establishments involved in the release of prisoners to the community should have "Guidance Officers" in place to provide advice during the later stages of custody and to provide a ready link to community provisions and to local support structures.

29. Locally and nationally, there are many different models of delivery by probation areas. For example, in the North East, the three local boards each provide very different services.

30. Northumbria is a model of good practice with a well established ETE section able to offer learning, vocational training and IAG services.

31. The other areas offer linked community-based services, or connections to local FE provision.

32. Work is in place to link the work within the North East cluster of prisons with the probation boards and so developing a structured and efficient referral and data provision system. This should ensure that, for those moving to probation supervision, a seamless progression route will be provided which will prevent duplication of effort, in terms of assessment of need.

June 2004

Witness: **Mr Michael Newell,** President of Prison Governors Association and Governor of HMP Durham, examined.

Q504 Chairman: Welcome to the Committee; you have been very patient. I hope you understand. We have overrun a bit but that should not stop us giving you plenty of time to answer some of our questions. I gave Anne Owers a chance to say a few opening words. Is there anything you would like to say to the Committee to get us started or do you want to go straight to questions?
Mr Newell: I would like to open by saying that from a governor's perspective education, in the list of areas, is the one that most governors feel that they have least control of as the system has changed over the variety of aspects of running a prison and their regimes. I think it is moving in the right direction. There is a huge transition problem at the moment which means that we have not got the clarity of what we want from education and we have effectively not got the resources and the will to make it happen.

Q505 Chairman: Thank you for that. You are a very distinguished governor with a remarkable record in the work that you have done with the Prison Governors Association. I was surprised to see that you trained as a chemical engineer originally.
Mr Newell: Yes. All learning and skills are valuable.

Q506 Chairman: Absolutely. Can I open by saying that the thing that comes through and astonishes us is that if you were running any other enterprise, commercial or public, to get the sort of staff turnover you have at governor level is amazing. How do you run an establishment where the average length of stay of a governor is 15 months? How do you do that effectively if you have got such turmoil, if you take it that the men and women you are managing have a 60% drop-out rate within two years? How do you run an organisation with that amount of instability?
Mr Newell: One of the difficulties is that there is a difference between the amount of instability which is being created by history; in other words, the way that we went about recruitment and standards of our staff over the years, and the failure to look now to introducing stability. Governors move very frequently because we allow them to move very frequently. It is as simple as that. We do not career manage any of our staff now, so there are no governors where they know what they are doing next. Basically what they do is read adverts, and if they see something that they think is better a week after they have taken on a job and responsibility they go and apply for it. That is why we have this chaos almost in the movement of governors, simply because we make no attempt to control it and we think that that is good for equal opportunities. We feel that that is appropriate for a modern approach to our staff, but unfortunately it has this catastrophic effect on the management of institutions.

Q507 Chairman: What about the turnover in prison officers, the men and women who work for you?
Mr Newell: That is very variable. That is geographical. That is about where the job of a prison officer stands in the pecking order of the particular community or region. For example, in my part of the world the turnover of prison officers is quite low, in the north east. There are a lot of people with backgrounds in shipbuilding and mining and when those industries collapsed they moved into more stable employment as they saw it. If you take London, it is a very competitive market and there is a very high turnover. That would also be reflected in other parts of the country. Milton Keynes, which I understand has virtually zero unemployment, has great difficulties in recruiting for that very reason. A lot depends on how it is

seen in relation to other job opportunities in that area. It is not a picture that is the same throughout the country.

Q508 Chairman: The witness that gave evidence last week said that by and large the starting rate for a prison officer was about £22,000 with no formal qualifications and a six-week training period. That is about the starting salary for a fully qualified teacher. That is a remarkable salary level for someone with very few qualifications, is it not?
Mr Newell: Yes, it is. I do not know where the starting salary of £22,000 is. I assume that is in London with London weighting arrangements on or additional payments because the starting salary for a new entrant prison officer is round about £16,000 out in the regions without any additions.

Q509 Mr Turner: My first question, Mr Newell, is about your institution and the rest will be addressed to your Association. How many prisoners in your prison cannot read and how long does it take you to teach one to do so?
Mr Newell: It is not easy to answer it in those terms. The number of prisoners who can read and write to adequate standards within my establishment is very similar to the number in any other establishment which is receiving direct from the courts, and that puts it at round about the 60% figure where there are difficulties at Level 1 or 2. In relation to how long it takes to teach them and how we rectify the problem, as was given in earlier evidence, as a local prison people are generally moving on from us. We have a lot of starters but very few completers in the process, although we do meet all our targets for the number of basic skills that we deliver at Level 1 and Level 2. It is impossible to say how long it takes. There is a large number of things that we could do better, both in my institution and nationally, to ensure that we get a handle on the process.

Q510 Mr Turner: But you must have some idea as a manager how many hours you need to put a prisoner in front of an instructor on average.
Mr Newell: No. I do not think an educationalist would take that viewpoint. I think it is a very dangerous approach to suggest that there is a certain level of saturation necessary, that it is an indoctrination process. What we do know with all the prisoners in custody is that they have been failed in the community by the system and that the learning strategies that have been employed have not worked. As I said, we are dealing with a very damaged group and we have to be a great deal more inventive about how we engage them. How long does it take? The key question is, how long does it take to engage that prisoner in believing that education is positive and helpful and will do a number of things for them in their lives? For example, we often use PE as that approach. You will get someone who will work effectively with PE and then will want to move on and take a certificate but the barrier to the certificate, of course, is that their ability to read and write is not of the necessary standard. By engaging them in that way they see a purpose to the education which they take to support it. I think it would be wholly wrong of us simply to say, "It takes six hours". How long does it take to train a prison officer is a more interesting question which we may come back to.

Q511 Mr Turner: Why do 20% of prisoners arrive late for education?
Mr Newell: I think that this is a really important issue that has to be tackled across the service. A great deal of it has to do with the way that we have already signed up to contracts and who is interested. Quite simply, we signed a contract for teaching hours. That is a very bad way to sign a contract because, from the contractor's point of view, as long as they are not the people responsible for the fact that there was a reduction in teaching hours they have fulfilled their contract. They do not have any outcome; they therefore do not have any interest, and I mean that not in the way of saying that teachers generally do not care. They do not have any interest in whether anybody turns up to classes today and certainly what time they turn up to them. Equally, when you look at it in prison management terms, we have not been able to be absolutely clear about raising the profile of education within prisons. It was mentioned earlier that there was an issue about security and its balance. When you listen to the messages that come centrally from the Prison Service then education does not get into its appropriate place. I think if you asked any member of staff they do not know who leads education in the Prison Service. There is no champion.

Q512 Mr Turner: This does bring on my next question, which is, who are you personally responsible to for your prisoners' learning?
Mr Newell: I am responsible to my area manager, my director, in the same way as I am for everything that takes place in the establishment.

Q513 Mr Turner: You would expect a higher level of engagement in your success or otherwise in achieving that learning from your area manager and your director?
Mr Newell: Yes. I would expect someone to be asking me for a plan. The interesting thing is that I have a whole series of business plans, action plans, strategic plans, everything that you could possibly think of for every aspect of the development of my prison except education.

Q514 Mr Turner: And that is the responsibility of the Prison Service, that you are not asked for that. Is it your responsibility that you have not done one?
Mr Newell: I think it is my responsibility that I have not done one in the way that perhaps you are thinking. What I have is that I know what I want from prison education but I have no mechanism for doing it.

Q515 Mr Turner: Why is that, because you have got instructors who work to you and you have got a contractor who is supposed to deliver a service for your prison? Why can you not manage them?
Mr Newell: First of all, in terms of the contractor and the service, it is not let by me, none of the measures within that contract is set by me, none of the mechanisms. They are all set by central contract negotiation. In many cases the original contracting process produced for prison governors education providers that they had never heard of.

Q516 Mr Turner: But it is not unusual to have to manage something which you did not design?
Mr Newell: Indeed. In fact, you get very good at it in the Prison Service. There are some real difficulties about trying to manage the way that this contract has moved around over the last four or five years. First, let us go back to 1999. 1999–2000 was the change period. Prior to that time the governor had a total budget and they had a budget for education and they had a provider. They moved money around. If I wanted to improve education I would find some funds. I would come to some arrangement with my contractor and I would change education and it was as simple as that.

Q517 Chairman: Or you could abolish it. We went to an Isle of Wight prison and the new governor came and he said, "Get rid of it all".
Mr Newell: Exactly, and obviously that is not desirable. In my time as Governor of Hull I did the opposite in putting an awful lot of additional money at that time into education, and I was able to do that; I had the freedom to do that. When the money moved to the Department for Education and Skills and then subsequently now on through Learning and Skills Councils, that ability was lost. At the moment I am trying to get a very large amount of money at Durham because I started a number of years ago on my plan. My plan was to create additional facilities—accommodation. That has been delivered. My part of the plan has been delivered. I could technically put 240 people a day into education services but I have a contract that provides me with 90. I have created the facilities but I do not have the mechanism now to lever the additional funds that can match the need for prisoners. Previously I would have been working on the funding stream at the same time as working on the accommodation stream, so it is not easy to manage. As I say, we need the ability to add to it the necessary strands. We have talked about how damaged these individuals are, how poorly they have been served perhaps in previous attempts at education. We have single providers with single approaches and single skills. We want multi-providers, we want a contract which allows to us call off services as we require them for the individual that we identify. When you look at funding streams out in the community now it is quite interesting. I can go and get some specialist funding for dyslexia because that is how the funding stream takes place outside, but I cannot add that into the system because the contract deals with a single provider and they would have to sub-contract and get that from that funding stream. It is hugely complex. It needs simplifying and there needs to be more control back at local level to meet local need. We have to find a way of doing that. It is working exceptionally well with PCTs and it is interesting how the energy for that has gone in, how the very simplistic approach of having a health needs analysis, a mental health needs analysis, looking at the standards, looking at what we do in the NHS and then moving to deliver those, has worked exceptionally well, and there is no energy in education.

Q518 Mr Turner: Presumably they have exactly the same problems with innate churn and delivering them to the right place at the right time. Perhaps you could—not now—let us know why PCTs work and why education does not.
Mr Newell: Yes.

Q519 Helen Jones: We have heard quite a bit of evidence about the impact of staffing problems on the ability to deliver education, with prisoners sometimes arriving late, problems with overcrowding in prisons and so on. Can you tell the Committee what in your view the impact of staffing problems is on the ability to deliver a proper prisoner education? Do you have any suggestions for how we might improve matters? The second one is more difficult than the first, I admit.

Q520 Mr Newell: We have to go back to the way that we deliver our staff for duties and activities within our prisons. We still run some very old systems. The attendance systems of prison officers are based on a 1987 agreement, Bulletin 8. It is wholly inflexible. Some of our prisons have begun to move to systems of self-rostering but they still do it against a background of a 17-year old agreement which is not fit for purpose. When we look at the availability and needs of our staff, high security prisons as an example, which obviously I have been governor of for a number of years, getting staff on duty, getting them through search procedures, getting them ready for the start of the day probably can take, from first to last person, half an hour out of the day. That has knock-on effects. Everything is late in that process, but we have been too ambitious in what we have said, so we have a core day for delivery which does not match the reality of life. What we have are systems which do not allow us to deliver, plus, if you take the point of where is the priority in daily life within a prison, where is the profile of education, how have we raised it, it is almost seen as flexible. If we are 15 minutes late, fine, we are 15 minutes late. We have to do more about that in managerial accountability but we have to be able to devise a way to get our staff on attendance in a way that allows us to ensure that it is better delivered. Until we do that I think we will be up against a situation where the hours of instructors, the hours of teachers, the tradition of the Prison Service, all move against how we would like to deliver education in the modern day.

Q521 Helen Jones: Does that also relate to the way in which we train prison officers? You will have heard us talking before about the fact that there is a seven-week training period for prison officers which seems to us incredibly short for the job that they are being asked to do, which is a very difficult and stressful job in many ways. Do you think that the training prison officers get enables them to support education effectively or even to understand the value of it within the system?
Mr Newell: The short answer to that is no. I have been one who has constantly, on behalf of the Association, raised our concerns about prison officer training, which has been moving backwards for a number of years.

Q522 Chairman: Who moved it backwards?
Mr Newell: As an individual it was the belief of the previous Director General that some of the matters in training were not appropriate and that there was too much time spent on a residential basis which was therefore deterring people from joining the service who may not be able to attend for lengthy residential periods. It was never anywhere near the levels that we would expect, so the issue of where education gets a mention even in current training, I do not know but I would guess is not in there at all. There is no explanation, and you are quite right that until we make people understand some of the components of prison regimes and what we are trying to do from the very first day that they join we are unlikely to improve.

Q523 Helen Jones: Is there any in-service training which encourages prison officers to help offenders take up educational opportunities? Does that exist at all that you know of?
Mr Newell: First of all, there are some qualifications that people can take to assist. Without knowing the exact numbers, there are quite a number of staff in the service who have taken those. They effectively train to be the equivalent of, I guess, what we would call classroom assistants or learning supporters. Each establishment will have its approach to education where it will try and involve some uniformed staff in education provision. For example, it may run an education block where it provides to that education block different officers every day who really are not interested in the task. Equally, it may provide them from a core who are there, who are interested in the learners, who do have some background training, who do feel part of an education team and are actually there to help build education and relate that back to wing. There are different approaches by different governors. Training is lengthy. The standards are going up. I am sure we will talk about reqs but the plight of instructors is very serious now because of the standards.

Q524 Chairman: Tell us a bit more about standards. The plight is—?
Mr Newell: If we are going to do the sensible thing, which I think is to bring education and training and skills and using our workshops all under one umbrella, however we deliver that through contract, the vast majority of the staff who are on Prison Service books are a very long way away from the training requirements that would be necessary from the education point of view to deliver those.

Q525 Helen Jones: If we could recommend one thing that would help officers to engage more in prisoner education what would it be?
Mr Newell: I would have to think about that. Certainly we need to get something in training. There needs to be an awareness, but I believe there needs to be a champion. I know who is responsible for education in the Prison Service but I am not certain that many other people do.
Helen Jones: If you have any further thoughts on that perhaps you could let us know later on.

Q526 Chairman: Can I just push you on that? Your learning and skills manager, is he or she on your management team?
Mr Newell: No.

Q527 Chairman: Why not?
Mr Newell: I have a very small senior management board of six people.

Q528 Chairman: You are complaining about prioritising education and you have not even got this person on your senior management team?
Mr Newell: I am not quite certain if I have got the proper connections to monitor whether where people sit, which is really an ethos issue in those terms, is relevant. The reason that I have a senior management board of six people is that I previously had a senior management team of 14 people with direct reports, including chaplain, psychologist, educationalists, etc, and that was not working. They were not getting the attention and we were not getting the strategic overview and loads of people were coming to meetings who were totally bored by nine-tenths of the content of those meetings, so we have adopted something which is based on two operational directors. It is a very small team but they are then the next direct links. My Director of Regimes obviously takes on that matter on my behalf.

Q529 Mr Chaytor: Who is responsible for education in the Prison Service? You said you knew the name of this person but no-one else does.
Mr Newell: It is Peter Renge. In Prison Board terms that is where it lies.

Q530 Jeff Ennis: I am fascinated by the process undergone to decide which prisoner transfers from one prison to another and the fact that Anne Owers pointed out that education comes very low down the priority list in terms of deciding whether one prisoner should go to which prison or whatever. What are your views on that?
Mr Newell: We are always chasing numbers; that is the difficulty. Whilst we have got a lull in population at the moment it has been for a very long time simply a case of moving prisoners into any available slot.

Therefore, on the list of things which would make someone available for transfer or prevent them going education comes quite low down. If you have to send 15 to the only 15 places in the country then obviously they must meet the security category and they must meet some health issues and so on.

Q531 Jeff Ennis: Is there a need to re-categorise education further up the list in terms of transfers?
Mr Newell: Ideally, of course, what you want is to get some of those population pressures off and ensure that they remain off. We are going through a period where we have some gap. What we do not know is whether that is going to remain that way. I think that where people are on clearly identified courses most governors do hold them, for example, if they are doing some particular 12-week course, and obviously if we are doing something in cognitive skills training or if we are doing something which is a PE course or an education course which has a start and finish. The problem is, obviously, that where we are dealing with basic learning and skills there is no start and finish to it. We put someone on education. They may have been with us six weeks and doing fantastically well but they come up for transfer. We have to look at that, but I would add that medical holds, as PCTs have taken over in the service, are getting larger in simple terms.

Q532 Jeff Ennis: In your submission in paragraphs 25–27 you refer to the problems with aftercare, a consistent approach to aftercare, which is the other line of questions I pursued with Anne Owers. I floated the idea of an inspectorate for aftercare. Do you think that is a goer and how would that be managed to bring in some consistency of approach?
Mr Newell: The National Offender Management Service, of course, is intended to provide exactly that so that when the prisoner is released into the community we are following the same plan handled by the same offender manager. Whether we are going to get there and when we are going to get there is a little more difficult to predict with the difficulties that there have been with the National Offender Management Service plans this year. There is no doubt that we do an awful lot of good work in prisons, not just on education but on drugs as well where there is a risk when people are released into the community. What we should be doing is that when we contract education we should be contracting for the release element of it. That should be all part of the same contract. It seems to me absolutely pointless to say that we do not have that continuity of care and the responsibility remains with the organisation which is contracted in prison. That is one of the things that we would also like to see in drugs.

Q533 Mr Chaytor: Mr Newell, the impression that most of the Members of the Committee have from all the evidence sessions and all the visits we have made is of a service that is completely fragmented and chaotic with lack of leadership, lack of accountability and where largely under-qualified staff are forever sticking their fingers in the hole of the dyke. Is that fair comment?
Mr Newell: It is not far off fair comment. We make far too many excuses.

Q534 Mr Chaytor: We have had prisons for a long time. Prisons are not new institutions. Education and training in prison is not a new activity. How has this been allowed to continue decade after decade? It seems to be only now that there is some interest in this and some investment going into it.
Mr Newell: Generally we have been at the bottom of that pile for investment. We have seen over the years prison education do its own thing to varying standards and no-one has really been too bothered. When we moved to being taken over by the DfES we had a real problem. The real problem is that if we really do want to impose standards, if we do want to say something about the appalling facilities in which we are conducting education and the failure to have trained and prepared our staff, there is a huge bill on it. The consequence of anything where there is a huge bill is that you have not liked to take it on in the way that you publish and lead a whole change of service action plan. What is happening with the PCTs may be mirrored by the Learning and Skills Councils; I do not know. It is certainly nowhere near as advanced. We do make excuses but the consequence of tackling this is that we have to spend some money.

Q535 Chairman: There has been substantial money put into prison education in the last number of years.
Mr Newell: There has been a substantial amount of money put in the last few years, undoubtedly. In fact, both education and drugs and cognitive programmes have seen investment sustained now for several years. However, what is not clear is what level we are trying to fund for. In other words, we are not clear about what the future standards are that we are aiming to and what the funding gap is. There is lots of money going in but there probably needs to be substantially more.

Q536 Mr Chaytor: Accepting your point earlier that a lot of the governor's direct power and control of budgets has shifted to PCTs and the LSCs, at the end of the day the prison governor is crucial in determining the ethos of the prison. What proportion of governors in English prisons today attach the highest priority to education and training in the ethos that they are trying to create?
Mr Newell: Probably those who are in juvenile establishments, working to contracts with the Youth Justice Board. The next level up would be those within young offender establishments, the over-18s.

Q537 Mr Chaytor: And the mainstream adult prisons?
Mr Newell: In the mainstream adult prisons most governors on the whole are driven by what their area manager is shouting the loudest about: the

targets. Let us get real. That is what happens. I am not going to stand up in my establishment and say that we really have to do something about education when actually my area manager says, "You really have to do something about security".

Q538 Mr Chaytor: Can we come back to this question of this post of heads of learning and skills? In your submission you say that these people are management grade E, so this is uniform across the country?
Mr Newell: Yes.

Q539 Mr Chaytor: Presumably there are five management grades, are there, A to E?
Mr Newell: No; F covers our grades as well.

Q540 Mr Chaytor: But there will be some grade E managers who are on the senior management teams in certain prisons?
Mr Newell: Yes.

Q541 Mr Chaytor: On your slimmed down management team who then has the responsibility for regimes?
Mr Newell: The Director of Regimes.

Q542 Mr Chaytor: So the head of learning and skills is directly accountable to the Director of Regimes?
Mr Newell: Yes.

Q543 Mr Chaytor: What do you think is the picture generally with the role of the heads of learning and skills? Are they making an impact and do you think this is a positive development or is it a token gesture?
Mr Newell: No; I think they have made a real impact. It is a very important move. I think when we moved to contracting in the early stages one of the difficulties was that there was no specialist adviser on the governor's team any more. Effectively your head of education was working for the contractor and that is not an ideal situation to have, so you need some specialist on your team helping to develop and assess and analyse and do your own self-audit of standards, which eventually ALI will come and see you about, and we were satisfactory, I might add, in Durham. I am sure you have checked that. I think they have made a real contribution. I would like to see that continue. I would not like to see it threatened by any of the arrangements. What is disappearing and what has become less certain is the structure of both of them now in that there was a whole series of area learning and skills advisers and there was to some extent you might say a management structure in that they had people to go to. It has now become unclear what their relationship into the LSCs is and we need to clarify that.

Q544 Mr Chaytor: What you are saying is that the fact that the heads of learning and skills are fairly low in the pecking order in your management team is not the totality of the problem. The problem is in the Home Office structure in that at the area manager level and above there is no strong strategic direction about making prisons secure learning centres?
Mr Newell: Yes. I do not think there is a strategic direction but I think that the move to the local skills councils can expose local advisers so that they can become the conduit, if we are not careful, to improving or not improving education within any particular establishment. You have to say that we do not know yet—the jury is still out—on where LSCs stand with prison education in their pecking order. As I say, there have been tremendous improvements in health through PCTs. It has been hard work to get it up the agenda on local health, and that has taken place by a mass of meetings and goodwill and commitment on my side and by the Chief Executive of the PCT. I do not see anything resembling that taking place in education.

Q545 Mr Chaytor: Through the LSCs?
Mr Newell: Yes.

Q546 Mr Chaytor: But this is part of the problem, is it not, because you are saying there is no strategic direction through the area board and the Home Office; you are saying that in the individual establishments not all heads of learning and skills are on the senior management team, and you are saying that in the Learning and Skills Councils there is no evidence that they are going to take it seriously, so we have got a fragmentation three ways?
Mr Newell: Yes.

Q547 Mr Chaytor: And in none of the three key forums is there anyone who has got the power or the clout to move this up the agenda?
Mr Newell: That is the difficulty about who is going to break some of the logjams or the different interpretations which will take place in different parts of the country within departments. For me there is no doubt: prison education is improving. The underlying message is that it is getting better; we are doing more, there are more opportunities and there are more connections with the community. It is quite a positive message and I would like to think that a lot of what is happening is the transitional phase but, to use a good old prison term, it does need gripping and gripping quite quickly.

Q548 Mr Chaytor: Finally, on the question of your staff, there is no minimum qualification that people need to apply for a job in a prison, and if they apply and they are appointed they get a seven-week training scheme and then they are a qualified prison officer?
Mr Newell: Yes.

Q549 Mr Chaytor: After that does your prison provide any updated training for its officers? What are the opportunities for professional development for the typical prison officer?

Mr Newell: I think they are quite poor. Let me go back to the start of that. Not only do we not require qualifications. You will have noted that money is being provided for basic skills for staff in that there is a recognition that within those targets up to 2,000 staff could be funded to Level 2 skills. That shows some of the pace. In terms of additional training, most prisons have development programmes for their staff. They are often overtaken by skill training which is necessary for the job, and as people move around within jobs locally within prison, there will be substantial training that will go with that and will eat into the amount of their training time. Most individuals are expected to follow up personal development which the service will often fund but it is not good.

Q550 Mr Chaytor: That training also is largely directed to improving their skills in respect of the traditional functions of the secure functions of the prison rather than the training and education functions of the prison?
Mr Newell: Yes, indeed.

Q551 Mr Pollard: You have mentioned several times, Michael, about having a champion for education. You are a very senior and experienced governor. You are also President of the Association. Why can you not be that champion? Why can you not set by example, as David was saying earlier on, by having somebody on your board whose direct responsibility is education? You are that man.
Mr Newell: I think that is slightly unfair. I do champion a number of things when I have the opportunity. There are so many things to champion. We need to share some of them out. One of the things that I do a lot of championing for is mental health in prisons and the inappropriate use of prisons for mental health. It is not a role that I am going to take on. I think it is a Prison Service responsibility, jointly, obviously, with the DfES. In terms of my own structure and whether I decide to put a head of learning and skills on my senior management team or not, I am not certain about the token gestures that go with that. If I were to say that it is showing leadership by putting that person on my senior management team, that is a long way away from my definition of leadership. My education inside gets an enormous amount of support in moving towards better education within Durham and I do not think that my individual learning and skills adviser's position would be enhanced by being on the SMT and then me taking no interest in it, which is the other side of the coin.

Q552 Chairman: Who is in charge of the quality of the work that your prisoners do in the workshops? Who decides what contracts you get with outside providers and who is the entrepreneur in your prison?
Mr Newell: It is effectively a principal officer and a senior officer in industries that are doing that. Yes, it is going out and engaging with the local community and seeing what we can get. We have done some things and we have been able to make progress but, as I am sure you will be aware, we do not have an industrial strategy within the Prison Service other than one which seems to be backward-looking, which is to move to internal consumption, but that means bringing back sewing machines rather than getting rid of sewing machines. One of my proud achievements at Durham was to get rid of sewing machines in the workshops because it seems to me that that is not going to help gain jobs on release.

Q553 Chairman: What about pay? Why do people get more pay to do routine work than to do education and training?
Mr Newell: They do not in my place. We have changed the pay system so that education is a flat rate job just the same as the workshop is a flat rate job. The only additions on those payments are related to performance, so you might say we have performance-related pay for our prisoners. A lot of it has been around because of piecework shops. A lot of it has been around again in old structures. Education historically sat there and no-one knows how to get additional funding into their total pay budget for prisoners, so they do not know how to make up the gap. There are lots of reasons but I think that there are a number of things that we could do. I was very impressed in America a number of years ago in the federal system about how they made sure that all their jobs had educational qualifications to them, so that every prisoner who came in who felt they were of a low standard went on to education; they did not have any option because there was not anything else available. We do not seem to grasp the nettle well enough about is education compulsory or is it voluntary? What we need to do is make sure that guidance workers do guide. I have prisoners who come into custody time and time again who end up as the dreaded wing cleaner who avoids the education system and we give them a job and we let them opt out. We need to think about our incentive structures for education a great deal more without getting into compulsory, but if you do not have anywhere else to go, compulsory, coercion, they are quite close together. We need to do something about that and we need to get better facilities; we need to get a more diverse approach to delivery of education. Talk and chalk in 2004 for people who did not think much of talk and chalk ten years ago when they were going through the school system is not a way forward.

Q554 Jonathan Shaw: You heard earlier from the inspectors that they favour this area based contracting system. Is that something that your organisation supports?
Mr Newell: We would be quite happy with an area based contracting approach. We were quite happy with NOMS trying to move the National Federation of Management Services to an area

structure, a regional structure effectively, and we wanted everything to be coterminous in that approach with the government offices of region, constabularies, etc, and in a way that if we could do that with education then, wherever the National Offender Management Service is going to go for the future, at least we will have put in place something which is not going to run contrary to it. Because we do not have grand plans in some of these areas one of the dangers is that we end up doing something which we then have to damn well untangle at a later date. Regional contracting would not be a bad idea and certainly would give us the opportunity in some of the specialist areas to have more of a call-off approach so that those who have got particular learning disabilities we were able to respond to far more easily.

Q555 Chairman: How many prison areas are there?
Mr Newell: There are 13 Prison Service areas. There are nine regions plus Wales, and there are 42 Probation Services and 42 Chief Constables. We have to go some way to get that right.

Q556 Chairman: Do you have a close relationship with Durham University?
Mr Newell: Reasonable.

Q557 Chairman: Do you see Ken Coleman reasonably frequently?
Mr Newell: Yes. We have a reasonable relationship but the education we need they do not advertise that they are the experts in.
Chairman: Thank you very much. It has been a very useful session for us.

Wednesday 17 November 2004

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr David Chaytor
Valerie Davey
Jeff Ennis
Mr Nick Gibb
Paul Holmes
Helen Jones
Mr Kerry Pollard
Jonathan Shaw
Mr Andrew Turner

Memorandum submitted by the Department for Education and Skills

The Skills Strategy White Paper, "21st Century Skills—Realising Our Potential" presents us with a unique opportunity to secure future prosperity for the country and to transform the lives of millions of people. It does this by putting employers' and individuals' needs centre stage, delivering the skills they need and providing easy access to high quality training across the full range from basic to advanced skills.

A successful strategy will bring enormous economic and social benefits to the nation and by increasing the skill levels of all, and in particular of groups traditionally under-represented in skilled employment, we will develop an inclusive society that promotes employability for all.

The Skills Needs of Offenders

In any one year, around 130,000 people are or have been in prison, with a further 200,000 supervised by the Probation Service in the community. The prison population at time of writing is just over 74,500, including: 2,600 who are under 18; 7,500 aged 18–20; and 4,500 women. Compared to the general population, offenders have disproportionately poor skills. Many have a history of truancy or exclusion from school, and have left school with few or no formal qualifications. For example:

- almost four out of five prisoners have been temporarily or permanently excluded from school; with at least six months' education lost in nearly half of all cases;
- half of all prisoners screened on reception are at or below Level 1 in reading, two-thirds in numeracy and four fifths in writing; and
- around 60–65% of offenders screened by the National Probation Service have very poor basic skills; significantly higher than the estimated 20% of the general population with a similar learning need.

At the same time, research published by the Basic Skills Agency makes a link between repeated criminal offences and poor literacy skills.

The goals of the new Criminal Justice Act are: punishment, rehabilitation, reparation, deterrence and reform. Learning activities can contribute to the effective management of a humane prison regime. Having a job makes re-offending much less likely, and the right education and training can make it more likely that offenders will get and maintain employment on release or whilst subject to community orders. Therefore the development of an excellent offender education service is a priority for the government, reflected in a Manifesto commitment.

Security and practicability are obviously of great importance when dealing with offenders, particularly those in a custodial setting. But in other respects, such as learning backgrounds and lack of achievements, most offenders are not very different from many of their counterparts in the community. That is why our vision is that they too should, according to need, have access to education and training which enable them to gain the skills and qualifications they need to hold down a job and have a positive role in society. Our aim is that the content and quality of learning programmes in prisons, and the qualifications to which these lead, should increasingly be the same as those of comparable provision in the community.

The Importance of the Skills Strategy for Offenders

We believe learning and skills have a lot to offer offenders. The Government's Skills Strategy, which includes *Skills for Life,* focuses on supporting disadvantaged groups. *Skills for Life,* the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills, sets out how the Government will reach its Public Service Agreement goal of improving the basic skills of 1.5 million adults by 2007.

The Government is implementing its *Skills for Life* strategy through key delivery partners, including the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit, the Prison and Probation Services, the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, the Inspectorates, the Learning and Skills Council, JobCentre Plus and other government departments. These partners are working together closely to promote, plan, deliver, fund and inspect basic skills provision

for priority groups. One of these priority groups is offenders, whether in custody or in the community, whose poor literacy and numeracy skills are a serious obstacle to rehabilitation and the search for employment on release.

The Skills Strategy helps people develop the skills they need for employment as well as personal fulfilment. It supports learners in different ways, offering information and advice, making courses more accessible and driving up quality through Success for All, helping with costs and gaining support from employers.

It introduces a wide range of interlinked measures to remove barriers to learning and support participation for individuals, as well as re-focusing public investment in those areas of skills provision where it is most needed—for example, a universal entitlement to a first full Level 2 qualification and in specific shortage areas above Level 2. New Deal for Skills was announced by the Chancellor in his Budget of 17 March 2004. Focusing directly on taking forward a key element of the Skills Strategy, New Deal for Skills sets out new ways of tackling both long standing barriers between welfare and workforce development and the problem of numbers of people with no or low skills. In developing the NDfS, the needs of offenders and ex-offenders will be kept firmly in mind.

Progress so far in Meeting Offenders' Skills Needs

Education and training can play an important role in motivating offenders and reducing re-offending. Funding for offender learning, which is jointly administered by the DfES and the Home Office, has risen from £97 million in 2003–04 to £127 million in 2004–05.

The Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit in DfES co-ordinates the development and delivery of change, working in partnership with the Home Office, Prison Service, National Probation Service, Youth Justice Board, Learning and Skills Council and others.

(i) *Progress in Prisons*

Key achievements in prisons include:

- prisoners achieved over 46,000 qualifications in literacy, language and numeracy in 2003–04, as well as nearly 110,000 qualifications in work-related skills which will prepare them for employment on release. These achievements exceeded national targets in both areas. The Home Office target for getting 31,500 prisoners into employment, training or education outcomes on release in 2003–04 has also been met.
- a national Quality Improvement Strategy for prisoner learning has been introduced, which embeds the requirement for annual self-assessment and three-year development plans.
- Ufi/learndirect has worked with the Department to rollout learndirect delivery in 20 prisons and in local probation services. They have also delivered online tests to prisons through mobile testing units.
- the management and organisation of learning and skills provision in prisons now has a single champion in the person of the Heads of Learning and Skills. These key senior posts enable establishments to make progress across a number of areas in which they have generally been weak:
  - bringing together colleagues from across the prison to ensure that learning opportunities are maximised in all parts of the regime;
  - ensuring that this partnership, supported by comprehensive and routine self-assessment, is reflected in three-year development plans reviewed and rolled forward annually;
  - ensuring the existence and implementation of a quality assurance framework for learning and skills in the establishment; and
  - promoting a transformational change in delivery practice which takes account of prisoners' needs and offers a wide range of methods to encourage and maintain participation.

(ii) *Progress with Offenders in the Community*

We have recently put in place new arrangements to support improvements in the learning and skills of offenders in the community as well as those in custody. The Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit in DfES, in partnership with the National Probation Service (NPS) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), is now responsible for the learning and skills of offenders under supervision of the NPS.

This new partnership between the NPS and LSC brings together the joint expertise of both organisations and will enable the creation of a greater range of educational opportunities for offenders in the community. Exposure to such opportunities will, it is hoped, encourage offenders to explore further educational provision as well as vocational programmes. The partnership will also allow for planned progression and, as far as can be arranged, seamless transfer from education delivered under supervision, to mainstream learning and training activities. The new relationship will assist both organisations to tackle the bureaucratic and administrative hurdles that can become barriers to learning for offenders.

Improving Quality

There is a great deal to be done in terms of improving quality in the learning and skills provided in both custodial and community settings. Quality improvement remains a major focus.

We are working in partnership with the Adult Learning Inspectorate and Ofsted to address the significant weaknesses highlighted in both Chief Inspectors' Annual Reports as well as the findings of the comprehensive thematic review of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL in prisons. These reports set a useful baseline for the main strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of learning and skills in prisons and young offender institutions.

We are also working with the Inspectorates to address weaknesses in provision for offenders in the community. We are currently preparing an action plan for publication which will set out the progress we are making with the Probation Service and Learning and Skills Council, and the plans we have to improve provision for Skills for Life for offenders in the community.

The voluntary and community sector remains fully engaged in providing innovative and imaginative learning and skills programmes for offenders. For example, the Inside Out Trust continues to develop prison projects based on restorative justice principles through which prisoners learn new skills in order to provide goods and services to disadvantaged people across the world; and the Irene Taylor Trust which takes creative music projects into prisons as part of the rehabilitation and education of offenders.

In March 2004 we launched a strategy to improve the effectiveness of joint working between prisons and organisations in the voluntary and community sector, alongside an evaluation and monitoring guide to help both Heads of Learning and Skills and staff involved in delivery to ensure quality.

Improving Delivery in the Future

We intend to maintain the momentum in driving up offender engagement and achievement and focusing on offenders serving sentences both in custody and in the community in a more coherent way. It is important that we develop structures and initiatives which will maximise the benefits for individual offenders in terms of the learning they undertake during their sentence and beyond.

The DfES and Home Office want a service that provides all offenders, whether in custody or the community, with the learning and skills they need as individuals. In the case of offenders in custody, this needs to be done in the context of their overall sentence plan, which itself includes the goal of rehabilitation. Key features of this new service include:

- the aim should be to improve the skills of offenders and improve performance in placing offenders in sustainable employment. This will require a focus on both basic and key skills as well as vocational skills.
- the service should have the flexibility to meet individual needs, within the constraints of the sentence.
- learning and development activities should be of the same high standard as those available for other learners.
- continuity is crucial throughout the duration of a custodial sentence and beyond to keep learners engaged and to secure positive outcomes.
- accountabilities, targets and rewards, inspection and performance management within prisons and probation services should emphasise the importance of learning and employability outcomes for offenders. Prison governors should be focused on prisoners achieving qualifications and entering sustainable employment.
- continuity and coherence in sharing information and transferring records should enable the whole system to focus on the offender.
- offenders should have access to information, advice and guidance.
- the best possible provision for e-learning and effective use of information and communication technologies should be offered consistent with security and the protection of the public.

We are developing a new approach to delivery, to replace the current contracts for prison learning and skills services, in order to make a reality of the more flexible, individually-focused offender education service we need. Greater involvement of the Learning and Skills Council through their new regional infrastructure, and the creation of a National Offender Management Service with regional offender managers, open up possibilities for developing new models of partnership and delivery. NOMS offers an integrated approach to the custodial and non-custodial aspects of a sentence, enhancing continuity which will become increasingly important under new sentencing arrangements. The LSC offers a single channel for planning, commissioning, funding and overseeing post-16 learning delivery.

The North East, North West and South West regions of England have been selected to develop and test out the most effective forms of delivery partnership, starting from the autumn of 2004. There will be a strong focus on achieving continuity of learning during a sentence and beyond it. Our initial thinking is that the

regional level should set the main framework for delivery, with some provision offered at national level as appropriate. The lessons from this activity will inform comprehensive proposals for a national delivery framework for the Offenders Learning and Skills Service.

Supplementary information

Assessment of Prisoners' needs on Conviction

Early and effective assessment of need is essential if prison and probation services are to identify and respond to an offender's individual learning needs. The Prison Service Order governing the delivery and management of induction processes for prisoners entering custodial sentences (PSO 0550) states that "attendance on education programmes must be planned as a result of a needs assessment and must be part of an integrated programme of regime activities".

The goal of the OLSU is increasingly to introduce national approaches and standards into prisons. That means building capacity for comprehensive screening, initial assessment and diagnostic assessment, which then feeds into an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) recording learning and other goals and progress against them.

At present, practice varies across the estate. Our aim is to reach a position where assessments happen as a matter of course, with ILPs firmly embedded in the sentence planning process.

Facilitating a "learning journey" for individual offenders is the focus for a new integrated delivery service for offender learning and skills on which developmental work is shortly to begin in three regions—the North West, North East and South West of England. Specifications for this future service have been developed and are being refined through consultation and testing in the three development regions.

Meanwhile, Individual Learning Plans are being piloted in juvenile custodial facilities through the PLUS literacy programme with capital investment in local prisons focusing on capacity building where it is most needed, ie where prisoners are first received into custody.

The Effectiveness of Local Contracting Arrangements

Current contracts have been focused on purchasing inputs rather than outputs, which has made it difficult to assess value for money, and they do not encourage innovation. Although we are extending the contracts while we develop the new arrangements, the Prison Service is providing pro-active management to establishments, including training for Heads of Learning and Skills in contract management and agreeing corrective action plans with the establishment where necessary. This will ensure that we introduce as much improvement in quality as is possible in advance of the introduction of new arrangements for delivery.

Provision of Appropriate Training Facilities within Prisons

Government is clear that the primary focus of training for prisoners should be to prepare them effectively for resettlement. With this in mind, we are committed to bringing training provision into greater alignment with industry standards and ensuring that it equips prisoners with the range of skills they need to enhance their employability on release.

We are looking to Heads of Learning and Skills to drive forward our agenda for creating greater coherence across learning and skills provision in prisons, bringing together a range of staff delivering a range of programmes and/or support. This year we have brought together the funding allocations for education and vocational training into one ring fenced budget. This will allow maximum flexibility for Prison Service areas to decide how best to use the funds to support local work based learning priorities/initiatives—whether through existing arrangements or through education contracts.

In addition, investment of £7.4 million over the past two years from the Capital Modernisation Fund has provided classrooms adjacent to workshops, enabling Skills for Life and key skills to be integrated into practical training.

A further £4.5 million of Capital Modernisation Fund resources has enabled establishments to upgrade their facilities and equipment so that prisoners can achieve skills and qualifications in areas and at levels needed by industry, and DfES continues to advise the Prison Service on the introduction of prisoner training programmes with employer involvement which could lead to enhanced opportunities for employment for learners on release.

Prisons have been included in the piloting of new learning materials in construction industry training and in horticulture. Work also continues with sector skills councils such as the CITB (construction) and LANTRA (land-based industries) and with awarding bodies to develop vocational programmes for prisoners which meet the particular needs of the prison learning environment, eg unitised qualifications.

The Role of Prison Staff in Supporting Educational Activities

Prison governors are accountable for educational outcomes in their establishments. It is important therefore that the prison regimes allow prisoners access to learning and skills opportunities. DfES has funded a new senior post in each prison establishment. The role of Heads of Learning and Skills is to facilitate and encourage the expansion of learning opportunities for prisoners which will enhance their employability and their life in the community after release. Replicating successful practice in the juvenile estate, Heads of Learning and Skills have an overview across all learning provision, and are expected to co-ordinate activities to ensure coherence and quality— both within their establishment and with opportunities in the local community—and to maximise opportunities for learning throughout the establishment. This involves promoting a culture of learning across the prison, encouraging or supporting the involvement of a range of staff in prisoner learning including prison officers, officer instructors, instructional officers and teachers.

Training and support for instructors to deliver accreditation through vocational training workshops, and to support these skills with underpinning key skills such as communication, numeracy and teamwork, is further encouraged by peer partnership schemes through which prison staff as well as prisoners can become basic skills supporters.

Heads of Learning and Skills in the juvenile estate are currently working to the Youth Justice Board's National Specification which was designed "to expand learning from the classroom into the entire fabric of the institution and to provide the framework for training and enabling all institutional staff to support learning and influence behaviour positively".

A range of staff including tutors, vocational training instructors, PE officers and wing officers have undergone accredited training in order to support learners and/or work in the classroom when off duty. In some cases, identified staff work in the education block daily. Support in developing literacy and numeracy skills is also available through the PLUS programme's development advisers.

Beyond this, the involvement of personal officers in the Detention and Training Order review process is essential to a whole establishment focus on learning and skills development and to engaging individual offenders in education, training or employment on release.

Links with Employers and Employer Led Initiatives

Research has shown that there is a link between unemployment and re-offending, which is why the focus is increasingly on ensuring that vocational training for prisoners equips them with the skills needed for life and for industry.

DfES offers learning and skills advice to the Prison Service to inform its development of the Service's strategic links with employers and employer organisations. The Service's Custody to Work Unit is working with employer organisations, including the Confederation of British Industry, to identify employment sectors which have feasible job opportunities for offenders and develop links with major employers in those sectors. Its work also includes promoting the case with employers that, with appropriate basic skills, training and work experience, released prisoners can be a useful source of labour.

Following a recent review of prison industries, the Prison Service has agreed a new statement of purpose which emphasises taking opportunities wherever possible to improve prisoners' skills and their employment prospects on release. The review suggests that the Prison Service should seek to attract work that can develop prisoners' skills, and that prison industries should keep in touch with developments in the modern labour market. This will involve developing links with the relevant Sector Skills Councils which can provide relevant labour market information and help the Service develop its links with employers in related industries.

The Youth Justice Board is working in partnership with the LSC on a specific young offender e2e (Education to Employment) pathfinder targeting those young people who need additional help in obtaining the skills for employability and a route into further education or work based learning. The pilot is working in Brinsford, Hindley, Stoke Heath and Wetherby YOIs, selecting and preparing groups of young people for continuing e2e work in the community post release.

Continuing Support and Guidance on Release, Including Co-ordination with Local Providers

There is a new partnership to deliver effective learning provision to offenders in the community. The Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit in DfES is now working closely with the LSC, the National Probation Service and other key partners to develop a new integrated service that will provide coherence across custodial and community sectors, in line with strategic framework for the new National Offender Management Service.

The Learning and Skills Council has a key role to play in ensuring that the gains made by offenders while serving a custodial sentence are not lost on transfer or release into the community. It continues to fund day-release enrolments for adult prisoners eligible for release on temporary license (ROTL). This scheme

supports continuity by enabling individuals to continue their studies without a break after release, while also equipping them with valuable skills—particularly in vocational areas—which will enhance their employability.

We are encouraging capacity building across the prison estate, while looking to Heads of Learning and Skills to develop strategic links at local level with providers, both to promote mainstream standards in custody and to facilitate continuity of learning on release. This is also being done by the Probation Service through the new partnership arrangements for community-based learning.

For those under 18 years of age the Youth Offending Teams are key to managing the whole of a young person's sentence—both in custody and in the community—including the transfer of an individual to community provision on release. The Youth Justice Board has a shared target with the Connexions Service for 90% of young people to enter education, training or employment on release. To support the transition from custody back into the community, custodial staff are required to attend the young person's first review after release.

Additionally the YJB is using £8 million from SR2002 over three years to enhance the ETE engagement capacity within Youth Offending Teams and Young Offender Institutions, targeting the highest risk groups of young people on Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes and serving Detention and Training Orders. This money provides additional mentoring and Connexions Personal Adviser support to ensure educational placements are properly brokered and sustained.

Education, Training and Support for Those on Probation

Offenders under supervision in the community face a range of challenges including a lack of stable accommodation, health problems, lack of family support, unemployment and a poor employment history, drug and alcohol abuse and mental health problems.

We firmly believe that offenders according to need should have access to education and training in the community. This will enable them to gain the skills and qualifications they require to provide alternatives to crime, obtain and keep appropriate employment, and play a positive role within the community.

New partnership arrangements came into force in April 2004 to support improvements in the learning and skills of offenders in the community, strengthening partnership working between the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit in DfES, the National Probation Service (NPS) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). An additional £9.4 million in 2004–05 and 2005–06 will be allocated to local Learning and Skills Councils for this purpose. New targets of 32,000 starts and 8,000 qualifications in England and Wales are shared between the DfES, LSC and NPS.

The new National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will help sharpen the focus on this vital area as we move towards a new sentencing framework comprising both a custodial and a community element. The introduction of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will underpin "end to end" offender management, ensuring that the focus is firmly on managing offenders throughout their entire sentence. The Prison Service and the NPS will work much more closely together on a range of interventions to support offender rehabilitation.

June 2004

Witnesses: **Mr Phil Wheatley,** Director General, Prison Service, **Mr Martin Narey,** Chief Executive, National Offender Management Service (NOMS), and **Ms Susan Pember OBE,** Director of Apprenticeships and Skills for Life, Department for Education and Skills, examined.

Q558 Chairman: Good morning everyone. Can I welcome Martin Narey, Susan Pember and Phil Wheatley to our deliberations. You know that we are now well on course in our evidence sessions on prison education. We are very grateful that such a distinguished group of people have given us their time this morning to answer some of our questions. Can I start, Martin Narey, by asking you to open up and tell us a little of what you think prison education is and what its purpose is?

Mr Narey: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I am delighted to have the opportunity. Can I say I am delighted that the Committee has picked up the subject of prison education so early in your jurisdiction for this subject. As you would expect, I have read with some interest some of the evidence that has previously been given to you. I think in one or two circumstances you might have been given a picture which is undeservedly bleak, so, if I may, I would like to say something about prison education but also the background in which it takes place. If I may start on the background, the pressures on the prison system remain very considerable. We have this morning close to a record population. There are 16,000 individuals living in overcrowded conditions, conditions which we consider to be gross. There are far too many short-term prisoners, many of them being sent to custody in circumstances where they would never have been sent to custody 10 years ago, and the overwhelming numbers mean that Phil and the staff need to frequently move prisoners up and down the country during their sentence to wherever there is an empty bed. Despite those pressures, and accepting absolutely that there is much we need to do to improve the prison service, I think we have a better run, a more constructive, a more cost effective

and a much more humane prison system that ever before. I know that some of you will remember the 1980s and 1990s, which were characterised by major prison disturbances, riots, notorious escapes and, in some prisons, inhumane treatment. In the mid 1990s there were four or five escapes from prison every week; last year there were only five in the whole year. There were about two major prison disturbances every year through most of the 1990s; and there have been two since 1997. In 1998 there were only nine prisons with drug treatment; soon there will be more than 100. In education terms, investment in education fell in real terms during the 1990s as the service concentrated on security and good order, but since 1998 investment has grown very sharply from about £36 million dedicated to adult education in 1997–98 to about £82 million this year. There are lots of things we need to improve. We need to improve the quality of teaching, and I am particularly grateful for the support of Ofsted and ALI in helping us to do that; we need to do much more to integrate work skills training with classroom and basic education; we need to get more prisoners into classes and deliver them on time and find ways of them spending more time there; but I am very proud that in difficult circumstances, with individuals who are generally being excluded from schools or excluded themselves, we are likely to achieve 60,000 basic skills qualifications this year and more than 100,000 work skills qualifications. Additionally, we have almost 1,000 Open University students in prison, about 2,500 individuals doing other distance learning financed by the Prisoners' Education Trust, about 600 prisoners studying every day on day-release, about 20 writing residents schemes and a flourishing artistic curriculum, culminating in the stunning Koestler Exhibition of prisoner writing and art every year. Whilst we are aware of the improvements that need to be made, and we will look with real interest at the recommendations that the Committee makes, I think it is remarkable that in extremely difficult circumstances 13% of the Government Skills for Life target up to 2004 (94,000 of the 750,000 targeted) has been achieved by prisoners in custody. What we hope to do in the next few years in this new partnership of the DfES with the Learning Skills Councils is to put education even more at the heart of an offender's experience, whether they are in custody or in the community, because we are convinced that that is the way to increase employability and to reduce crime.

Q559 Chairman: Martin, thank you very much for that. Susan, would you like to say something?
Ms Pember: Only to add, my role in the DfES is to manage the prison education, and what we are doing in the Department is concentrating on three main areas. The first area is delivering relevant programmes of good quality. As Martin has said, in basic skills particularly we have very much seen success in the last few years, but we know that quality is an important angle. The Adult Learning Inspectorate has done some excellent work recently, pointing out where our priorities should lay. So improving quality is our second most important goal. Our third goal is to determine a new service which is fit for the 21st century that builds on the good work that we have already done in prisons, but it has to be a seamless service that goes from the offender in a secure environment to the offender in the community on to probation and then either into full-time employment or into full-time education and the education service or training service that we want to provide follows that offender/earner through that journey.
Mr Wheatley: I do not think there is much I should add to that other than to say that the Prison Service certainly welcomes the partnership with DfES, not only because it has brought more money to enable us to provide better education, but because it has brought in new thinking and the chance to organise better and to make prison a more positive experience, because this gives a much greater variety of activity which prisoners can use which will help reduce re-offending. At the same time we have got to do all the other things that Martin spoke about to keep a system which is running under considerable pressure but is running successfully at the moment coping with a large population, maintaining security, maintaining order and hitting the many targets we have got.

Q560 Chairman: Martin, can I open the questioning by saying: what do you say to the view that this is really a bit of a waste of time, looking at prison education, that most of the people we represent see prison as a punishment; it is a punishment, people are sentenced for their crimes; and to start looking at prison as some sort of educational secure college where education transforms the individual into a non-offending model citizen is an illusion and is not what the Prison Service should be trying to deliver?
Mr Narey: I hope you are teasing me, Mr Sheerman.

Q561 Chairman: No, those are the views we have heard.
Mr Narey: I do not think anybody should be sent to custody simply because it will do them some good, but I believe passionately that, in the right circumstances, we can reduce criminality and change people's lives, and the major way we do that is through education. It is stunning to meet offenders in custody and, I should say, increasingly in the community, where we are trying to repeat what we have achieved in prisons, who have had their lives changed by getting the education which they inevitably missed at school. At some of our institutions coping with the youngest offenders, those who are children, sometimes 75% of the young men there have been permanently excluded from school from about the age of 12. When we started this programme of education in 1998 and when Phil and I started working it together as DG and DDG and trying to put education at the heart of prisons, we were told this could not be done. I was told that prisons could not benefit from classroom based learning and, in any case, we should be preparing them to use their leisure time because they were unemployable. I think that is a poverty stricken

philosophy. I think if we educate people we can change their lives, we can make them employable, we can get them into jobs and we can reduce criminality.

Q562 Chairman: That is a good aspiration, but can you point this Committee to hard evidence that suggests that education in prison leads two a lower re-offending rate?
Mr Narey: The link is a very complex one. I can certainly point to evidence which shows that if we get somebody up to level one in basic skills and then up to level two, that their chances of being in employment are raised very significantly. I can also demonstrate that when NACRO audited the prison population in 1995 to see what proportion went into jobs and training on release, the conclusion was that the figure was about 11%. I think, Phil, the figure is now 32%.
Mr Wheatley: Yes.
Mr Narey: We know that this is complex stuff, but if we can get offenders into employment and somewhere to live, then the chances of their re-offending radically reduces.

Q563 Chairman: Time and time again we have had witnesses suggesting that the heart of the whole problem that we face is the full package. Even if you do quite good things educationally, a range of educational strategies in prison, if no-one follows it through and the individual has to leave prison without support—housing, or a job, searching for a job—what is going to happen in that respect? Is that what is missing?
Mr Narey: It is absolutely what is missing, Mr Sheerman, and that is why we are creating this new organisation, the National Offender Management Service, which I will lead, managing both the Prison Service and the Probation Service and introducing the concept of offender management whereby we manage offenders coherently whether they are in custody or in the community. In my view that is the major weakness. The proportion of prisoners having succeeded in education or who have begun to achieve in education who follow up their education on release is far too small. It is rare, if ever, that I meet a probation officer who has received or is much interested in the educational record of someone who has left prison; and a very significant proportion of prisoners who leave prison are not, under the current law, supervised by the Probation Service at all. Next year that will change: everybody leaving prison will be supervised by the Probation Service and, with the partnership with the Learning Skills Council, we are introducing into the Probation Service a similar emphasis on education for offenders in the community as we have tried to do in prisons. If we join it up, we will make a difference.

Q564 Chairman: The other thing that constantly comes from witnesses, both in written evidence and oral presentation, is the failure to embed education into a prison, to make prison a place where there is a culture of education but it is embedded in the heart of the prison experience, that education is a bolt on, not central. What would you say to that?
Mr Narey: I would acknowledge that we are certainly not at that point yet. I think we are very close to it in the establishments that hold children, where education is genuinely at the heart of the regime. If you went to any of the institutions which held those aged 17 and under, you would find nearly all their time, about 25 hours a week at the moment, is spent in education, and with very considerable and laudable progress in terms of education. Phil and I were at Hindley in the North West last week and the amount of education, the range of education and the achievements being made by the young people there, particularly relative to their inevitable non-achievement at school, was very exciting.

Q565 Chairman: Phil Wheatley, some people out there say to us, not in formative sessions but privately, here you are building new prisons not modifying old ones, but you do not build new prisons or modify old ones in a way that makes education accessible, that you are still building prisons that do not look at that aspect of prison life; in other words, they are poorly designed for a new purpose?
Mr Wheatley: In terms of building new prisons, the Prison Service, the public sector Prison Service, has not opened a new prison since Woodhill was opened in the early 1990s. Woodhill, interestingly, has no workshop provision but only an education provision. The new prisons have been private sector prisons. Martin is responsible for the private sector policy, so I would have to hand that bit back to him. In terms of expanding prisons, most of the expansion we have done over the last five years has been to create places very quickly to cope with the surge in the population to make sure that we could hold all the prisoners that courts were sending to us. We have expanded education in some cases, because we have tried to make sure we expand the ways of occupying prisoners as we expand prisons, but that has been essentially piecemeal work as we have put in a new wing here or a new quick build accommodation into prisons, as we have been coping with what was a crisis: hence the importance of the work the National Offender Management Service is doing to try and steady the population to make sure that that great increase in numbers did not go on as originally projected.

Q566 Chairman: Would you like an opportunity to build a prison that was properly designed for the 21st century?
Mr Wheatley: As you would expect with anybody in my position, the chance to build something with sufficient cash to build it in the way I would like to build it would be very attractive. That is a question for Parliament and the Government in terms of what money they allocate to us.
Mr Narey: May I add to that, Mr Sheerman? You are absolutely right. Nearly all the new prisons, which are in the private sector, were designed in the early 1990s, and the belief at that time was that if you

had prisoners in work in workshop activity, in industrial activity, that somehow prisoners would absorb the work ethic and go on to seek employment. I think that completely missed the point that offenders were unemployable in the outside world; they could not get jobs without the most basic skills. We have been re-negotiating contracts with the private sector operators who run those prisons and are beginning to change workshops to education, but—you are right—the design is not right. I think our two newest prisons, Ashford Prison, which is a women's prison near Heathrow which has just opened, and Peterborough Prison, which will open in about March, half women, half men, have much more education at the centre of their regime and the design reflects that.

Q567 Mr Pollard: On the 11%, 32% employment, this is at a time when we have virtually no unemployment in the country at all. It is very low. Is that not a contributory factor? One other thing I would say is that companies like British Gas and others are in prisons. They are not doing that from a philanthropic point of view; they are doing that because its hard-headed and makes good sense, meaning that they cannot get people outside to come and do apprenticeships. So a very impressive 11%–30%, but, in the context of virtual full employment, it is perhaps not as good as it might be?
Mr Narey: I accept that, Mr Pollard. I would say in defence that a large number of offenders in prison and in the community do not think the world of work is anything to do with them. They have never worked; their parents have never worked; their fathers have never worked (if there has ever been a father around), and sometimes we have to plant in their minds that actually we can get them out of social exclusion and they can do well in jobs. It is very difficult to do and we have to work sometimes against an assumption on their part that the world for them is a world of being on benefit.

Q568 Paul Holmes: Picking up on that 32% figure, it was suggested to us a week or two ago that that might be a bit misleading, that to some extent if a prisoner on release was going for a job interview, or had got a job, that would therefore count as one of the 30% going into work; but in fact there was no follow up to see whether a job interview became a job or whether a job was sustainable. Do you use criteria like New Deal, where it has to be 13 weeks' sustained employment before you can count it as going into employment, or is it just the prisoner says on release, "I have got a job", and that is it; there is no check?
Mr Narey: Phil will have these details better than me. It is mainly prisoners saying, "I am going into a job", and in that scoring we give a weighting for prisoners who accept and attend job centre interviews. We have no basis for tracking those individuals at the moment and on to Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus's estimate is if we get somebody that far—and I think as far as managing offenders is concerned that is primarily our job to deliver people motivated to work to the job centre—a large proportion of them do go into work and remain in work.

Q569 Paul Holmes: So there is no hard figure behind that? The 30% could be misleading?
Mr Narey: Phil will tell you what proportion of it is absolutely hard figures in terms of people going into jobs.
Mr Wheatley: I cannot give you as hard data as you would like. We score each Fresh Start interview, getting them into the Government scheme to try and employ people who are hard to employ, at a half point as we work out that versus a prisoner having a job to go to. We survey independently to establish whether prisoners do have jobs to go to or not. We do not just ask them ourselves; we have been using an independent survey. We have achieved rather more than 30% into employment, and to some extent the 30% figure discounts the fact that some of those interviews will not have led to jobs. We obviously are anxious to encourage people to participate in a scheme that is meant to get them into employment, and there is quite a lot of hard evidence behind it, but we have not got the 13 week follow-up that you speak about, mainly because we are trying to record our data very quickly to make sure we have got data to hand as to what we are achieving, and that long a delay would make it difficult for us to handle it.
Chairman: It is always the Chair's job to warm you up. Now I have warmed you up, I hand you over to our inquisitor, Helen Jones.

Q570 Helen Jones: Mr Narey, you gave us a fairly rosy picture of investment in prison education and rising standards, but I have to say that much of the evidence that we have had indicates that only a small proportion of prisoners have access to prison education, that the provision is very inflexible in many cases and often unsuited to their needs. If, as all of you seem to be saying to us, education in prison ought to be essential to getting people into further education or employment when they leave, why is more not being done to make sure that those aspirations become a reality inside prison?
Mr Narey: Miss Jones, I said that I accepted entirely that more could be done, and I certainly do not think we are at a point yet, as I said to Mr Sheerman, where education is at the heart of prison regimes. We are approaching that with prisons for young people, but I think relative to the challenges facing the prison system, the overwhelming number of prisons, the fact the prison population was 42,000 12 years ago and is now 75,000, I think a remarkable amount has been achieved. About 39% of the prisoner population right now have some form of education. Most of that is part-time; some of that might be only half a session a week as part of their workshop training. That is 39%. I do not have a figure for 10 years ago, but I would have been very surprised if it had been in double figures at that time.

Q571 Helen Jones: Perhaps Phil Wheatley can comment on this. We are running a system where prisoners can often get paid more for working than

they do in education, where they can be moved often in the middle of the course. We accept that sometimes people have to be moved, but a lot of the evidence is that people are being moved, sometimes quite arbitrarily, without reference to the courses they are on and the need to finish. Surely if we want people to achieve something and go to work when they leave prison that system militates against what we are trying to do rather than is helpful?

Mr Wheatley: It is quite true that we are trying to measure a lot of different pressures in prison and when we are running, as we did the best part of eight or nine months ago, very near to full capacity, as we ran through the spring of the year, using every place that we had, with only at times 100 or 200 spare places available, that was very difficult. Even then, the evidence that I have suggests that very few people were moved off courses that they were doing where it was a course that was expected to lead to a qualification. It did happen sometimes, and it happens sometimes because the courts bail people and people who thought they were going to get a custodial sentence do not so, and there are a number of other reasons that mean that we have not got absolute control over when people leave; courts control how long people spend in prison. We have tried to prioritise movements so that it does not move those who are on courses. We achieve that for most of the time. Running as we are at the moment with a little head-room in the system—there are about 2,000 places between the number of prisoners we have got and the absolute capacity of the system—means that we are much less likely to do that, and that is one of the reasons I am very relieved that the population has dropped back slightly and we are not running this system at 100% capacity—that is 100% overcrowded capacity, that is right at its top maximum ability to manage—and that is enabling us to make better use of what we have got. What we have not got is provision for every prisoner. What we have been trying to do is to make sure that we target our efforts on those whose basic skills need improving, because we think the biggest effect comes, in terms of reducing re-offending, if we can make people employable, not exclusively to target on raising basic skills levels, but certainly targeting our efforts there. Were trying to do part-time education, because we think people learn better if they do part-time education rather than giving a small number a very intense full-time experience, particularly when you are doing basic skills education. Traditionally, an old-fashioned prison regime in the 1980s 1990s would have had lots of people on education full-time because it is administratively easier: you do not have to move people around very much; just march them down to education and leave them there. We have moved away from that: hence the much wider spread of education. A large percentage are getting some educational input. I do not mean to claim it is perfection, and if there was significantly more investment we would do more with it, but it is certainly improved and we are using the investment we have got in more purposeful way that, I think, better matches what the country expects of us, which is to reduce the risk of prisoners re-offending and to give them a greater chance of being skilled up and being successful members of society.

Q572 Helen Jones: What about the pay structure?

Mr Wheatley: In my experience, and I have a lot of prison experience—regrettably I spent all my life in prison, working life that is—prisoners are not deterred from entering education by the vagaries of the pay system because education is a very attractive thing for lots of prisoners to do, particularly part-time education, which normally does not much interfere with their ability to earn because they are doing part-time work, and because there is not enough work to give everybody full-time work. So prisoners are not normally deterred by the pay system. What we do have to do, however, with some of them is the most repetitive work, and a lot of prison work is essentially repetitive work because it is pick up and put down work that somebody can come in and learn to do within two or three days and can be picked up by somebody else when they are transferred on or they leave prison because they are only on a very short sentence or short remand period. That sort of repetitive work, unless there is some decent reward for it, we cannot get prisoners to do in a co-operative and productive way, so we do need to make sure we can reward people in that sort of work appropriately. Education, which we do pay reasonably well for in prison terms—I know it is not wildly generous, I hasten to add—is seen by most prisoners as an attractive thing to do because it is interesting; and the thing that above all dominates the prisoner inside is: how can you make your time fly? You have to make the time pass, and education is a wonderful way of making time pass because, for a bit, you are not in prison in your head, if you follow what I mean, you are doing something quite different that you could be doing outside that stretches you, and that is so attractive that I do not need to pay high pay-rates to get people to do it; and if I did pay high pay-rate there, I would have to drop somebody else's pay-rate and I would probably have the person in the "mindless shop" doing the repetitive work feeling very upset and annoyed, thinking, "I am not being paid properly for this. Why should I do it", and I cannot afford that.

Q573 Helen Jones: Bearing in mind the difficulties that are faced in delivering education in prison, could any of you tell me—perhaps Susan can—what research has been done into the various forms of learning which might be most suitable in prison, different ways of learning, and also what is being done to improve the qualifications of teachers and instructors who work in prisons, some whom are very good—we know that—but also many of whom are isolated from what is going on in the profession outside?

Ms Pember: If we start with the research into the teaching and learning of adults, we have got the benefits of a learning centre, we have got our own literacy centre research, the National Centre for Literacy and Numeracy. Both of those see the offender as one of their priority client groups. It is

new stuff that we have only started in the last 18 months, but, saying that, for literacy and numeracy we do know our adults learn the best, and they learn best when it is actually embedded in something they are interested in or is embedded in a vocational area. The work that we have been doing in the strategy unit for the last two years is building up a bank of material that helps the lecturer—whether they are in a closed environment in a prison or whether they are in a workshop, in an employer's premises or whether they are in a traditional classroom—to actually deliver literacy and numeracy in a form that is best for that adult learner. We can give you lots of examples of material about all the projects that we have done to show how best people learn in different environments. On qualifications for teachers, one of the reasons education in prisons was brought into the DfES was about that isolation. The prison contract regime that we had set up for education, and I was one of the early contractors back in the early 1990s—I managed prison education for four years in that way for the whole of Kent, so I know that regime very well and I know what we did well and I know how far we have come, but one of the reasons that I was quite excited that education was being transferred was to stop that isolation for teachers so that they became part of the whole big initiatives that we got—what we call Success for All—which is about transforming the workforce, transforming college management and allowing people to become more professional. Part of that is an insistence that new teachers come into further education and become qualified, and that needs to extend into the prison work so that we make sure that teachers coming into post-16 education, whether they teach in enclosed environments, whether they are teaching in the community, whether they are teaching in an FE have the same status and the same qualifications as primary school teachers have. That is a big jump for lots of people. If you are already in employment, you have had three years to get yourself trained to do that. One of the things that we have been working on is to ensure that prison education teachers get access to all this training that is going on. Through our evaluation last year we realised that for Skills for Life work they were not getting access; so we have been running special events for prison education teachers; and that is what we must make sure in our new service, that the people who teach in a prison get the same access to the staff development and professional development that we have for everybody else post-16.

Q574 Helen Jones: Is that not rather difficult? In the current circumstances many of them are officially attached to colleges but the colleges can be hundreds of miles away. Have you looked at what happens with prison healthcare and the way that changed to be delivered locally by PCTs? Also have you looked at the benefits to the staff from that for delivery? Have you also looked at the way that in healthcare terms we now do a needs assessment for prisoners which is funded, which we could do in education in the same way? Has the DfES learned any lessons from that?
Ms Pember: We have looked at health, and that is one of the reasons that we are going forward with what we call our "three prototypes" after Christmas in three areas working with the learning and skills councils in those areas to make sure that the offender get assessed, the assessment goes with them, that the learning in that area can be delivered locally, if that is seen as the most favoured option. That is not to say that the existing contractors who work nationally will not be working in prison education in that way; but you are actually right, the idea of the Department for Education and Skills being in charge of prison education is that the teacher in the classroom is not alone, is not isolated, is part of a family of educators in that area that can provide support and training. It happens in some places, but we need more of that, and that is why these prototypes with the Learning and Skills Council which we are starting after Christmas are so important.

Q575 Helen Jones: When you talk about prototypes, will the needs assessments be funded?
Ms Pember: That is in the system now. We have got diagnostic materials; we have got screening tools; they can be done absolutely now.

Q576 Helen Jones: I do not mean an assessment itself. I am sorry, I was not clear. I mean when you have done the assessment and you decide what needs to happen for a particular prisoner, is the funding going to be available to do that?
Ms Pember: We are limited, as we were just saying, as regards the funding level, but I have not yet come across, unless you are going to tell me differently, an assessment being done for a prisoner—and, you remember, half of them, we know, are going to be literacy and numeracy needs anyway—to say that that person needs this support and we cannot supply it. We should be able to provide that in their learning journey in custody.

Q577 Mr Gibb: Can I ask Mr Narey about the levels of literacy in prisons. We have just heard from Susan Pember that half the prisons have literacy and numeracy needs. Is that your assessment?
Mr Narey: About 50% of prisoners when they come to us have literacy and numeracy levels at Level 1 or below.

Q578 Mr Gibb: What is the level of literacy when they leave?
Mr Narey: We do not measure literacy when they leave, but we can do an approximate work-out. We know that about 36,000 prisoners a year—individuals this is—improve their literacy or numeracy by a qualification. So about half of those individuals coming into prison at Level 1 or below have some success in literacy or numeracy, not necessarily both, in improving their education while they are in prison.

Q579 Mr Gibb: You talk about these 36,000 prisoners. What do they achieve during the period they are in prison? Tell me a bit more about these things?
Mr Narey: Many more than 36,000 prisoners get some sort of qualification. The 36,000 are the individuals—because some individuals get more than one qualification—who are getting some sort of qualification in basic skills, in literacy or numeracy. They are spread between entry Level 1 and Level 2.

Q580 Mr Gibb: What kind of test are they taking?
Mr Narey: Susan will tell you what the Examination Boards are, but these are national accreditations which measure the level which people should probably have reached before they leave school. For example, Level 1 is equivalent to the reading and numeracy age of an 11-year old. We have a large group of prisoners who are below that level.

Q581 Mr Gibb: What are the names of these tests that they are taking?
Ms Pember: They are national qualifications in literacy and numeracy, and there are entry Levels 3, Level 1 and Level 2?

Q582 Mr Gibb: Is it possible to have a table on the precise figures of the qualifications that have been achieved?
Ms Pember: Yes.[1]

Q583 Mr Gibb: Do you think there should be a measure, that prisoners should be assessed when they leave prison for literacy levels?
Mr Narey: Building on what we have achieved in prisons and as we introduce offender management, particularly for short sentence prisoners who go into prison and then go out and amount to nothing, I want to continue work in education very central to the work which we do with offenders. It would, however, be very expensive if at the end of every sentence we put somebody through a second assessment process to see what progress they had made. We concentrate on assessing people's needs when they come in and then trying to address them.

Q584 Mr Gibb: I am not talking about a general assessment, I am talking about an assessment of their literacy levels. Do you not think there is a case? It would not take very long. Probably about 20 minutes?
Mr Narey: I can go away and do some calculations and give you our best bet of what the exact answer is, but I am not for one moment claiming that we significantly reduce the 45% figure. It would be impossible to do so. I think we have made a significant in-road into it.

Q585 Mr Gibb: You do not really know though, do you?
Mr Narey: I am able to tell you there are 65,000 people coming into custody every year who are at entry Level 1 or below for literacy and numeracy. About 36,000 get at least one qualification in literacy or numeracy while they are with us.

Q586 Mr Gibb: So that is 30,000 that are not?
Mr Narey: That is right.

Q587 Mr Gibb: You said earlier that education is crucial to reducing criminality and changing people's lives. I would have thought that literacy was the most crucial aspect of that. It is not getting people through Open University that reduces criminality and changes people's lives, it is getting people who cannot read to read, is it not? They are likely to be the 30,000 who are not achieving Level 1 or below?
Mr Narey: Yes.

Q588 Mr Gibb: So surely we need to focus on that group of people?
Mr Narey: Indeed, we are. The usual criticisms which are pointed at us so far are concentrating on basic skills rather too much. I need to stress that many of the individuals coming into prison with low levels of literacy and numeracy are not in prison remotely long enough to make any impact on that. As a rule of thumb, what teachers tell me—Susan will know—is that to move somebody up, for example, from entry level to Level 1 takes about six weeks pretty intensive work. A very large proportion of people coming into prison have a stay in prison which is shorter than six weeks.

Q589 Mr Gibb: What is the average sentence? What is the average length of time people spend in prison?
Mr Narey: The average right across the prison population I could not give you an exact figure, but it will certainly be measured in months rather than years.

Q590 Mr Gibb: It is four months, is it not? I thought you would know this figure. We were given evidence that it was four months?
Mr Narey: I would need to check on that figure, but I will happily do so.

Q591 Mr Gibb: Can you tell me the average number of hours people spend on education? For those that are in education, how many hours a week do they spend?
Mr Narey: Of those that are in education the figure will be quite low, because a large number of prisoners are intentionally only in education for a few hours per week. A recent audit suggested that 39% of the prisoner population were in some form of education, but many of those will simply be in education for two or three hours a week. They will work for four and a half days in the laundry and they will do half a day's basic education alongside their work.

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Q592 Mr Gibb: Half a day a week?
Mr Narey: Yes. So the average across the whole prison population is a small number of hours, three or four hours for everyone in prison, but some individuals, of course, and all children in prison, of which there are nearly 3,000, are in education 25 hours?

Q593 Mr Gibb: Let us take the 39%. Of that 39% what is the average number of hours per week of education they have?
Mr Narey: About seven or eight hours, I would guess.

Q594 Mr Gibb: Seven or eight hours a week. Do you think that is enough?
Mr Narey: No, I would love to do much more. If I could I would have almost everybody who was able to do education benefiting from being in education.

Q595 Mr Gibb: When you transfer prisoners around why can you not transfer their notes on what they have achieved educationally from one prison to the next prison? Why is that so difficult to achieve?
Mr Narey: One of the reasons is that until very recently the Prison Service has not had an IT system which has secure e-mail.

Q596 Mr Gibb: Can you not just give a bit of paper?
Mr Narey: Yes, we can, but it would be much easier to do it electronically. Through a project which the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit are dealing with—Phil's prisons and private sector prisons—that information will begin to be transferred electronically next year.

Q597 Mr Gibb: So when we next have an inquiry into this issue this will not be an issue?
Mr Narey: I would be very disappointed if it were, and I would be very disappointed if at the same time we were not transferring information electronically to the Probation Service so that education could continue on release.

Q598 Mr Gibb: Why can you not deliver prisoners on time to their classes? We have heard that a quarter of the time is wasted because prisoners are arriving late, 90 minutes late in some instances. Why can you not get that right?
Mr Wheatley: We dispute that the figures are anywhere near the figures given.

Q599 Mr Gibb: Perhaps you could give us the correct figures?
Mr Wheatley: It is quite a major piece of work to do a calculation across 130-odd prisons about how many minutes everybody has been late, and we do not have that run of data. From my visits to prisons and reports on prisons I do not see anything like that level of slippage, but we do get slippage. As an example, if we find that we believe we have got a gun in a prison, we close the whole of the prison down and we search it from end to end and nobody goes to education—I think that is perfectly proper actually—and that will lead to a slippage in the delivery of education. Similarly, if an incident takes place so that we have a fight as we are moving people to go to work and to education, we stop the movement and deal with the fight. A prison has all those sorts of things going on in it. What we do is measure the amount of purposeful activity that establishments do and make sure that we see that not shrinking but being delivered consistently. It is one of the lines of data we have for all of our purposeful activity so that we can see that the prison is making the best use of the facilities available, and we monitor that on a monthly basis, area managers use that as one of the key pieces of data in the prison, and that shows when you have got slippage in regimes, which you can get if you do not organise well. There is a risk, if a place is not organised well, that movement to all the various activities is not brisk or does not take place when it should take place. So we monitor, we make sure that that is happening regularly, but there are a series of events that can occur in prison that will disrupt the delivery of activities.

Q600 Mr Gibb: So what you are saying is that, aside from those crisis moments in prisons, all prisoners, as far as you are concerned, are getting to their classes on time?
Mr Wheatley: Yes, and the crisis will include things like—I have given you two fairly obvious crises—but if we have got a number of staff who go sick in the morning, we only staff up to run the prison, we do not have a contingency of staff standing by ready to walk in if anybody goes sick, then we will have to trim the regime to we can sure we can do the essential things first, and the essential things will probably be—

Q601 Mr Gibb: It is not just crises then; it is some routine problems that are causing delays in getting prisoners to classes as well?
Mr Wheatley: Any problem that restricts the full ability to deliver has to be balanced on the day. Do we send prisoners to court on time? Do we feed prisoners on time? Do we get people to the workshops on time? All those sorts of decisions are being taken on a daily basis in prisons. My experience of prisons is that running the big purposeful activity includes workshops, includes education; movements tend to take place at the same time.

Q602 Mr Gibb: So I am getting from you that there are delays?
Mr Wheatley: There may be delays, but nowhere near the scale of delays that you are talking about, and not because it is not organised properly but because prison has to cope with a wide variety of events not all of which can be planned.
Mr Gibb: Too much sickness; is that right?

Q603 Chairman: Can we move on.
Mr Wheatley: No, actually sickness is reducing and we are hitting our targets on sickness at the moment, but sickness is a problem in a world where staff are working under a lot of pressure with difficult in-your-face prisoners.
Mr Gibb: That means more viruses, does it? I do not quite understand that.

Q604 Chairman: Mr Wheatley was saying, it is a very stressful job.
Mr Wheatley: In a 24 hour a day job—this is not something you do nine to five—shift patterns, with difficult work to do, including the possibility from time to time of being assaulted, I think the sickness rates we are currently achieving are not bad; we must work to improve them, because I want to get the maximum amount of work I can get from staff and I want to keep staff as fit as possible.

Q605 Mr Pollard: Have you done any research into shift working and how that affects staff? I worked shifts for years and the concept was that you have a much shorter working life and a much shorter life expectancy if you worked regular night shifts particularly. Five years was the figure that was banded about some years ago?
Mr Wheatley: We believe that the fact that we are running shift schemes makes it more difficult to keep staff at work and not feel stressed and suffer sickness, and that includes unsocial working hours, which we have quite a lot because we have to staff our prisons 365 days a year, every Bank Holiday, every night. We cannot ever close them down.
Chairman: The general picture we are getting from other evidence is that the lack of joined up practice in prisons. You have very big ambitious schemes that seem to stop and then start and you have different areas that are not coterminous, and that is one of the problems. One of the ones we have heard a great deal about is Project Rex and its cancellation. David wants to lead on this.

Q606 Mr Chaytor: I want to ask about the relationship between education and vocational training. Perhaps I can ask Susan Pember: is it still generally considered that education and vocational training should be better integrated? If so, was this not the purpose of Project Rex and why was it abandoned?
Ms Pember: Absolutely, educational vocational training needs to be integrated, and that is why we have put in place with the Home Office and the Prison Service, heads of learning and skills in every establishment, to make sure that education and training is seen as one activity in the prison itself, and they are making a difference. They are making a difference to the way that it is managed, the way that it is organised and the quality of that activity and the management of the contractor. That brings us back to the Rex project, which was the re-tendering project?

Q607 Chairman: Why was it called Rex?
Ms Pember: Why was it called Rex? There was an acronym. I asked this a year ago: "Why is it called Rex?" It is just about re-tendering. It was a re-tendering exercise and we got Rex. It could have been for anything. It did not have to be for prison education. The re-tendering exercise originally was just about the fact we had contracts that had been run for two sets of four years—they needed to be done again—but alongside that was the need to improve quality. Running alongside that, although it was not in the public domain, was the concept of developing NOMS (the new National Offender Management Service). The problem with the tendering contract originally, it was going to be, although a better contract in substance of what was needed to be delivered, it would have been substantially the same that had happened the previous two sets of four years, and actually life had moved on. One of the other things that was obvious to me last year was that we needed to improve the quality of the activity: the teachers needed to be supported and we needed to improve the quality of activity. With a tendering process all that happens is that you might get new management but all the staff get carried across—they would have been the same staff—and in that year of tendering we would have lost momentum about increasing better quality and, again, these would not have been supportive people. The reason that that process was stopped as it was going was the creation of NOMS, the need to improve quality and the need to support the teaching staff; the creation of the Learning and Skills Councils and them becoming incredibly active at a local level so that we had another vehicle that we could put funds through; and, lastly, the creation of a whole management service for offenders that allowed us to think about prisoner education, not just in prison, but in the community as well. When you think about the numbers in involved now, there are around 70,000 individuals in prison, but there are over 200,000 serving their sentence in the community. We needed to think about the whole offender management and the whole offender learning skills in a different way.

Q608 Mr Chaytor: In terms of the different groups of staff on the education side and the vocational training side, what are the issues there in terms of their background, rates of pay, their qualifications and experience?
Ms Pember: They are actually doing a sterling job and I think that should be noted. Many of them are really well trained, maybe not qualified in teaching but they are well trained. Many of them have really good practical skills that we need in the future service and, between them, they are actually accrediting about 100,000 individual vocational units in each year. What we need to be able to do, if I could just refer to the future, working with the local learning and skills councils, with the prisons in that area and with probation with JobCentre Plus, is to deliver a service that brings us all together and those VT trainers are going to be incredibly important to that service and they will be brought into that service

at that time. The things you were talking about, pay and conditions of service and who actually manages them, will be taken on board at that time in that local area to meet those local circumstances.

Q609 Mr Chaytor: So, there will be standard terms and conditions and standard basic requirements in terms of qualifications. Will they all need to have a teaching qualification whether they are on the educational or the vocational training schemes?
Ms Pember: I cannot commit to standards in terms and conditions because the contractors up and down the country, FE colleges, do not have standard terms and conditions, full stop. That is not the way that further education is run these days. On the qualifications, we would expect them in the future, as we do with skills tutors in further education colleges, to be qualified in that particular vocational area. That is what we would be looking for from VT people in the future. However, we are where we are now and some of them are amazing and brilliant and therefore we do not actually want to displace people who are really good, we want to facilitate them in order that they can actually take part in this service in the future.

Q610 Mr Chaytor: If the re-tendering process were delayed and now could be delayed up to 2007, presumably there is some uncertainty in the field. What effect do you think this has had on the existing contractors and the existing staff within the prisons involved in vocational training? Is there evidence that it is stable or are staff leaving or is there an increased turnover of staff? What is the picture that emerges from this delay and uncertainty over the new contract?
Ms Pember: Last October when the discussions about Rex were taking place and there was uncertainty about where the next stage was, I think you are right, people felt uncertain and there was some staff movement. In the last year, there has been improvement in teaching and learning grades, so the teachers' grades are actually improving. Over 70% of all classroom inspections are satisfactory or above. We have had two contractors getting a two in inspection grades for the management of that activity which is the first time in this sector that we have actually had two grades. So, yes, although there is uncertainty, on the other hand this has been balanced. The work of the heads of learning and skills is having a marked difference because the quality of the activity is actually improving. I think, talking to contractors, they are aware now that they are part of the real education world; they are inspected by inspectors, they have been managed properly by the prison itself and I see a marked improvement over the last year. If you talk to some people, they will say that it is dismal, that people are leaving in droves *etcetera,* but contractors are able to meet their contractual responsibilities.

Q611 Mr Chaytor: Over the last six years, there has been an increase of about 125% in the prison education budget. Do you think there has been an increase in volume and/or quality commensurate with that 125% increase in cash?
Mr Narey: In terms of output, very clearly, Mr Chaytor. In 1998 when we had the first serious injection of money to expend on prison education, in terms of basic skills qualifications, we could have got 2,000 a year. This year, prisons will get about 60,000 basic skills qualifications. I do not know what the figures were for work skills qualifications but it is about 100,000. Measured by outputs which I think is the best possible measure you can have as a rule of thumb, I think we have more than matched the investment we have been given.
Chairman: Let us continue with contracting arrangements.

Q612 Jonathan Shaw: Susan Pember, I understand that you were the person who made the decision to axe Rex, put Rex down; is that correct?
Ms Pember: I made the recommendations but it was actually ministers' decisions and based on the recommendations that we drew together. I cannot say that I personally took the decision about Rex.

Q613 Jonathan Shaw: You put Rex's head on the chopping block.
Ms Pember: No. It was a very balanced approach with the support of both the DfES and the Home Office at the time.

Q614 Jonathan Shaw: I would not expect you to say anything else!
Ms Pember: I have only been a civil servant for four years!

Q615 Jonathan Shaw: In taking this balanced decision or recommendation to the Minister, did you say to the Minister, "Minister, we have had this PWC report . . ." Did it take years?
Ms Pember: Yes.

Q616 Jonathan Shaw: Did the Minister ask, "How much did this cost?"
Ms Pember: Absolutely. We had to put through a rationale to say, "Right, this exercise has been going on for about 18 months, this is where we are now and this is what you will get, this is how much it has cost. However, the other side of the coin is that the learning and skills councils are working in each of the areas and nationally; they have been funded to provide learning for those in the community; they have been funded to provide staff training for people who are teaching post-16; we have the creation of NOMS coming on the cards in the following year. This is the service we want in the future and, if we carry on in the way we have been contracting through the Rex process, we will not get what we need in the future."

Q617 Jonathan Shaw: You know what I am going to ask you now and that is to answer my question. What was the cost?

Ms Pember: I will need to find the number for you. I was the person who contracted with PriceWaterhouseCoopers who have been in at the beginning—

Q618 Jonathan Shaw: This is quite a fundamental issue. It is a reasonable question for this Committee to ask. You had an 18 month process and you decided that you did not want to go ahead with the recommendations of PWC, so what right—
Mr Narey: We will find that figure.
Chairman: We will have that figure.[2]

Q619 Jonathan Shaw: Thank you very much indeed.
Ms Pember: It was not in any form of a deal breaker. It was not that extensive.

Q620 Jonathan Shaw: I understand the context in which you are putting it but there was a change in policy and obviously there was an expense to the public purse and I think it is reasonable for the Committee to have that information. Moving on from that, in terms of looking to the future, there are, I understand, three pilots operating with the learning and skills council. I do not know which institutions they are operating in. Could you tell the Committee a little about those three pilots and the different nature of those pilots, please.
Ms Pember: The three prototypes were chosen because these are areas that we actually feel we can do a substantial amount of quite exciting work in. They were chosen with the learning and skills councils in order that we could actually see what type of different activities we could do in different places. So, they are made up of a consortium of the learning and skills council, JobCentre Plus and probation and some of the key providers in that particular area through a stakeholder group. The idea is that we actually begin to work out the seamless service. So, as soon as an offender is touched at all by the correctional services, they are assessed. That assessment goes with them; it goes with them to the different prisons that they are in and then it goes out with them into the community and it goes with them for probation and it travels with them depending on the length of time to JobCentre Plus—often JobCentre Plus is the first agency to be involved with that prisoner after they have been released—and then into education. We need to change the infrastructure of that. It is not just passing the information from one service to another but it is actually ensuring on the way, say if we take literacy, that the literacy programme is continued and that the person is assessed at the appropriate time and put forward to the test. We need to develop in education what we call a unique learner number in order that we actually know who that individual is and we need to develop processes between probation and JobCentre Plus. We need to be able to ensure that when somebody goes into a job, they can continue their education. In doing that, we have to pilot assessments in order that we have a standard screening tool and a standard diagnostic tool. We have to be able to pilot programmes and assessment of those programmes. We have to be able to pilot even things like which awarding body we use because, up until now, everybody can choose which awarding body to use, so the prison might choose City & Guilds, somebody might choose Edexcel and somebody might choose OCR. So, all these partners have to agree on this absolutely seamless process and each of the prototypes are going to try things in different ways. Also, about re-tendering and whether we have to go forward in the future about straight re-tendering for prison education, whether we can do it in joint ventures and whether we can do it by the learning and skills councils' method of planned provision.
Chairman: We are going to have to move into shorter questions and shorter answers.

Q621 Jonathan Shaw: Do you envisage flexibility within the new regime for individual prisoners? We have heard that there is a great deal of constraint on the heads of learning and skills to actually adapt the contract to meet the particular individual needs. Is that something that is going to be possible? I recognise that you obviously are working on constraints.
Ms Pember: One of the constraints people say now is that we are very target driven and the targets are generated top down. That has worked really well in the area of basic skills, literacy and numeracy and I have targets to work to until 2010 and cannot see them being moved. Also, there is the question of each of the offender learners having individual targets and they have to be generated upwards and we are looking at that target regime at this moment and it should answer your question about flexibility because the provider in that prison is actually wanting to do what is best for that prisoner and therefore it might be getting a Level 2 in a vocational area not straight literacy and numeracy activity and that is what we need to work for.

Q622 Jonathan Shaw: Am I right in understanding that when the £127 million—I think that is the education budget—is transferred to the learning and skills council, it will not be ring fenced within the learning and skills council's budget?
Mr Narey: That is correct.

Q623 Jonathan Shaw: You will understand, Mr Narey, our concern to hear that because, when we went to Albany Prison on the Isle of Wight, the staff there described the situation some years ago where budgets were not ring fenced for education and a particular governor decided that he did not want the education and training, so it was just axed.
Ms Pember: We give the learning and skills council their overall £9 billion through five finance heads in the department but we also give them a set of outcome targets to go with that. So, although the money would not be ring fenced, the actual targets that they have to achieve will be.

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Q624 Jonathan Shaw: What is going to happen if there are financial pressures on the learning and skills council as we have seen? Is prison education going to be their number one priority or is it going to be schools and FE colleges?
Mr Narey: Either, Mr Shaw. What we will do is get rather more than our £127 million back until I have been persuaded by Susan and by the Chief Executive of the learning and skills council. I think the case we have to make in terms of what can be achieved educationally with an audience which is either literally captive or semi-captive is a very powerful one and I will retain, as head of this new organisation, an intense interest in education and I will be fighting very hard to make sure that I get more than a full return on the investment and I know that I would have the Home Secretary's support on that.

Q625 Jonathan Shaw: Susan, you mentioned earlier about the successful project in allowing teachers to get access to staff development and training. I have two questions. First of all, within the new contracting regime, would that include specific budgetary provision for training and development? Are you going to put your money where your mouth is basically?
Ms Pember: The money is in the system now for training. The *Success for All* initiative that offers support right across from early teacher training to support and training on materials is there for teachers in prisons to access now. The job of the contractor will be to make sure that they do access that activity but they are part of this larger professional development initiative that we have happening at the moment. I am satisfied with the improvement we have now happening in prison education; I am not satisfied with the lack of access these people have had and the isolation these lecturers have had and that is something that we want to change and that we are changing.
Jonathan Shaw: We have been advised that there are a number of staff working in the vocational area who have low skills levels themselves. In fact, there is quite a number who are functioning at Level 1. Is that your understanding?
Chairman: Is that appropriate for Susan or for Phil Wheatley who is shaking his head?

Q626 Jonathan Shaw: If Mr Wheatley is shaking his head, perhaps he would like to enlighten the Committee.
Mr Wheatley: It certainly would be a surprise to me that we had a substantial number of people—

Q627 Jonathan Shaw: I did not say "substantial".
Mr Wheatley: Or even a big enough number to notice who did not have the basic skills required for Level 1 which is, as Martin pointed out, only that of a 11-year old or thereabouts. Our vocational training instructors are skilled in their trades and lead education, it is a form of education to those they train which involves them doing more than simply showing they can paint and decorate but also they can plan, they can work out how much paint they need to use and all the other things that go with most of the trades that are involved and they have the skill to do that. We can improve their educational skills, I think there is no doubt about that, but I do not accept that we are employing people of the sort of level that you suggest.
Jonathan Shaw: This is what we are advised. I am just telling you what we are advised, I am not suggesting it.

Q628 Mr Turner: Just to reiterate something where we started. I take it that there is no disagreement that prison has three purposes: one is punishment, one is protection of the public and the third is rehabilitation; is that correct?
Mr Narey: I agree with that, yes.

Q629 Mr Turner: You said, Mr Narey, that you are convinced that education is the way to increase employability and reduce crime and you believe passionately that it will do so, but you were a little thin on the evidence.
Mr Narey: I cannot yet give you evidence that the investment we have put into offenders' basic skills is leading to a significant proportion of those individuals committing less crime. That research is under way and we started that research in about the year 2000 and I hope we will produce it. Internationally, there is evidence available that investment in education makes a difference to crime in the long run. It is a very difficult thing to measure and, at the moment, our effectiveness of the whole of the correctional area of both prisons and probation is measured in an extremely blunt way. We are measured on the proportion of offenders who are not convicted for two years. That is a measure of no crime, not a measure of less crime and we are trying to improve that measure. I am very confident that we will be able to demonstrate that the sort of things we are doing, giving people an education, getting them off drugs and giving them somewhere to live and a job, will significantly reduce volume and seriousness of offending.

Q630 Mr Turner: By when will you be able to demonstrate that?
Mr Narey: I hope that we will be able to demonstrate it in the next couple of years when we start to get some data from the work we are currently doing. I think we need to be more adventurous than we have previously been on research and, for the first time ever, we are beginning to do randomised control trials in order that we can take a much more confident view of what we are achieving. It is very difficult to make categorically the benefits of education to re-offending when you just have control groups.

Q631 Mr Turner: So, January 2007. Can I ask each of you: what is your picture of who is responsible for what in prison education and to whom? Ms Pember, who is responsible for what and to whom in prison education?

Ms Pember: We are responsible for the policy of prison education and David Normington is the accounting officer for the £127 million and therefore has overall authority. The prison contract itself with the contractors is run by the procurement service of the Prison Service at this moment.

Q632 Mr Turner: They are nice distant paths from each other and there is nobody in between those.
Ms Pember: There are links between them. If I can explain the overall link. Martin is the chair of a board that looks at reconviction, that stops reconviction, and I am the chair of the subcommittee on education and employment which is a committee that oversees the work we are doing in both education and with the DWP and JobCentre Plus and we report from both our services up to this board which then goes back to David Blunkett at the Home Office.

Q633 Mr Turner: "We report from both our services" and, by that, you mean the Prison Service and the DfES?
Ms Pember: And JobCentre Plus.

Q634 Mr Turner: To the board, you said.
Ms Pember: Martin's board, NOMS.
Mr Narey: And then to the Home Secretary.

Q635 Mr Turner: Despite the involvement of the DfES, education is the responsibility of the Home Secretary.
Ms Pember: David Normington is the accounting officer for the funds and it is jointly managed by the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Education.

Q636 Mr Turner: So, the NOMS Board reports to the Home Secretary and the two elements, education and employment, report to reconviction who reports to the NOMS Board.
Ms Pember: Yes.

Q637 Mr Turner: So, where does education and employment report to the DfES?
Ms Pember: I report through our performance system up to the Secretary of State. We can draw you a drawing if it would help you.

Q638 Mr Turner: It probably would.
Mr Narey: On most substantial issues—on targeting setting and on where we are going to put financial investment—we report to both Secretaries of State and it is completely routine for me to spend as much time with an education minister as I do with a Home Office minister these days because we are generally working together in a way that did not happen in the Civil Service until quite recently.

Q639 Mr Turner: Now let us go down further. You said that somebody designs this contract.
Ms Pember: The contract was designed by the Prison Service about four years ago.

Q640 Mr Turner: And, in the future, it will be designed by yourself as education and employment?
Ms Pember: Absolutely.

Q641 Mr Turner: And it is let in a number of different bits, presumably.
Ms Pember: At the moment, the contract that was done four years ago was tendered and let as a contract and it has a specification underneath that that the contractor is expected to perform to.

Q642 Mr Turner: And lots of little bits of contractor let across the country.
Ms Pember: Yes.

Q643 Mr Turner: So, a number of contractors are responsible through the contract to yourselves.
Ms Pember: Yes.

Q644 Mr Turner: What is the relationship in your view between the contractors who are delivering a service within the prison and the people who run the prisons?
Ms Pember: There was a gap there. You had the contract managers in each of the prisons who were managing the prison education service but their line management is to their home body which could be a college 100 miles away. So, what we have done to make sure that we can actually feel secure that we are getting value for money is put in these posts called "heads of learning and skills" who, on the ground, can manage the quality and the activity of that prison contract and that allows us to report back to that prison contractor if we are unhappy about it.

Q645 Mr Turner: And the heads of learning and skills report to the governor?
Ms Pember: Yes.

Q646 Mr Turner: So, in effect, it is actually the head of learning and skills who is the contract manager. The contract manager is the manager of the delivery of the contract.
Ms Pember: That is right.

Q647 Mr Turner: Is that correct? Good, everybody agrees! I accept that contractual arrangements can be complex but what I am concerned about is the extent to which the man who most people think of as being in charge of a prison is in charge. Do you feel, Mr Wheatley, that the governor has sufficient (a) responsibility and (b) power to ensure that education is delivered?
Mr Wheatley: As currently structured, the prison governor with a head of learning and skills reporting to the governor who is in effect contract managing the contract for that prison, I think governors have the power, within the limitations of the contract—and the contracts were let four years ago and they are not the ones we would choose to let whenever they are next re-let—to make that contract work and it is the governor who is accountable for the results of the targets which are set and, yes, we do have targets and they are mainly about basic skills which

I hold governors to account for delivering and they account through the management line to me for that delivery.

Q648 Mr Turner: How can they be accountable if they move around as quickly as some of them obviously do?
Mr Wheatley: Whoever is in charge of the establishment is accountable. The fact that somebody changes their post does not mean that they are not accountable. Their accountability remains with the governor. Governors do move. We grow governors, so that governors work in small establishments where they learn their trade having first of all assisted in other establishments and then we move them into bigger establishments and then into our biggest establishments and some people like me get pulled forward into running the whole of the system. We take governors into the service from a number of different backgrounds. We still have people who joined as direct entry governor grade from other jobs, so—and, please, bear with me—people do not all join at the age of 21. Pulling people through the various stages necessary to grow a governor to run a big prison, say, like Wandsworth or to do my sort of job means that we have to move them.

Q649 Mr Turner: I accept that but I think you will recognise the criticism of ministers sometimes: they are moved on so quickly that nobody knows who is to blame for what went wrong.
Mr Wheatley: I think that is misguided, if you do not mind me saying so. We do not move governors casually. I move governors for real reasons. Sometimes for reasons beyond my control. If somebody leaves an establishment to join the private sector or dies or wants to go to Australia as happened recently to the Governor of Nottingham, I have to replace at short notice and, because it is a little like house moves, there is a chain of moves. As the Governor of Nottingham moves, we will have to replace with a governor from a smaller establishment, Nottingham being a medium-sized establishment, it is not somewhere that somebody can cut their teeth on for the first time, so actually a skilled deputy governor moves and somebody else moves into that position and that is done in an intelligent and thoughtful way, not as some people suggest in a casual manner designed to reduce accountability.

Q650 Mr Turner: So, there is a plan?
Mr Wheatley: It is planned, yes.

Q651 Chairman: Is 20 months on average long enough for a governor to manage an institution?
Mr Wheatley: In an ideal world, I would slow down the departure rate of governors and I would not have people joining the private sector or transferring to Australia or all the other things that produce pull-through.

Q652 Chairman: Mr Wheatley, that is not a good enough excuse. All human organisations have people who change their jobs. They have turnover. In your own terms, they have churn. It is quite wrong to suggest that the Prison Service is unique. Managers who have come to this Committee say that it is chaotic to try and properly run institutions with the turnover that you allow in your senior managers/your governors. That is what they tell us.
Mr Wheatley: They may tell you that but I am telling you that we are planning carefully to replace our governors. We have moved a number of people during a period when we have changed the way in which we run prisons. In order to achieve the improvements that Martin Narey set out at the beginning in his opening statement, we have had to move governors and, on a number of occasions, move them away from establishments where they were not doing as well as I would have liked them to have done. During that period, we did speed up movement quite necessarily in order to achieve significant improvement of performance and actually that is seen in our results. We are planning carefully to move governors between places in a sensible way that maximises the country's chance of having a good Prison Service. We are not helped sometimes by the fact that people leave unexpectedly, but we must always have a governor in position who is capable of doing the job and has the necessary track record. It is a job that you have to grow people into. I could slow down movement by making the Governor of Wandsworth a brand new governor and saying, "Stay there for 10 years", but it would be running a very big risk for the very first time to take on a large establishment with all the complexities of operational management without that sort of experience.

Q653 Chairman: Come on, Mr Wheatley, no one is suggesting 10 years but one is saying that if you have this high turnover of governors, no other management task I know of in the private or public sector allows you to get a hold on an establishment and run it. One of the real downs if you do have a constantly moving management is that somebody else is running the prison.
Mr Wheatley: That is very much not the case. Governors have a better grip of prisons than certainly at any time in my career, hence the improved performance. That is simply demonstrated in the performance we are achieving. You cannot achieve results on escapes, on riots, on hitting targets and on reducing offending behaviour without having a grip of establishments.

Q654 Chairman: I did not say that no one had a grip on them.
Mr Wheatley: The grip is a management grip. I can assure you that, if there were not a management grip, we would not be hitting those targets and we would not be looking at the sort of education figures that we are looking at today, nearly 60,000—and I think probably at the end of the year over 60,000—basic skills qualifications gained. We are delivering. We have governors who have been in post for a

substantial period of time, so I can point to governors, if you want, who have been in post for seven years, for four years and for six years. There are other governors who have moved more quickly but it is being done in a planned way, though sometimes in response to things that were not immediately foreseen.

Q655 Mr Turner: Why does health work and education not in prisons?
Mr Wheatley: Both work.

Q656 Mr Turner: Why does health work better then?
Mr Wheatley: I do not think that is correct.

Q657 Chairman: I think Andrew is asking, why does the transfer to the Department of Health seem to have succeeded much better in health compared to education?
Mr Narey: Chairman, I think I would challenge that. The fact is that the transfer to health is more embedded. We started the transfer at an earlier stage. I should say that, at an official level, these transfers were both initiated from us in the Prison Service. When I was Director General, I read the rules, I think quite correctly, and thought that, in terms of investment, it would be rather better for prison health and prison education if the budgets were coming from Health and Education rather than from the Home Office. We started earlier with health. I think education is working very well. I am not complacent and I hope we have not conveyed that today, but I think that some of the things we are achieving with some of the people who have been unteachable and uneducatible elsewhere are quite remarkable. I am sure you must have seen that in your visits to the three prisons on your patch. We are achieving things with people that would never ever have been achieved outside. We have, with health, a rule of thumb. We say, "Are we providing healthcare which is equivalent to what somebody would get outside?" and we believe, with some exceptions, we are close to achieving that. In education, we are providing more than anyone can get outside because education outside for many of the young people we lock up just does not exist at all.

Q658 Mr Turner: You may not be complacent but I have to say that you are not convincing either because, even in the three prisons in my constituency, there is huge variety in the quality of education and training, as far as I can see, that is undertaken. Colleagues may have a different view on that but that is my view. One of the things that slightly worries me is that we have these different groups of people responsible in the same institution for the education and training process and education is different from health to the extent that, for the most part, the provision of health services as a specialist service is of a very different level from the provision of education. Prison officers can train in some vocational subject; prison instructors can be employed for those purposes. On the whole, prison officers cannot, although perhaps they can, I do not know, administer drugs, they cannot nurse and they cannot be doctors. My question is, how are you going to protect the position of the prison officers to ensure that they continue to have and develop a better working relationship with the inmates at the same time as improving the quality of training and so on that is available to all?
Mr Narey: Mr Wheatley may want to say something about training. I think the improvements we have been making in health and education, with the help of the Department of Health, the NHS and with the DfES have been substantial. I am sorry that I have not convinced you of that and I will look at the figures for your three prisons and I am confident that I will be able to demonstrate to you that significant qualifications have been achieved by people there that certainly would not have been achieved outside. This does mean a transition of responsibility. We have, in healthcare, moved from the position where we trained prison officers essentially as first-aiders to where we have qualified nurses in every establishment and healthcare has improved and we are giving compensatory healthcare in the way that we give compensatory education. Alongside that, I think the job of prison officers, both in Phil's sector, the public sector, and the private sector has been enriched, not diminished, because prison officers see the people they look after engaged in fruitful activity. They see them in education, on drug treatment and on cognitive skills programmes and we have embedded relationships as a very big part of the prison experience. We have a thing which has become known as the Decency Agenda which, when Phil and I worked together in prisons, we launched together and the essential decency and humanity of prisons is vastly improved. I have not been to a prison anywhere abroad—and I have visited very many prisons though I have not been to Finland and Norway but I might having read your evidence—under the pressures we are under where there is a greater level of humanity combined with what is now, under Phil's leadership, quite outstanding security.

Q659 Chairman: One thing that we ought to know before we move over this section is when the LSCs will take over.
Ms Pember: They are working jointly with us from January 2005 on three areas and, by 2006, across the country.

Q660 Chairman: When will the new contract range have been put in place?
Ms Pember: We are evidencing work from the prototypes to see if we can have a different type of contract arrangement and we will look at which one is most appropriate and that is what we will run out in 2006.

Q661 Chairman: Where are the prototypes being rolled out?
Ms Pember: The prototypes are being rolled out in the North East, North West and the South West.
Chairman: We must press on with education provision.

Q662 Valerie Davey: In Bristol at the moment, we are just having the assessment of a scheme for targeting prolific offenders and, in that case, probation, police and the prison have come together, magnificently I believe, to target the 20% of offenders who are causing 80% of the crime and, in that way, really homing in on individual prisoners. I would extrapolate perhaps from the conversation but, in health, we are looking at individuals, so whether they are diabetic or whether they have a drugs problem or whatever, and perhaps in education we should be doing that more to look at whether a younger or older person is still dyslexic and has all those problems or whether they have very special needs. My first question is to Susan: in that first assessment, do you actually have people sufficiently qualified across the whole country to be doing an assessment at the level and in the depth that is necessary?
Ms Pember: That is one of our goals. We have trained up people right across the country now to do early screening in order that they can identify straightaway if somebody has a literacy or numeracy problem. Then we have instituted something that we call a diagnostic assessment to see how severe their problem is and, from that, you can lead off a pathway to see whether they are dyslexic or they have some other form of specific learning difficulty. Our goal is to make sure that there are people trained up in each of the services or they can signpost to somebody who can do that for them and, once we have that individual diagnostic assessment of the individual, it transfers with them and we have an individual learning plan that goes with them and exactly what you were talking about with the joint project between probation and the police, we would want the learning and skills council to be in that from day one in order that we can actually help that individual and that is the learning plan that goes with them.

Q663 Valerie Davey: So, under the new contracts, whenever they are finally let, that initial assessment would be a crucial element of it.
Ms Pember: Yes.

Q664 Valerie Davey: Secondly, the facility to follow through for those individuals to meet their special needs where they are seen.
Ms Pember: Yes.

Q665 Valerie Davey: Martin mentioned the additional funding which has come into the system which you are obviously pleased about. How have you prioritised the spending of that money within the education development?
Mr Narey: When the money began to arrive in 1998, we agreed with ministers an educational strategy for prisons with an emphasis on basic skills and essentially we put almost all the new money into basic skills provision and we redirected some of the money which had been spent elsewhere on education also into basic skills because the primary mover on this—and I do not know whether you have seen the survey—is Alan Wells of the Basic Skills Agency who was very much a friend and supporter to us in that period told us that, from a survey carried out by the Basic Skills Agency, the overwhelming problem in the prison population was that two thirds of them were essentially ineligible for about 97% of jobs advertised in job centres. So, we do other things as well, as I mentioned at the beginning—sometimes people believe that we do nothing and that is not the case—but, overwhelmingly, we concentrate on the barriers to employability, so basic skills primarily.

Q666 Valerie Davey: Is the money that we are talking about all revenue or is there a capital element or is that separate?
Mr Narey: The figures I reported to you for adult offenders were entirely resource money. There has been also significant capital investment in the establishment of facilities for children. Most of them have had, for example, new educational blocks and we had a lot of money from the capital investment fund to improve education facilities in some adult prisons as well

Q667 Valerie Davey: Is the revenue—and let us concentrate on the revenue—leading to more prisoners getting education or is it leading to the depth of quality which some prisoners on basic skills really need? What is happening? Where is it going?
Mr Narey: It is leading to both as demonstrated by the statistics which I quoted you. There are very many more individuals in education: 39% of prisoners at the moment have some sort of participation in education. I would estimate that, five or seven years ago, that would have been in single figures. Also, the depth of education is much more. Before I did Phil's job, before I became Director General, I was responsible for education on the Prisons Board and, in 1997–98 when I looked at education, I found that we had hardly any outputs at all in terms of making any effect on individuals. There were still quite a few people in education but most of that education was largely recreational and, in terms of doing anything to change their life chances, there were hardly any. We now have these huge amount of progress and very significant levels of qualification in prison.

Q668 Valerie Davey: One of the ways that would take this forward massively would be if prisoners could use the Internet. We did find in Norway that, for the first time, they had found a way of screening in order that it was educational provision by the network. Are we going to be able to develop through the Internet levels in attainments of education which would obviously take this forward amazingly for many, many prisoners?
Mr Narey: The short answer to that is "yes". We are already giving prisoners access to the Internet in some establishments. We are being very, very careful. Both Phil and I will have truncated careers if we have individuals in prison who are getting access to paedophilia and matters such as that and also have truncated careers if victims are finding themselves being contacted through the net. So, we are taking it very carefully. A number of

establishments have already done this and work which we are doing in partnership with the DfES I am confident will open up access to limited sites in a controlled way. I can tell you that the Home Secretary will want to be very convinced that we can be absolutely sure that the firewalls and everything that we can put in can work. If anyone has had the experience that I have of a 15-year old at home, you will notice how people can get round things unless you are really sophisticated and we must be very, very careful.

Q669 Chairman: There is good international experience now in the United States, Norway and other places that is showing that it can be done.
Mr Narey: Indeed and we have not been ignoring it. Until very recently, with Learn Direct, we used the Learn Direct Intranet, CD-based learning, and that has been of variable success but I think it is accepted that we need to go further though I just want to be absolutely sure and Phil and I will want to convince the Home Secretary that this is not going to cause public embarrassment.
Valerie Davey: I am sure this Committee would endorse everything you have said provided we know that there is also at the same time exploration of what will be for many people in the future, I am sure, something of very great value.

Q670 Mr Chaytor: Just returning to the question of the emphasis on basic skills training, one of the Government's new policies for adult skills as a whole is the Level 2 entitlement which will give free tuition for Level 2 courses for all adults who do not have it. What are the implications of that for prisoner education? Will offenders both within prisons and on release be eligible for Level 2 entitlement and what are the implications for your budgets if the whole budget has been skewed towards basic skills training over the last few years?
Ms Pember: The Level 2 has been piloted in two geographical areas of the learning skills council as we speak and it is an expectation that it will be rolled out next year and that is exactly what the new service has to cover especially for those who are going to serve their sentence in the community because they will be entitled to free Level 2 training and that is the funding that Martin was saying that offenders need to get access to. So, yes, there will be a priority group there. For the work that we have been doing on basic skills, we have been getting ready for the launch of the Level 2 entitlement because if you are an individual who has luggage of the past about school, you actually do not really want to do basic skills. We have had to do a great deal of persuasion nationally in prisons and outside of prisons for people to take the basic skills tuition up but they do actually want to get Level 2 qualification. So, the work that we have been doing is to secure materials that embed literacy and numeracy in the level 2 activity in order that it is cost effective because you are doing the two at once. However, it does mean more training for the individuals who are actually teaching this activity and that is the work that we have to do for the future.

Q671 Chairman: That is one of the problems though, is it not? I know that you are very highly respected people in this field and we are learning a great deal from this, but what worries me about some of the answers we are getting is that they do not really square with the rest of the evidence we have had. You have read some of the transcripts presumably. Some of the evidence we have been given from real prisons, governors in prisons and people working in prisons, say that the situation is much less coherent and less satisfactory than you seem to be suggesting and they say they are really struggling. One of the things they are struggling with is in regard to the quality of competencies available to them in a prison. I think, Martin, it was you who cut down the training period for a prison officer to something like six or seven weeks. In the Scandinavian countries we visited, it is a year. You have a churn of prison officers which is horrific.
Mr Narey: No, we certainly do not, Chairman.

Q672 Chairman: Just wait a minute. That is what we hear. There is low-level qualification amongst prison officers themselves. So, to be able to train them up to be part of a learning environment seems to be challenging. Secondly, the people running the workshops are much lower educated then we would hope they would be. Thirdly, even the teachers themselves have pretty rusty skills that need upgrading. That is what we are hearing. The three of you seem to be saying, "Chairman and Committee, come on, don't believe all those voices, everything is all right." Is that not what you are saying?
Mr Narey: Chairman, the reason I made the opening statement that I did was because I did spend last night reading some of the transcripts and some of them frankly horrified me. I thought they were misleading.

Q673 Chairman: And even your friends.
Mr Narey: I do not mind saying publicly that I was horrified by what one of them, someone who I greatly admire, Mike Newell, the Governor of Durham, who has been a friend of mine for 20 years, had to say and I think he is quite wrong. I would simply urge you to speak to as many governors as possible. I am delighted that you are going to visit a prison and I would urge you to call governors at random. Governors are committed to this and they have a grip on this. We could not possibly be producing the qualifications that we are if this were not being taken seriously.

Q674 Chairman: Martin, come back to that one thing: do you really think that six/seven weeks of training for a prison officer is enough, with no qualifications?
Mr Narey: This is Mr Wheatley's business now. I am not backing out and I will happily come back to it but I should let Phil speak to this.
Mr Wheatley: It is actually eight weeks of training; it used to be 11 weeks of training. The part of training we removed was primarily the fitness training because we used to do lots of PE with staff and drill which we seemed at one point to think was

good for prison officers. Actually, because we are recruiting people following a fitness test, we know they are fit and we do not need to make them super fit just in training, it does not make any sense, and we thought that the drill added nothing to the learning and we were able to take those things out and leave the real training of a prison officer intact without reducing any of that training. It is eight weeks of training; it is not as long as they do in Scandinavia but it gives prison officers the basics of training to take out in order that they can begin to do their job and a great deal of the learning is intended to be done on the job. It is part of the probation period and further training is done with prison officers. On average, we are doing about six days of training per member of staff and we keep on trying to improve the skills of our staff.

Q675 Chairman: There are those who have said to us, "Look, they are having a short training period and they never get any more training except training in restraint".
Mr Wheatley: That simply is not true. You are right, they do get training in restraint and it is very important that they do, actually.

Q676 Chairman: But nothing else?
Mr Wheatley: They get training in suicide, they get training in diversity, they get training for specific jobs for staff. If they go into reception and into observation and classification work, they get trained for that. This is not to say that every prison officer is spending most of their time in training but there is further training for staff and there has to be to make the prisons work. Similarly, when somebody says there is a high resignation rate, actually, there is a 2.2% resignation rate for reasons other than retirement in prison officers. That is tremendously low. It is a problem to me sometimes that actually the rate at which staff churn, to use that phrase again, is very low which makes coping with any budget reductions difficult because actually staff do not leave in very large numbers. So, the idea that we have an enormous churn of prison officers, heaven knows where that came from but it is not reality. It has been—and I have the figures in front of me—round about 2.2% since March 2002 which is where my figures go back to. It has been as low as 2.1% and no higher than 2.2%, which is what it currently is.

Q677 Chairman: That is very interesting compared to the other information we have been given.
Mr Wheatley: I suspect that you have not been told the truth.
Chairman: We will now move on to key performance targets.

Q678 Paul Holmes: In a way, it is carrying on from the theme we have just been talking about regarding the possible gaps between perception and reality between the official figures and what is actually going on. People would say that performance targets can be very useful for driving up performance and for measuring success and people would also say that there can be quite a false image of what is happening as well. As somebody who was a teacher for a long time, I can give you chapter and verse on how schools manipulate information in order that they hit the targets and I was speaking to somebody yesterday who works in the Accident & Emergency Department at my local hospital who was complaining about the very distorting effect of the four hour waiting list target on A&E provision. I think there is a set of examples like that from the Prison Service. We have heard a great deal from Phil and Martin regarding the success rates they have. They are getting more prisoners into education through basic skills etcetera, etcetera. The Prison Reform Trust has said that the achievement of targets in basic skills masks very significant shortcomings and the opportunities for learning available to all prisoners across the board. How do you reconcile that?
Mr Narey: I read the evidence from Juliet Lyon and I am afraid that I think it was partial. She did not tell you about the numbers of students doing Open University work; she did not tell you the number of people doing distance learning funded through the Prison Education Trust which we fund in the first place; she did not mention people on day release. It is simply not the case that this is only basic skills. It is primarily basic skills because it is the greatest challenge we face but there is a great deal of other education as well. I do not know if any of you ever get to see the annual Koestler event launched recently at Wormwood Scrubs to which I went a few weeks ago. That is just a representation of what prisoners are achieving in the arts. We have 20 writer-in-residence schemes. There is a great deal more than basic skills. It is true and we are not ashamed to say that basic skills remains a priority because that is the best possible way that we might reduce criminality.

Q679 Paul Holmes: Is it still reaching the majority. I think Phil was saying earlier on that there is no problem about prisoners getting access to education, there is no problem about them being able to earn more money for phone cards by doing work rather than undergoing education and yet we have been told, both in the prisons we visited and by evidence we have been given, that there are actually big barriers to prisoners. The money factor is a big barrier because, if it is the only source of money for cigarettes and phone cards, they will go and do the work, as boring and repetitive as it is, that pays them slightly more. We have heard that a number of prisoners cannot get access to education courses because there are not the spaces for them. Martin, you yourself said that about 35% are in education which means that 65% are not.
Mr Wheatley: I certainly would not claim that every prisoner who wants to have education will have as much education as they would like to have. What we have is much greater resources than we used to have, primarily targeted on basic skills, which we are trying to make sure that we use to maximum effect. We are certainly well short of resourcing for every

prisoner who wanted to do education and many do for the reasons I set out earlier and they are not bad reasons, prisoners want to improve themselves in prison. If we set out to achieve that, that would cost the country a great deal more money and, at the moment, that is not being allocated to us in that way. I think trying to hit a standard in which we met absolutely the express needs of every prisoner would be quite difficult to defend. There will be some prisoners who have basic skills problems who are not motivated to attack those problems as I think we have brought out already and you have to be motivated to attack those problems. We are filling the educational places for which we have funding for people who have skills deficits with which we are managing to deal. I am not trying to say that this is perfection but I am saying that we are using the resources to good effect to do what we are meant to be doing and the results show that 60,000 basic skills qualifications this year will be a substantial improvement on the previous year. It is pretty good going. It is a large percentage of the Government's overall target. I think we are using the resources to good effect, not that governors are not finding the role difficult as they cope with lots of pressures on them and not that prisoners are getting everything that they want because they are not.

Q680 Paul Holmes: There was a recently published report from Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate which said that although the *Skills for Life* initiative had been highly successful in increasing the number of students doing various types of basic skills and raising the profile of that area of learning, they said there needed to be much sharper focus on the quality. So, you are ticking the box for numbers but the report said that the quality needs improving.

Mr Wheatley: I think that, for the public sector prison service, that is right. We need to work on quality. The Adult Learning Inspectorate work is an important part on helping us to work on quality. The heads of learning and skills have gone in specifically to help us to do that and the re-tendering process that we will go through as LSCs take on that responsibility will also give us another chance to build quality into the contract in the way that it is not built into the current contracts. So, it is perfectly accurate that that is what we should be doing and that is what we are trying to do.

Mr Narey: It would be very easy just to measure bodies in education, that is very easy to manipulate. We are being measured by hard outcomes. Phil holds his governors to account for getting prisoners with qualifications; I hold Phil to account and I hold the private sector prisons to account. This is hard outputs and we could not be doing that if we were not doing something right. We all acknowledge that the quality could be much improved. I not infrequently visit a prison and believe that the tutors who we are getting from a particular college are not exactly the pick of the bunch and we do need to address that and improve that, but I think we are doing something right otherwise we would not be getting the outputs that we are.

Q681 Paul Holmes: The Independent Monitoring Board has said that you are ticking the boxes for basic skills and basic skills are essential for employment but they are not sufficient in themselves because particularly the prisoners would then need a lot more help in life skills and the motivation to apply for jobs and the higher level skills that are needed for any decent job in the job market now and we have seen again the icing on the cake examples like the Transco training information for gas fitters, but that is the tip of the iceberg. So, is it enough just to tick the box for basic skills or do we need to be having a lot more than that?

Mr Narey: Certainly not and the primary challenge, and the primary challenge for me leading this new organisation, is to make sure that the gains made on education in prison are built on when people go out and we do very badly on that. That is much my greatest worry. It is hard to get offenders in the community to attend basic skills. It is much more difficult to motivate them and retaining them and building on what has been achieved in prison is a huge challenge and I think that is the key to improvement. Basic skills are where it begins. I know David Sherlock spoke to you—he has been a great friend to both Phil and myself throughout this and has been very, very supportive—and he said to us, "In terms of addressing the main problems that your offenders have, you should continue to concentrate on basic skills".

Q682 Paul Holmes: I have a question regarding following up when they leave prison but, just before I ask that, I do have another very quick point. We heard examples of a very crude way of a tick box culture having an effect in that you go into some prisons and they would actually advertise key performance target classes and you would ask the prisoners, "What are you learning here?" and they would say, "We're learning key performance targets" and they were not really making a connection or the emphasis was on ticking the target box, it was not actually on the educational process.

Mr Narey: I have never heard that. Phil and I were at Wandsworth a fortnight ago and at Hindley last week and we both spent quite a long time in education there and I saw a number of young people who knew exactly what they were doing. They did not much enjoy it, they were not exactly motivated. One of the reasons why we will always have relatively small class sizes is that you cannot teach 20 people who have never been to school in a single room. You have to have class sizes sometimes of six or eight. I saw a great deal of learning going on. There is nothing to hide here and I urge you to believe that we do not think all is perfect but I would urge you to visit as many places as you want and speak to as many governors as you want, not just the Chair of the Prison Governors Association, and I think you will find a real commitment right down the Prison Service which, frankly, I wish I could yet say I had replicated in the Probation Service and, ironically, I am finding that a greater challenge than I did with the Prison Service.

Chairman: We will be coming to that in a minute.

Q683 Paul Holmes: My final question, which I touched on in my first question near the start of the session, is, you just said a few minutes ago that you would need to look more at what happens after they go out of prison and I asked you right at the start about you saying, okay, we have met the Home Office target for getting 31,500 prisoners into employment, training or education outcomes on release, but we have heard evidence to query how true that is because what you are basing that on is a questionnaire that you give prisoners before they are released and they say, "Oh, yes, I am going for an interview" and "I am going for a job", but you have no idea in effect whether that interview actually becomes a job or whether that job lasts for more than week, 10 weeks or 20 weeks. You do not know what the actual outcome is, it is just a questionnaire in which prisoners say, "Yes, I am going to do this when I am released" and you do not know what the quality is. The Adult Learning Inspectorate has said that the targets should relate to employment and reducing re-offending rather than just being a tick box where they are saying that, yes, they are going for a job interview, but you need to be able to measure and target whether they are actually reducing re-offending and whether they are going to sustain employment.

Mr Narey: I have to admit, though it is not very fashionable at the moment, that I am great fan of targets. Targets change organisations; they send messages to your workforce about what you want to do. If you look at the targets which Phil and I inherited as Director General and Deputy Director General when we started working together in 1999, you would see targets which concentrated almost entirely on ordering, control and security. Phil now has targets to which I hold him to account which cover those things but also cover getting people into employment, reducing their use of drugs, getting people into accommodation, improving their education and improving their cognitive skills and the Prison Service has changed accordingly. So, we are doing much more than that and overall the thing that underpins it, all the targets to which the Home Secretary holds me personally responsible, is to reduce re-offending by 5% based on people leaving prison in 2002 and in the longer term by 10% and that is what all this adds up to and what it is for.

Chairman: I have two patient colleagues who want to get their section of questions in. Work, pay and employers.

Q684 Mr Pollard: Martin, you mentioned earlier that kids you have seen eventually in your prisons have been out of education since they were 12, generally excluded. It seems to me that we should be doing much more positive pro-active things well before they get to become guests of your establishments. It would be initially very expensive to do that but, in the long term, perhaps much, much cheaper. Are you talking to the Home Secretary and to Charles Clarke about that very issue?

Mr Narey: Certainly. Over a long time, the Department for Education knows of our concerns about exclusion and has been doing a great deal to address that. I should say that I have great sympathy with heads. My kids have left school now but it is relatively recently that I was shopping around for which school my kids would go to and headmasters sell the schools on their exclusion policy and it is very attractive. If I worried about my son who is a little small for his age getting beaten up, I would be greatly reassured by a head who said, "Anyone who touches him will be thrown out". The fact is that 13,000 or so people a year, a worrying proportion of them young black men, are being excluded from school and a much greater number are being informally excluded—and that is what very much I get from visiting youth offending teams—and it is a time bomb which we inherit. Of course, I would much rather that it was not happening but it is happening and we have to deal with realities and we have to try and do what we can.

Q685 Mr Pollard: What needs to happen to enable all prisons to take a joined-up approach to work and education and training opportunities?

Mr Narey: Do you want me or Mr Wheatley to answer that?

Mr Pollard: Either of you.

Q686 Chairman: Joining-up does run as a theme, so we would be grateful for an answer to this.

Mr Wheatley: The key to the joining-up is in fact offender management which is what the National Offender Management Service has at its heart. Actually, what you have to do—and I think one of the members of the Committee referred to it—is take somebody, work out what the things are that are wrong with them and then, as far as resources allow, try to then do what we can in prison, linking through to the outside, to deal with those problems and that is how the joining-up should be achieved. So, as we move into working as part of a service that has offender management at its core, that is how I think we make those links, by making offender management the way in which we run establishments. So, you are looking at what the needs of the offenders are, what we can stack up to cope with those needs, what the best order is in which to do them and then how to adjust the things that we learn about offenders during the period we have them in custody. So, if somebody has a positive drugs test while they are inside, we will have to adjust to take account of the fact that something we were doing was not working. I think that joining up is best achieved in that way. It is also achieved by having a senior management team that owns the whole of the aims of the prison and the targets of the prison, and I think that actually the importance of the head of learning and skills cannot be underestimated in this because previously there was not a champion for education on the senior management team. The person who was most qualified in educational terms was usually the manger in the establishment who was actually the contractor's staff and I think that we did miss a trick in the Prison Service as we moved

to contracting as opposed to delivering direct in not putting somebody in to be responsible for the management with skills and knowledge about what could be achieved in education. So, I think that the head of learning and skills post in enabling education now to punch its weight as part of the team to make sure that we do integrate things, and they do need integrating because quite a lot of education can be done not in education but in places of employment, on the wings and as part of other things. I can think of a particular example that I saw at Onley where I saw young men, over 18s, in a workshop making concrete blocks. Not the most exciting of jobs but they liked it because it was big, strong men's work as they saw it and it involved using dumper trucks and a forklift truck and things that give you skills that are actually very employable skills outside. The instructors who were doing that were also doing a basic education class as part of the work they were doing and that played back into calculating things, recording stuff that they had made and you had the whole integration very neatly. We should be doing more of that and trying to make sure we do that and head of learning skills is a key part of that and a concerted senior management team built round, as we move into the future of the National Offender Management Service, carefully planning for offenders in order that we do our best to reduce the risks they present.

Q687 Mr Pollard: You mentioned the head of learning and skills. A very old friend of Mr Narey told us quite recently that the head of learning and skills in his prison was not part of the senior management team. If education is so important and so crucial, why was that person not represented on the senior management team in order that it gave the clear view to one and all that education was at the core of your activities?
Mr Wheatley: I must admit that I agree. I think that the head of learning and skills should be on the senior management team.

Q688 Chairman: The Governor of Durham said that he cannot control the contract, he cannot control the education, so why should that person be on the management team.
Mr Narey: Chairman, he certainly can control education.

Q689 Chairman: You read the transcript and that is what he said, is it not?
Mr Narey: Yes, that is what he said and, as I explained, I am dismayed by what he said and I am not quite sure why he should say that. Mike Newell is very proud of his prison; he has been a very fine governor of Durham and he has achieved a great deal.

Q690 Mr Pollard: You say that he has been.
Mr Narey: He has been a very fine governor of Durham and has achieved a great deal; he is very proud of what he has achieved. I have recently been round Durham with him and been round education and have seen the things that he has been doing and, in very, very difficult circumstances in one of the most overcrowded prisons, and he has been doing a good job. I barely recognised anything of what he said to you and certainly I shall be taking it up with him.

Q691 Mr Pollard: You talk about NOMS being the coordinating body. We were told earlier that, apart from Martin, there are 10 other people doing this throughout the country. How is that going to be affected if there is a man, a boy and a dog doing this, no matter how good the man is?
Mr Narey: I promise you that is not the case, Mr Pollard. I have the resources of prison and probation. That is one thing that I cannot complain about either when I was doing Phil's job or doing this job in terms of the resources I have been given. I would like much more obviously but I have done pretty well. We have 64,000 staff all being brought together into this organisation. At the moment, we are still running the organisations and Phil is still Director General of Prisons and indeed will remain so and I have a Director General of Probation and we are running them as separate services. The work to do to bring them together, to introduce regional offender managers who will hold the budgets for prisons and probation in their areas, is only just under way. It is going to mean a very, very large change. It is a change which we are taking steadily. I cannot possibly put at risk the performance improvements that we have had. I think one of the greatest achievements that Phil has made as DDG and DG is that he has taken prisons, for months at a time, off the front page of the papers and the Service has been allowed to prosper because of that. We are taking the organisation steadily but it will make a dramatic change and the whole purpose of the organisation is to bring together that coherent management of offenders and manage them as individuals in and out of custody.

Q692 Mr Pollard: What opportunities are there for prisoners to get paid real wages in order that they have the dignity that goes along with that, perhaps sending money across to their families? I appreciate all that you said earlier about the low skills, low levels and all that.
Mr Narey: Phil may want to comment but one of the things which amused me when I read the Prison Reform Trust evidence which talked about the need to pay people was that, separately and quite rightly, the Prison Reform Trust is very keen for the number of experiments that we have around the Prison Estate in public and private prisons where we do pay prisoners real wages and, as a condition of that, they have to save money for their release. There are quite a number of these real pay schemes, some of their wages are sent to Victims' Support. There are some real difficulties with what we would really like to do which is for them to support their dependants on the outside because of the effect on benefits. We are doing a number of these things but of course, in doing that, in giving people real work and real money, perhaps £60 a week to work in an industrial production workshop, then we are providing, it

would be argued, a disincentive to going into education. I share Phil's view. I have been more than once to every prison in the country and I have never been stopped by a prisoner who has said to me that wages are preventing him from wanting to go into education.

Q693 Chairman: Just on NOMS for a moment, what we are hearing is that it is a wonderful idea, wonderful aspiration again, but that it has been torpedoed. The Probation Service, aided and abetted by 130 Members of Parliament signing an Early Day Motion, has frightened the Government totally and they have really backtracked very, very fast on NOMS. NOMS, as Kerry said, is you and 10 others and not going very fast because you cannot get the Probation Service to cooperate. People are saying that you are dead in the water, Martin! Are you or not?
Mr Narey: I am certainly not dead in the water and I can promise you that the Probation Service does not believe that. I can tell you that, three Saturdays ago at the NAPO Conference, they did not think that NAPO was dead in the water, they were still very, very nervous about it. NAPO hates the concept of the National Offender Management Service primarily because one of the things we will introduce is greater contestability. My experience in leading prisons and in this job is that injecting contestability into public services hugely improves the effectiveness of those public services. Contestability in prisons has produced 12 shortly to be 13 very good private prisons and has allowed Phil to drive up standards in public sector prisons. I now want to do that with probation. I think I can make more effective use of the money we spend on offenders in the community if there is some competition. I stress competition, not privatisation, competition. NAPO hates that but NOMS is very much up and running and, in some areas, particularly in sentencing, we are making some very, very encouraging progress. I spent a great deal of my time in the first few months as Chief Executive speaking to sentencers, some 300 of them just last week, trying to get home to them what the Home Secretary and the Government's message is about sentencing, which is not "bang up everybody", it is about locking up dangerous offenders, often for longer, but, wherever possible, using community punishments for minor offenders and that is beginning to pay off. The prison population is still very high but it is 5,000 smaller than statistical projections suggested it would be last year. That and the development of offender management are coming along steadily but very well and it is certainly not dead in the water. NOMS is here, it is a reality and some members of the Probation Service will have to change.

Q694 Jeff Ennis: Paul Goggins, the Prison Minister, recently described one of the main problems with the system as being the high number of short-term prisoners in the system with whom very little can be done, to which we referred to some extent earlier. He then went on to say that what was needed was robust alternatives to prison for short-term prisoners in order that they are dealt with more effectively in the community. Is he right and what would be the robust alternatives?
Mr Narey: He is absolutely right. He is my minister! I agree with every word of that. There has been the most astonishing change in sentencing policy in the last 10 years. First-time offenders did not used to go to prison when they committed minor offences. In 2002, the last year for which we have full figures, 3,000 individuals convicted of minor thefts—theft of a bicycle, theft from a shop, theft from a car—without a previous conviction went to prison. That is just one example of the way custody has been almost the first choice for many sentencers and we need to turn that around in order that we can use prison for what it is best for, which is for dangerous people who are going to be there for long periods. I have to pick a confidence in the Probation Service which has deteriorated somewhat. I need to convince sentencers that, if they give somebody a community punishment, it will be enforced rigorously and, if someone does not comply, they will go back to prison. That is now beginning to happen but there is always a lag between making something happen and convincing the world that it has happened and, to be almost frank, it has not yet happened at all satisfactorily in London which is still struggling. There are very different community sentences. For example, the drug testing and treatment order is not the half-hour with the Probation Service which used to characterise probation supervision—half-an-hour a week—it is now 25 hours of activity including clinical treatment in order to get people off drugs. I have been given the investment to roll out more of those sort of sentences and I believe we will be able to convince the courts that, in terms of effectiveness, they should not send to prison for short periods of time, they should leave them in the community, but with the absolute understanding that, if they mess up, if they do not take that opportunity, they will end up back in prison because they will be in breach.

Q695 Jeff Ennis: Are we able to incorporate more education into community punishment measures or do we need to do more of that sort of thing, Martin?
Mr Narey: We need to do an awful lot more. It has been very difficult to turn this around and Susan has been by my side while we have done it. I think that we have made a breakthrough and, even this year, with radically improved performance relative to last year, we will only get 8,000 basic skills qualifications from offenders in the community which, set to the 60,000 we will get in prison, is still far too few. It is more difficult. Phil has a literally captive audience and we do not have that with offenders in the community but we can do and must do much better. What we plan to do is make education absolutely at the heart of the offender experience in custody, out of custody and between the two.

Q696 Jeff Ennis: So, you are developing the strategy to achieve that.

Mr Narey: Absolutely and the targets are being pushed up year on year and it is back to Mr Holmes's point about targets. The Probation Service is in no doubt now that the real priority is education and we have made a sort of retreat from cognitive skills programmes to which I think to some extent the Probation Service had attached themselves rather too closely and believed that they were the one and only way of dealing with offenders and they are not.

Q697 Jeff Ennis: We have already mentioned some of the barriers to prison education being delivered in the prison environment such as overcrowding, the churn factor, staff shortages, *etcetera.* What progress is the Prison Service making towards overcoming the various barriers to prison education within the regime itself and I guess this question is more to Phil?
Mr Wheatley: I think the barriers are the ones you have listed.

Q698 Jeff Ennis: How do we overcome these barriers?
Mr Wheatley: We are now nearer to target staffing level than we have been at any point over the last 10 years and that is primarily because we have managed to get local recruitment to work in London. That has made the really big difference. We have also targeted the spending we have and will lift up pay by area, very targeted, and we are putting additional money into prisons to which we are having difficulty in recruiting in order to make it more attractive. Getting our staffing levels right is crucial to running prisons effectively. We are running a performance improvement programme which again is targeted on prisons which we think can be improved that gives governors the chance—this is not a stick approach—to rethink their prison and re-organise it. Prisons are very complicated interlinking organisations and, if you are going to re-sort the regime in order to make sure it delivers better, you have to alter a number of things and letting them have the time and some additional resources to do that thinking in the performance improvement process is improving a number of establishments that were not performing quite as well as we thought they could and that has proved very successful with the bottom end of that, those that we really thought were in difficulty, using a rather more robust benchmarking process which actually performance tests establishments with the possibility that, if they do not lift their performance to an adequate level, of going to private sector contract. That has proved a major incentive to get everybody to pull together to try and make sure that this establishment works. So, out of those things, we are getting improvements. That is not to say that it is perfection. If I ever thought I had perfection in every prison, I should probably be sacked at that point because I would be deluding myself. I think we have a steady process of improvement and part of the improvement is making sure that we use the educational spend better and we integrate regimes better, which comes back to your question. So, we can actually sentence plan at the moment and then, later on, I think offender plan in order that we are thinking through to the outside in a more organised way.

Q699 Chairman: Why, when you were talking about the barriers with Jeff Ennis just now, did you not mention drugs? We are finding a great deal of reluctance to talk about drugs in prison and whether they are a barrier to the education and training process in prison. That was the first thing that the Norwegians wanted to talk to us about. They said, "We have 60–70% of the people here addicted to some form of substance abuse, drugs, alcohol or whatever, and that is a very big problem". Is that not a very big problem for English prisons as well?
Mr Wheatley: It is a big problem and you have not asked about it. Of our prisoners coming into custody, we think round about 80% will have been using drugs in some form and just over 50% problematical drug use, opiate abuse. That is a number of people to detox. We are very successful at detoxing prisoners. Prisoners have to detox. Nobody can keep a street level habit going in prison. The supply reduction methods we have is that we have dogs to check visitors, there are searches of people and there is good surveillance on visits, supervision of the perimeter and all those sorts of things which do not absolutely prevent all drugs coming in but they do reduce the supply. So, the chances of keeping an opiate habit going are simply non-existent in any secure establishment and our mandatory drug testing, which is quite a good measure of the rate of drug use, suggests that opiate use turns up in about 4% of samples. That is 4% too many, but the level of opiate use has remained fairly static having dropped from an original high, as we first brought in mandatory drug testing, and it has been quite a good disincentive to prisoners to use drugs in prison. For some prisoners who are addicted, until they have got over the detox process which is relatively rapid for opiate use and actually more difficult for alcohol abuse interestingly—it is much more difficult to get people off alcohol addiction safely—for the fairly fast detox, once they are detoxed, it is not a barrier to what goes on in prison and, in most prisons—not in every prison—I can confidently say that we have drug use under control, but have not completely removed it anywhere. So, it is not a barrier to education. It is less of a problem because we have quite robust methods of dealing with it. There are some prisons that I worry about and that is primarily when somebody has found a way of getting drugs in that has got around our control mechanisms and, until we have found out what it is—is it a bent member of staff? Is it some contractor coming into the prison? Has somebody found a way of throwing things over the wall which are picked up by work parties?—and have closed that method down, then I do worry about the stability of the prison and there is a risk that too many people are thinking about drugs and not improving themselves. I am not complacent

about it. Overall, the Service's performance has got drugs to a steady level but I would like to reduce it.

Q700 Chairman: Martin, Susan and Phil, this has been a very, very good session for us. We could have gone on longer because there are so many questions we wanted to ask you. I hope that you have found it not too uncomfortable and we look forward to being in communication with you. As you go away on the tube or in a taxi, I always say, "If you think of something you should have told that darn committee", do email us, phone us or get in contact. ***Mr Narey:*** Thank you very much indeed, Chairman and members. We will do that.

Supplementary evidence submitted by Susan Pember, Department for Education and Skills

At the evidence session on Wednesday 17 November I undertook to provide further information on two issues:

— the cost of Project REX;

— A table of basic skills qualifications gained in prisons.

I think it may also be helpful if I took this opportunity to set out more clearly the latest position on our plans to improve delivery of learning and skills for offenders, working with the Learning and Skills Council. I am conscious that plans were still in development at the time Ivan Lewis sent you our memorandum in June 2004. Things have moved on considerably since then but I note that the references you have had in previous hearings have not given you a comprehensive description of our plans for the coming years.

As the Committee has heard, Ministers decided in January not to proceed with plans to re-tender the existing prison education contracts (Project REX). The main reasons for this were that wider developments—notably the imminent plans to set up a National Offender Management Service, and the relatively recent creation of the LSC network—offered the opportunity to deliver learning and skills in the context of better end to end management of interventions with offenders, and with better connection to mainstream provision. The fact that the LSC already had a partnership with the National Probation Service, to deliver learning to offenders in the community from April 2004 also meant that we could aim to build with the LSC a new service for offenders both in prison and community, rather than replicating contracts that covered prison only. The National Probation Service partnership with the LSC is already producing results; for the first time ever the probation service is exceeding their basic skills targets and 20% more qualifications have already been gained since April this year than were gained in the whole of the previous academic year.

The DfES is now working with partners towards the phased introduction of a new integrated learning and skills service for offenders in custody and the community, to build on the excellent progress in basic skills and work skills delivery that we have seen in the last year. The service will have very well developed links with that provided for mainstream post-16 learners in the community, and will be planned, funded and monitored by the Learning and Skills Council in the regions of England, in close partnership with Prison and Probation Service, YJB and Jobcentre Plus (plus others).

The key elements of the timetable are:

— most of the existing prison contracts have been extended, in order to provide stability and continuity in the transition. Contractors have been given extensions for up to three years, but have been told that it is our intention to phase them out earlier, as the LSC takes up responsibility.

— three development regions have been chosen—the North East, North West and South West. In these regions, partnerships led by the LSC will test different approaches and elements of a future integrated service, from January 2005.

— emerging lessons from such partial prototyping will allow us to finalise delivery options for the new service with a final delivery model ready for the three Development Regions to implement in August 2005. From that date, the LSC will be responsible for the planning and funding of offender learning, in prisons and in community for those under probation service supervision.

— the six remaining English Regions will commence delivery of the new, LSC-led service in August 2006—having introduced, on a progressive basis, some successfully prototyped elements of the new service from next August.

The key elements of the new service—what we might describe as the learning and skills "offer" for offenders—are set out in the Offenders' Learning Journey. This has been developed through an extensive process of consultation. Its key features are presented in the sequence an offender will experience them:

— information, advice and guidance, in a form appropriate to the individual, to support the choice of learning programme and provide continuous guidance throughout their learning to maintain commitment;

— an individual diagnostic assessment to inform the content and delivery of their learning programme;

— individual learning plans which are up-to-date, follow offenders as they move, and inform decisions both inside and outside custody;

— the best possible provision for e-learning;

— a programme which is designed to enable each person to realise their potential, to provide opportunities for personal development and a chance to change behaviour and make a more positive contribution to society.

It is important to recognise how far many key issues of concern to the OLSU, the Adult Learning Inspectorate, and the Committee—such as integration of vocational training and basic skills, targets, assessment and data transfer -are being addressed through plans to improve the service in partnership with the LSC. I hope that this information is useful and if you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to ask.

Supplementary 1

THE COST OF PROJECT REX

The PricewaterhouseCoopers Review of October 2002 cost £76,318.20. One of the options recommended by the review was a new competitive re tendering exercise—Project REX. Subsequent to the decision being made to implement REX, the cross-Government Efficiency Review, the establishment of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and the drive to reduce bureaucracy prompted ministers to agree that the original procurement exercise would not be the best option to pursue and would not go ahead in its original format. The time was right to integrate the delivery of learning and skills to offenders into mainstream activity, and to make sure as much resource as possible was released to the front line to implement it. It was decided that this would be done by reconsidering the PWC review and taking the option of incorporating offender learning and skills into the Learning and Skills Council's remit. The specifications were translated into a document that set out the requirements for the new service.

Supplementary 2

BASIC SKILLS AWARDS ACHIEVED IN PRISONS

Breakdown of Awards by Level

	April 2001–March 2002	*April 2002–March 2003*	*April 2003–March 2004*	*April 2004–October 2004*	*Total*
Entry level	3,104	9,120	13,431	12,521	38,176
Level 1	6,028	17,208	18,905	14,039	56 180
Level 2	16,168	15,190	14,181	8,941	54,480
Total	25,300	41,518	46,517	35,501	148,836

The number of awards achieved in each subject has only been recorded reliably since April 2004:

Level	*Awards*
Entry ESOL	721
Entry Literacy	3,783
Entry Numeracy	8,017
Level 1 ESOL	89
Level 1 Literacy	7,170
Level 1 Numeracy	6,780
Level 2 ESOL	34
Level 2 Literacy	5,355
Level 2 Numeracy	3,552

These figures are the number of qualifications achieved (not the number of people who achieved them). Not all of these count towards the PSA Skills for Life Target, which does not include entry Levels 1 and 2 or those achieved in Wales and counts the number of people rather than qualifications.

Achievements that count towards basic skills targets are given below. These have been accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and approved by the Secretary of State. These qualifications are mapped to the national standards for literacy and numeracy and will replace all existing awarding body qualifications in Basic Skills.

Qualifications in ESOL also contribute to targets. National qualifications will be available from 2005

Qualification	*Awarding Body*	*Levels*	*Assessment method*
Key Skills—communications	OCR, City and Guilds, Edexcel and any other accredited by QCA	1, 2	End test and portfolio of work
Key Skills—Application of Number	OCR, City and Guilds Edexcel and any other accredited by QCA	1, 2	End test and portfolio of work
English for Speakers of Other Languages—ESOL	Any award approved by QCA	All levels New qualifications available from 2005	As specified
GCSE Maths	Any awarding body accredited to offer GCSEs	A–C (2) D–G (1)	Examination
GCSE English	Any awarding body accredited to offer GCSEs	A–C (2) D–G (1)	Examination

Qualification	*Awarding Body*	*Levels*	*Assessment method*
National Literacy Test	OCR, City and Guilds, Edexcel and any other accredited by QCA	1. 2	Test
National Numeracy Test	OCR City and Guilds, Edexcel and any other accredited by OCA	1, 2	Test
Literacy	OCR, City and Guilds, Edexcel and any other accredited by QCA	Entry Level 1, 2 and 3	Varied according to qualifications
Numeracy	OCR, City and Guilds, Edexcel and any other accredited by QCA	Entry Level 1, 2 and + 3	Varied according to qualifications

3 December 2004

Supplementary memorandum submitted by Martin Narey

RESPONSE TO QUESTION, QUESTION 584 (MR GIBB)

With the introduction of NOMS, new sentencing arrangements and the new Offenders Learning and Skills Service, leaving custody needs increasingly to be seen as a transition within, not the end of, the offender's learning journey. New sentencing arrangements such as custody plus! minus and intermittent custody will see more offenders spending shorter periods in custody, with more active management of their sentences in the community. In addition, more offenders will be serving community sentences.

That is an important part of the context in which we are setting a learning and skills service that will aim to make more systematic use of individual learning plans, with more thorough assessment early in the sentence, and with offenders' learning targets better linked to their needs.

A weakness of the system at present—which we acknowledge—is the difficulty of attributing achievement of qualifications to individuals, and tracking their progress. The introduction of an offenders' learning database, (later to be linked to NOMIS) will also mean that qualifications gained by specific offenders will be recorded. Increasingly we shall be able to track the progress made by individuals at various stages.

Accordingly, we do not consider it necessary to introduce a blanket assessment of progress at the fixed point of leaving custody. Were we to do so, this form of re-assessment of learners would entail significant costs. We estimate that if 100,000 offenders were to be re-assessed for forty minutes each (an initial screening takes between 20 and 30 minutes) the cost would be around £1.3 million. This figure has been calculated on the basis of assessment being delivered in-house by existing staff in prisons and probation services. It could cost substantially more if the assessment were performed by contractors. Such a cost would be at the expense of reducing other learning and skills provision.

RESPONSE TO QUESTION 590 (MR GIBB)

The average sentence length was 12.6 months in 2003—that is for all courts, all offences (3.1 months at magistrates' courts and 26.3 months at the Crown Court). That would suggest that the average time served in prison is about 6 months (half).

2 February 2005

Monday 6 December 2004

Members present:

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Valerie Davey	Paul Holmes
Jeff Ennis	Helen Jones
Mr Nick Gibb	Mr Andrew Turner

Memorandum submitted by the Department for Education and Skills

The Skills Strategy White Paper, *"21st Century Skills—Realising Our Potential"* presents us with a unique opportunity to secure future prosperity for the country and to transform the lives of millions of people. It does this by putting employers' and individuals' needs centre stage, delivering the skills they need and providing easy access to high quality training across the full range from basic to advanced skills.

A successful strategy will bring enormous economic and social benefits to the nation and by increasing the skill levels of all, and in particular of groups traditionally under-represented in skilled employment, we will develop an inclusive society that promotes employability for all.

The Skills Needs of Offenders

In any one year, around 130,000 people are or have been in prison, with a further 200,000 supervised by the Probation Service in the community. The prison population at the time of writing is just over 74,500, including: 2,600 who are under 18; 7,500 aged 18–20; and 4,500 women. Compared to the general population, offenders have disproportionately poor skills. Many have a history of truancy or exclusion from school, and have left school with few or no formal qualifications. For example:

- almost four out of five prisoners have been temporarily or permanently excluded from school; with at least six months' education lost in nearly half of all cases;
- half of all prisoners screened on reception are at or below level 1 in reading, two-thirds in numeracy and four-fifths in writing; and
- around 60–65% of offenders screened by the National Probation Service have very poor basic skills; significantly higher than the estimated 20% of the general population with a similar learning need.

At the same time, research published by the Basic Skills Agency makes a link between repeated criminal offences and poor literacy skills.

The goals of the new Criminal Justice Act are: Punishment, rehabilitation, reparation, deterrence and reform. Learning activities can contribute to the effective management of a humane prison regime. Having a job makes re-offending much less likely, and the right education and training can make it more likely that offenders will get and maintain employment on release or whilst subject to community orders. Therefore the development of an excellent offender education service is a priority for the Government, reflected in a Manifesto commitment.

Security and practicability are obviously of great importance when dealing with offenders, particularly those in a custodial setting. But in other respects, such as learning backgrounds and lack of achievements, most offenders are not very different from many of their counterparts in the community. That is why our vision is that they too should, according to need, have access to education and training which enable them to gain the skills and qualifications they need to hold down a job and have a positive role in society. Our aim is that the content and quality of learning programmes in prisons, and the qualifications to which these lead, should increasingly be the same as those of comparable provision in the community.

The Importance of the Skills Strategy for Offenders

We believe learning and skills have a lot to offer offenders. The Government's Skills Strategy, which includes *Skills for Life,* focuses on supporting disadvantaged groups. *Skills for Life*, the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills, sets out how the Government will reach its Public Service Agreement goal of improving the basic skills of 1.5 million adults by 2007.

The Government is implementing its *Skills for Life* strategy through key delivery partners, including the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit, the Prison and Probation Services, the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, the Inspectorates, the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus and other government departments. These partners are working together closely to promote, plan, deliver, fund and inspect basic skills provision

for priority groups. One of these priority groups is offenders, whether in custody or in the community, whose poor literacy and numeracy skills are a serious obstacle to rehabilitation and the search for employment on release.

The Skills Strategy helps people develop the skills they need for employment as well as personal fulfilment. It supports learners in different ways, offering information and advice, making courses more accessible and driving up quality through Success for All, helping with costs and gaining support from employers.

It introduces a wide range of interlinked measures to remove barriers to learning and support participation for individuals, as well as re-focusing public investment in those areas of skills provision where it is most needed—for example, a universal entitlement to a first full Level 2 qualification and in specific shortage areas above Level 2. New Deal for Skills was announced by the Chancellor in his Budget of 17 March. Focusing directly on taking forward a key element of the Skills Strategy, New Deal for Skills sets out new ways of tackling both long-standing barriers between welfare and workforce development and the problem of numbers of people with no or low skills. In developing the NDfS, the needs of offenders and ex-offenders will be kept firmly in mind.

Progress so Far in Meeting Offenders' Skills Needs

Education and training can play an important role in motivating offenders and reducing re-offending. Funding for offender learning, which is jointly administered by the DfES and the Home Office, has risen from £97 million in 2003–04 to £127 million in 2004–05.

The Offenders Learning and Skills Unit in DfES co-ordinates the development and delivery of change, working in partnership with the Home Office, Prison Service, National Probation Service, Youth Justice Board, Learning and Skills Council and others.

(i) *progress in prisons*

Key achievements in prisons include:

- Prisoners achieved over 46,000 qualifications in literacy, language and numeracy in 2003–04, as well as nearly 110,000 qualifications in work-related skills which will prepare them for employment on release. These achievements exceeded national targets in both areas. The Home Office target for getting 31,500 prisoners into employment, training or education outcomes on release in 2003–04 has also been met.
- A national Quality Improvement Strategy for prisoner learning has been introduced, which embeds the requirement for annual self-assessment and three-year development plans.
- Ufi/learndirect has worked with the Department to rollout learndirect delivery in 20 prisons and in local probation services. They have also delivered online tests to prisons through mobile testing units.
- The management and organisation of learning and skills provision in prisons now has a single champion in the person of the Heads of Learning and Skills. These key senior posts enable establishments to make progress across a number of areas in which they have generally been weak:
  - bringing together colleagues from across the prison to ensure that learning opportunities are maximised in all parts of the regime;
  - ensuring that this partnership, supported by comprehensive and routine self-assessment, is reflected in three-year development plans reviewed and rolled forward annually;
  - ensuring the existence and implementation of a quality assurance framework for learning and skills in the establishment; and
  - promoting a transformational change in delivery practice which takes account of prisoners' needs and offers a wide range of methods to encourage and maintain participation.

(ii) *progress with offenders in the community*

We have recently put in place new arrangements to support improvements in the learning and skills of offenders in the community as well as those in custody. The Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit in DfES, in partnership with the National Probation Service (NPS) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), is now responsible for the learning and skills of offenders under supervision of the NPS.

This new partnership between the NPS and LSC brings together the joint expertise of both organisations and will enable the creation of a greater range of educational opportunities for offenders in the community. Exposure to such opportunities will, it is hoped, encourage offenders to explore further educational provision as well as vocational programmes. The partnership will also allow for planned progression and, as far as can be arranged, seamless transfer from education delivered under supervision, to mainstream learning and training activities. The new relationship will assist both organisations to tackle the bureaucratic and administrative hurdles that can become barriers to learning for offenders.

Improving Quality

There is a great deal to be done in terms of improving quality in the learning and skills provided in both custodial and community settings. Quality improvement remains a major focus.

We are working in partnership with the Adult Learning Inspectorate and Ofsted to address the significant weaknesses highlighted in both Chief Inspectors' Annual Reports as well as the findings of the comprehensive thematic review of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL in prisons. These reports set a useful baseline for the main strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of learning and skills in prisons and young offender institutions.

We are also working with the Inspectorates to address weaknesses in provision for offenders in the community. We are currently preparing an action plan for publication which will set out the progress we are making with the Probation Service and Learning and Skills Council, and the plans we have to improve provision for Skills for Life for offenders in the community.

The voluntary and community sector remains fully engaged in providing innovative and imaginative learning and skills programmes for offenders. For example, the Inside Out Trust continues to develop prison projects based on restorative justice principles through which prisoners learn new skills in order to provide goods and services to disadvantaged people across the world; and the Irene Taylor Trust which takes creative music projects into prisons as part of the rehabilitation and education of offenders.

In March this year we launched a strategy to improve the effectiveness of joint working between prisons and organisations in the voluntary and community sector, alongside an evaluation and monitoring guide to help both Heads of Learning and Skills and staff involved in delivery to ensure quality.

Improving Delivery in the Future

We intend to maintain the momentum in driving up offender engagement and achievement and focusing on offenders serving sentences both in custody and in the community in a more coherent way. It is important that we develop structures and initiatives which will maximise the benefits for individual offenders in terms of the learning they undertake during their sentence and beyond.

The DfES and Home Office want a service that provides all offenders, whether in custody or the community, with the learning and skills they need as individuals. In the case of offenders in custody, this needs to be done in the context of their overall sentence plan, which itself includes the goal of rehabilitation. Key features of this new service include:

- The aim should be to improve the skills of offenders and improve performance in placing offenders in sustainable employment. This will require a focus on both basic and key skills as well as vocational skills.
- The service should have the flexibility to meet individual needs, within the constraints of the sentence.
- Learning and development activities should be of the same high standard as those available for other learners.
- Continuity is crucial throughout the duration of a custodial sentence and beyond to keep learners engaged and to secure positive outcomes.
- Accountabilities, targets and rewards, inspection and performance management within prisons and probation services should emphasise the importance of learning and employability outcomes for offenders. Prison governors should be focused on prisoners achieving qualifications and entering sustainable employment.
- Continuity and coherence in sharing information and transferring records should enable the whole system to focus on the offender.
- Offenders should have access to information, advice and guidance.
- The best possible provision for e-learning and effective use of information and communication technologies should be offered consistent with security and the protection of the public.

We are developing a new approach to delivery, to replace the current contracts for prison learning and skills services, in order to make a reality of the more flexible, individually-focused offender education service we need. Greater involvement of the Learning and Skills Council through their new regional infrastructure, and the creation of a National Offender Management Service with regional offender managers, open up possibilities for developing new models of partnership and delivery. NOMS offers an integrated approach to the custodial and non-custodial aspects of a sentence, enhancing continuity which will become increasingly important under new sentencing arrangements. The LSC offers a single channel for planning, commissioning, funding and overseeing post-16 learning delivery.

The North East, North West and South West regions of England have been selected to develop and test out the most effective forms of delivery partnership, starting from the autumn of 2004. There will be a strong focus on achieving continuity of learning during a sentence and beyond it. Our initial thinking is that the

regional level should set the main framework for delivery, with some provision offered at national level as appropriate. The lessons from this activity will inform comprehensive proposals for a national delivery framework for the Offenders Learning and Skills Service.

Supplementary Information

Assessment of prisoners' needs on conviction

Early and effective assessment of need is essential if prison and probation services are to identify and respond to an offenders individual learning needs. The Prison Service Order governing the delivery and management of induction processes for prisoners entering custodial sentences (PSO 0550) states that "attendance on education programmes must be planned as a result of a needs assessment and must be part of an integrated programme of regime activities".

The goal of the OLSU is increasingly to introduce national approaches and standards into prisons. That means building capacity for comprehensive screening, initial assessment and diagnostic assessment, which then feeds into an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) recording learning and other goals and progress against them.

At present, practice varies across the estate. Our aim is to reach a position where assessments happen as a matter of course, with ILPs firmly embedded in the sentence planning process.

Facilitating a "learning journey" for individual offenders is the focus for a new integrated delivery service for offender learning and skills on which developmental work is shortly to begin in three regions—the North West, North East and South West of England. Specifications for this future service have been developed and are being refined through consultation and testing in the three development regions.

Meanwhile, Individual Learning Plans are being piloted in juvenile custodial facilities through the PLUS literacy programme with capital investment in local prisons focusing on capacity building where it is most needed, ie where prisoners are first received into custody.

The effectiveness of local contracting arrangements

Current contracts have been focused on purchasing inputs rather than outputs, which has made it difficult to assess value for money, and they do not encourage innovation. Although we are extending the contracts while we develop the new arrangements, the Prison Service is providing pro-active management to establishments, including training for Heads of Learning and Skills in contract management and agreeing corrective action plans with the establishment where necessary. This will ensure that we introduce as much improvement in quality as is possible in advance of the introduction of new arrangements for delivery.

Provision of appropriate training facilities within prisons

Government is clear that the primary focus of training for prisoners should be to prepare them effectively for resettlement. With this in mind, we are committed to bringing training provision into greater alignment with industry standards and ensuring that it equips prisoners with the range of skills they need to enhance their employability on release.

We are looking to Heads of Learning and Skills to drive forward our agenda for creating greater coherence across learning and skills provision in prisons, bringing together a range of staff delivering a range of programmes and/or support. This year we have brought together the funding allocations for education and vocational training into one ring fenced budget. This will allow maximum flexibility for Prison Service areas to decide how best to use the funds to support local work-based learning priorities/initiatives—whether through existing arrangements or through education contracts.

In addition, investment of £7.4 million over the past two years from the Capital Modernisation Fund has provided classrooms adjacent to workshops, enabling Skills for Life and key skills to be integrated into practical training.

A further £4.5 million of Capital Modernisation Fund resources has enabled establishments to upgrade their facilities and equipment so that prisoners can achieve skills and qualifications in areas and at levels needed by industry, and DfES continues to advise the Prison Service on the introduction of prisoner training programmes with employer involvement which could lead to enhanced opportunities for employment for learners on release.

Prisons have been included in the piloting of new learning materials in construction industry training and in horticulture. Work also continues with sector skills councils such as the CITB (construction) and LANTRA (land-based industries) and with awarding bodies to develop vocational programmes for prisoners which meet the particular needs of the prison learning environment, eg unitised qualifications.

The role of prison staff in supporting educational activities

Prison governors are accountable for educational outcomes in their establishments. It is important therefore that the prison regimes allow prisoners access to learning and skills opportunities. DfES has funded a new senior post in each prison establishment. The role of Heads of Learning and Skills is to facilitate and encourage the expansion of learning opportunities for prisoners which will enhance their employability and their life in the community after release. Replicating successful practice in the juvenile estate, Heads of Learning and Skills have an overview across all learning provision, and are expected to co-ordinate activities to ensure coherence and quality—both within their establishment and with opportunities in the local community—and to maximise opportunities for learning throughout the establishment. This involves promoting a culture of learning across the prison, encouraging or supporting the involvement of a range of staff in prisoner learning including prison officers, officer instructors, instructional officers and teachers.

Training and support for instructors to deliver accreditation through vocational training workshops, and to support these skills with underpinning key skills such as communication, numeracy and teamwork, is further encouraged by peer partnership schemes through which prison staff as well as prisoners can become basic skills supporters.

Heads of Learning and Skills in the juvenile estate are currently working to the Youth Justice Board's National Specification which was designed "to expand learning from the classroom into the entire fabric of the institution and to provide the framework for training and enabling all institutional staff to support learning and influence behaviour positively".

A range of staff including tutors, vocational training instructors, PE officers and wing officers have undergone accredited training in order to support learners and/or work in the classroom when off duty. In some cases, identified staff work in the education block daily. Support in developing literacy and numeracy skills is also available through the PLUS programme's development advisers.

Beyond this, the involvement of personal officers in the Detention and Training Order review process is essential to a whole establishment focus on learning and skills development and to engaging individual offenders in education, training or employment on release.

Links with employers and employer led initiatives

Research has shown that there is a link between unemployment and re-offending, which is why the focus is increasingly on ensuring that vocational training for prisoners equips them with the skills needed for life and for industry.

DfES offers learning and skills advice to the Prison Service to inform its development of the Service's strategic links with employers and employer organisations. The Service's Custody to Work Unit is working with employer organisations, including the Confederation of British Industry, to identify employment sectors which have feasible job opportunities for offenders and develop links with major employers in those sectors. Its work also includes promoting the case with employers that, with appropriate basic skills, training and work experience, released prisoners can be a useful source of labour.

Following a recent review of prison industries, the Prison Service has agreed a new statement of purpose which emphasises taking opportunities wherever possible to improve prisoners' skills and their employment prospects on release. The review suggests that the Prison Service should seek to attract work that can develop prisoners' skills, and that prison industries should keep in touch with developments in the modern labour market. This will involve developing links with the relevant Sector Skills Councils which can provide relevant labour market information and help the Service develop its links with employers in related industries.

The Youth Justice Board is working in partnership with the LSC on a specific young offender e2e (Education to Employment) pathfinder targeting those young people who need additional help in obtaining the skills for employability and a route into further education or work-based learning. The pilot is working in Brinsford, Hindley, Stoke Heath and Wetherby YOI's, selecting and preparing groups of young people for continuing e2e work in the community post release.

Continuing support and guidance on release, including co-ordination with local providers

There is a new partnership to deliver effective learning provision to offenders in the community. The Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit in DfES is now working closely with the LSC, the National Probation Service and other key partners to develop a new integrated service that will provide coherence across custodial and community sectors, in line with strategic framework for the new National Offender Management Service.

The Learning and Skills Council has a key role to play in ensuring that the gains made by offenders while serving a custodial sentence are not lost on transfer or release into the community. It continues to fund day-release enrolments for adult prisoners eligible for release on temporary licence (ROTL). This scheme

supports continuity by enabling individuals to continue their studies without a break after release, while also equipping them with valuable skills—particularly in vocational areas—which will enhance their employability.

We are encouraging capacity building across the prison estate, while looking to Heads of Learning and Skills to develop strategic links at local level with providers, both to promote mainstream standards in custody and to facilitate continuity of learning on release. This is also being done by the Probation Service through the new partnership arrangements for community-based learning.

For those under 18 years of age the Youth Offending Teams are key to managing the whole of a young person's sentence—both in custody and in the community—including the transfer of an individual to community provision on release. The Youth Justice Board has a shared target with the Connexions Service for 90% of young people to enter education, training or employment on release. To support the transition from custody back into the community, custodial staff are required to attend the young person's first review after release.

Additionally the YJB is using £8 million from SR2002 over three years to enhance the ETE engagement capacity within Youth Offending Teams and Young Offender Institutions, targeting the highest risk groups of young people on Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes and serving Detention and Training Orders. This money provides additional mentoring and Connexions Personal Adviser support to ensure educational placements are properly brokered and sustained.

Education, training and support for those on probation

Offenders under supervision in the community face a range of challenges including a lack of stable accommodation, health problems, lack of family support, unemployment and a poor employment history, drug and alcohol abuse and mental health problems.

We firmly believe that offenders according to need should have access to education and training in the community. This will enable them to gain the skills and qualifications they require to provide alternatives to crime, obtain and keep appropriate employment, and play a positive role within the community.

New partnership arrangements came into force in April 2004 to support improvements in the learning and skills of offenders in the community, strengthening partnership working between the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit in DfES, the National Probation Service (NPS) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). An additional £9.4 million in 2004–05 and 2005–06 will be allocated to local Learning and Skills Councils for this purpose. New targets of 32,000 starts and 8,000 qualifications in England and Wales are shared between the DfES, LSC and NPS.

The new National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will help sharpen the focus on this vital area as we move towards a new sentencing framework comprising both a custodial and a community element. The introduction of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) will underpin "end to end" offender management, ensuring that the focus is firmly on managing offenders throughout their entire sentence. The Prison Service and the NPS will work much more closely together on a range of interventions to support offender rehabilitation.

June 2004

Memorandum submitted by the Learning and Skills Council

SUMMARY

1. The Learning and Skills Council currently has a limited role in prison education and training. It includes the responsibility for securing learning and skills training for offenders in the community and it has joint responsibility with the National Probation Service for achieving targets. The lead for work with offenders in custody currently rests with the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU) within the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) but many LSC local offices are engaged in work with offenders.

2. However, the Government intends to create a more integrated approach to learning and skills for all offenders. As the single efficient and effective body for planning, funding, contracting and overseeing post-16 education and training, the LSC will have a greatly increased involvement in this approach.

3. An integrated approach will require new and innovative models of partnership and delivery. Over the next year, these will be tested out in the North West, South West and North East LSC regions. From these "prototype" trials we will develop an integrated Learning and Skills Service for offenders, with a view to wider implementation of these new ways of working in September 2005.

4. The changes will bring a whole host of benefits. In particular an integrated service with the LSC's involvement will ensure continuity of learning from custody into the community, to meet the specific needs of offenders and introduce a greater ability to meet skills needs locally, regionally and nationally.

5. Our evidence outlines the LSC's current role in prison education and skills, sets out the rationale for transfer of responsibility and demonstrates the LSC's role in the pilots taking place in three areas of the country.

Importance of Learning and Skills

6. Offender management has twin goals: to punish offenders and to reduce re-offending. The provision of learning and skills for offenders can make a significant contribution to the second goal. Research shows that having a job makes re-offending less likely and the appropriate provision of learning and skills can actively increase the chances of an offender getting a job when they leave custody. Learning and skills activities can also contribute to the effective management of a humane prison regime.

7. The Government is looking to increase the skills levels of offenders both in custody and in the community. The Home Office and the DfES want a new service which offers all offenders the learning and skills they need, meeting individual needs while providing basic, key and vocational skills. To do this, a new integrated service is being designed and new models or "prototypes" of delivering training will be tested.

8. The Learning and Skills Council is currently responsible for securing learning and skills provision for offenders in the community. As from 1 April 2004, the LSC also assumed joint responsibility with the National Probation Service (NPS) for new partnership plans to achieve specific Public Service Agreement targets for skills for those in the community.

9. For those in custody, the LSC's involvement has been limited in that the contracts for this work have been awarded by the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit within the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and not the LSC. However, the LSC has been involved in elements of training in some circumstances for adult prisoners on day release.

An Integrated Service

10. The Home Office and the DfES will create a new body, the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to manage the integrated service. This new body will have a strong regional dimension and will work closely with the LSC's new Regional Directors, allowing the service to benefit from the LSC's expertise in helping to create a greater range of opportunities for offenders.

11. Regional "prototypes" are being developed to test new and innovative ways of delivering prison education and training. They will contribute to the integrated service and have strong links with the work being done in the community by the new LSC/Probation Service partnership.

12. All nine Learning and Skills Council regions were invited to propose their region as a development region for the new integrated offender Learning and Skills Service. As a result of the invitation, three regions have been invited to participate. These are North West, South West and North East. These regions will work with the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit and the LSC to draw up the Common Delivery Framework.

13. This work will involve the development of trial models from summer 2004 and a trial period between January and July 2005. We aim to have the agreed delivery framework emerging from the trials implemented across all regions from September 2005.

14. Each development region will develop one or more variables to test as a prototype to inform the new national framework. Key aspects of the prototypes work will be to explore:

- the best ways of maximising funding;
- an appropriate "mix" of contractors providing learning and skills;
- progress towards the concept of a "learner journey" which encompasses both custody and community; and
- realistic targets for the new service.

15. We also intend to undertake targeted activity in the other regions to help them to prepare for full implementation in September 2005.

16. For the transition year of 2004–05, the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit will continue to have primary responsibility for the funding of prisoners' education and training while individuals are detained in custody. However, local LSCs have both the power and the discretion to fund or co-fund learning and development programmes in partnership with the Prison Service and others where resources are not available within the Prison Service.

17. The focus for the LSC is to engage offenders who are close to the end of their sentence in order to promote continuity of engagement in learning after release. Vocational programmes at local colleges for those from participating prisons are eligible for LSC funding. The Offenders Learning and Skills Unit will notify participating prisons and their respective local LSCs of their allocation places.

18. Although the trials are taking place in three specific regions, some local LSCs are already:

- involved with prisons or local networks to support offenders and ex-offenders;

— working with employers and/or voluntary bodies to develop prisons as a local resource of skills staff; and

— working with Government Offices to secure European Social Fund resources for resettlement initiatives.

19. The experience gained from this activity will feed into the trial to ensure that any small scale activities that work well can be tested out on a larger scale, and that the trials do not focus on activity that is proved not to work.

THE BENEFITS

20. There are a number of clear benefits of an integrated service, including:

— the flexibility to meet individual needs within the constraints of the sentence;

— learning and development activities, which are of the same quality as those available for other learners;

— a clear focus on Skills for Life provision as well as training in vocational skills;

— continuity as a critical element throughout the custodial sentence and beyond to keep offenders engaged;

— an emphasis on learning and skills outcomes for offenders to form a key part of performance management and accountability within prisons and the probation service;

— continuity and coherence in sharing information and transferring records, which is important to allow the system to focus on the needs of the offender;

— offender access to information, advice and guidance (IAG); and

— Appropriate availability of e-learning and effective use of information and communication technology.

TRANSFER TIME LINE

June-November 2004

— Detailed planning for prototypes undertaken (planning workshop for three prototype regions took place on 8 June).

— Development of Common Delivery Framework and advice to LSC areas to inform planning guidance for 2005–06.

January 2005

— Trials begin.

April—July 2005

— Final negotiations by LSC with providers on funding, provision and targets.

July 2005

— End of trial phase and preparation for wider implementation by September 2005.

Activity so far

— Partnership plans for learning and skills for offenders in the community have been agreed between local LSC and National Probation Service areas.

— A high level Steering Group supported by a Project Board has been established to oversee the transfer, made up of the Learning and Skills Council, the National Probation Service, the Prison Service, Youth Justice Board and others.

— The LSC transition team is in place to take forward implementation plans.

— The prototype regions began their detailed planning on 8 June.

July 2004

Witnesses: **Ms Caroline Neville,** National Director for Learning, and **Mr John Gamble,** Director of Adult Learning, Learning and Skills Council; **Mrs Janice Shiner,** Director-General, Lifelong Learning Directorate, and **Mr Chris Barnham,** Head of Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit, Department for Education and Skills, examined.

Q701 Chairman: Can I welcome the four of you to our proceedings and say how pleased we are that you have been able to respond at quite short notice. We enjoy all our inquiries but we are particularly enjoying this one. We are learning a lot and getting around the country. We have looked at three prisons in the UK, one in Finland and one in Norway. We are going to take evidence in Feltham Young Offender Institution. We are not only seeing but we are getting some very good quality evidence as well. Thank you very much for coming before us. I am going to give one of you on each side two minutes if you want to say something to start, otherwise you can go straight into questions, it is up to you. Why do I not start with Janice Shiner or Chris Barnham, whoever wants to start, and then switch, but only one of you for two minutes?
Mrs Shiner: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity. We thought it would be helpful to say something more about how we are going to deal with the issues that you have raised, and in particular to look at planning and funding. Perhaps I can start by saying I recognise that there remain considerable pressures in the delivery of high quality consistent offender education but we believe that from a low base we have put some important building blocks in place. I think the Adult Learning Inspectorate has acknowledged that. In that list, I would probably put the appointment of the Heads of Learning and Skills and it is early days but there are some real signs of value added, increases in funding, achievement of basic skills qualifications, some quite significant capital projects and the work that is going on to build the project REX and to deliver that service, a service that we want to be as good as anything you would get in the mainstream and, in some cases, perhaps even better. There has been improvement in teaching and learning. We know that 71% of teaching and learning sessions are satisfactory or better. Significantly, there are two prisons that have now got a grade two or good grade for leadership and management. We are not hiding behind these achievements, however, but want to acknowledge the progress made and give credit to those who have worked tirelessly to move things on, but there is much that we need to do. We know that it cannot be right that 29% of classes are less than satisfactory. We know that we have got to integrate vocational training and basic skills. We know we have got to have learning taking place not just in the classroom but enable it to take place in the cells, in the workplace and wherever else, so it is not just about three or four hours a week. I hope you recognise the extent to which the issues that you are raising are at the heart of our agenda. There are just a couple of other things. It is important to remember that this is the most challenging cohort in education terms: of regular truants, 3% compared to 30% offenders; those excluded from school, 2% compared to 49; and in terms of unemployment 5% compared to 67. We believe we are working on the agenda that has been set out but we look forward to the comments that you might make to help us take this forward. Finally, this is my day job. I am responsible for post-16 education wherever it happens, therefore the quality of education in the Prison Service, in communities, is absolutely key for me. One of the benefits of it being my day job is that we can learn from what works in mainstream further education and also we can learn from what happens in custody and transfer that. We welcome your inquiry and look forward to the questions. Thank you.

Q702 Chairman: Thank you.
Ms Neville: Thank you for this opportunity. The Learning and Skills Council's role is to transform post-16 learning and skills in this country and make it a better skilled and more competitive workforce. Offenders in custody are one of the most disadvantaged groups in terms of accessing learning and skills. We believe that boosting the skills of offenders will enhance the employability of those offenders and employability increases the chance of sustained employment and sustained employment reduces recidivism. We are delighted that we will be taking on a growing and developing role in relation to offender learning and skills and we will be taking a lead role from January 2005.

Q703 Chairman: That is an excellent introduction. Can I say, I was feeling really positive about this session until this popped through my letterbox in Yorkshire on Saturday Morning. It is *The Skills We Need: Our Annual Statement of Priorities* by the Learning and Skills Council. Because I was preparing myself for today I took some time to read it and prisons are not mentioned once. It seemed disappointing that we have got this statement of your priorities and you have just said that prisons are very important but it is not there at all.
Ms Neville: It is there.

Q704 Chairman: Where?
Ms Neville: It is there as an action in terms of the transfer of responsibilities from DfES to the Learning and Skills Council for 2005–06. This is an annual statement of priorities and the full roll-out in terms of the LSC's role will be from August 2006. For 2005–06 it will be to ensure that there is effective transfer of responsibility from the Department to the LSC.

Q705 Chairman: The prototypes are up and running, yes?
Ms Neville: The prototypes are up and running from January 2005.

Q706 Chairman: So that is one of your priorities.
Ms Neville: That is right.

Q707 Chairman: It must be an ongoing programme if these are the priorities that you are flagging up. You have got a very exciting year ahead of you

according to what we have had from your other evidence and there will be a transfer in September of next year.
Ms Neville: Yes. The prototypes start in January and there are two phases effectively.

Q708 Chairman: Are they all planned? They are ready to go, are they not?
Ms Neville: They are planned and ready to go for January, yes, in the three regions.

Q709 Chairman: Do you not think it is disappointing that you have not put much in there?
Ms Neville: There are two points. One is that we have specifically mentioned the transfer of responsibility for offender learning and skills on more than one occasion, but it is the whole *Annual Statement of Priorities* which has relevance in terms of developing regional capacity, developing the role of Learning and Skills Council in economic regeneration, and the integration of the service, bringing together the vocational and educational services that are provided, that we see as the heart of the local community. It is specifically mentioned. The document is designed to be brief and to draw out those priorities for 2005–06.

Q710 Chairman: In a sense, did Mrs Shiner not let the cat out of the bag by talking about her day job, which encompasses a vast area, of which prison education is a small part? How do we expect prison education to survive when it gets into the hands of the Learning and Skills Council when prison education is a very small part and there is an enormous other day job and now we are not going to have any ring-fenced funding within the LSC? This Committee takes evidence from an awful lot of people demanding more money from the Learning and Skills Council, are they all going to be fighting for that money? Is it going to survive? Is it going to get a serious amount of funding?
Ms Neville: The Department has determined not to ring-fence the funding for offender learning and skills and I think that is in line with the overall trend of reducing ring-fencing. The Learning and Skills Council has quite a heavy involvement in offender learning and skills already. From April 2004, the Learning and Skills Council took over responsibility for offender learning and skills in the community. I quote the North East but a number of our regions have longstanding partnership arrangements with the Prison Service and established protocols. I think it is around 74% of Learning and Skills Councils already have heavy involvement with their local prisons, they are a part of the community.

Q711 Chairman: How does that work, because we are halfway through this inquiry and we are getting under the skin of it, we think, but the evidence we have got, and the visits to prisons back this up, is that the Learning and Skills Council is very rarely mentioned. They mention the partners that they are working with and the relationship with people employed by the Prison Service but—I am looking round the Committee—the Learning and Skills Council is rarely mentioned and you are saying there is a positive partnership already.
Ms Neville: There are examples of positive partnerships across the regions but, as I said earlier, we take a lead in January 2005 with the three prototypes. That is entering into a different phase at that point.

Q712 Chairman: How do we make sure that prison education still gets the funding?
Ms Neville: We will be measured by our performance. Obviously we will be responsible for increases in achievements of learners, for example, and we will be responsible for securing high levels of sustained performance. There will be key performance measures for which we are responsible and we will want to deliver on those. Indeed, in the offender learning and skills population we already contribute to our targets in terms of *Skills for Life* and Level 2. The prison community is, in fact, core to our work in local communities already.

Q713 Chairman: It has been difficult to be core up to now because of the arrangements for contracting out and very often it is not the local college that is providing the service, it is someone at some distance, is it not?
Ms Neville: It can be, yes. I was involved in providing prison education as a college principal for nine years and we provided for eight prison education departments across three counties.

Q714 Chairman: The local link is difficult sometimes, is it not?
Ms Neville: I think the local link can be strengthened. That is the advantage of the integrated approach that we will be taking. One of the main limitations of the current regime in the broadest sense of the word is lack of continuity. It is about progression and the problems that offenders face in terms of progression either between institutions or coming out of an institution into the community. The Learning and Skills Council, which has responsibility not only for being on top of local labour market needs and regional labour market needs but also the labour market in terms of the supply of education and training, I think is very well placed to try to ensure that the shape of that provision is one which allows offenders and ex-offenders to progress. There are many advantages of the local nature of the Learning and Skills Councils developing not just a good relationship with the local employers, as might be the case currently, but actually ensuring that there are pathways, both vocational and *Skills for Life* pathways, to higher level qualifications within the community and within the region. I am not saying that it is going to be easy but I think our core purpose and our core mission and our experience in relation to post-16 learning and skills is unprecedented really.

Q715 Chairman: Mrs Shiner, could I ask you and your team if you are confident because there is a lot of change going on here and really it is a test of

joined-up government, is it not, that on the one hand you have NOMS coming in and they have a different regional structure than the LSCs, let alone with AQA. Is either of those coterminous with government departments in terms of the regional structure of government departments? Do you not see a problem here with NOMS coming on track at the same time as you are changing everything? How are you going to get a consistency of policy across the piece?

Mrs Shiner: I think it is precisely because NOMS is coming on track that we want to do what we are planning to do. You have taken evidence about project REX and project REX was about trying to sort out the difference between education and vocational training inside the prison and to deal with what was the natural course of events, which was a re-tendering of a contract. The opportunity of NOMS made us stop and think that here is the Home Office trying to have an integrated approach to custodial and non-custodial sentencing in a way that would take place on an area basis, a regional basis, and, at the same time, here we have the Learning and Skills Council moving to establish a regional structure. That gave us an opportunity to think, well, how could we not see those things as separate and how could we bring those things together? Therefore, I can see huge benefits because we have got one organisation, the Learning and Skills Council, planning and funding all post-16 education, we have got a single process for dealing with the sentencing of a criminal and we have got an opportunity to say: "Well, okay, if that is the offender and this is their learning need, how do you bring those two processes together and keep them together through whatever happens", whether it is a custodial sentence into the community, probation support into full-time education and then into work? I do not think for one moment that it is plain-sailing and that is why we have these three prototypes because there are different ways of doing it and we want to try and see how best to do it. The most obvious thing we could do is to say: "We will just contract in the way that we have always done. We will contract with a provider for education provision in one or more prisons", but we want to look at this in a different way and keep the offender, in our case the learner, central to this, so that means us thinking about this in a completely different way. If you said to me now, "Janice, how is this going to look in a year's time?", I would put on the record that I do not know. These three prototypes will give us the answers and we are testing a whole range of different ways of doing things.

Q716 Chairman: What about the central problem that this is a massive change, it really is a very massive change, and the other evidence that we have taken suggests—we have had written evidence as well as oral evidence—that this is very slowly gearing up and this is a lot of change and the Learning and Skills Council are biting off a great deal here and even though it is a small percentage of their overall work, it is a quite a fundamental change. In one sense, the degree of planning, the degree of working out who does what is at a very early stage and the crucial thing that we find when we visit prisons is, where is the divide—and it seems totally arbitrary—between education, training and the workshops? Who is going to be responsible for which bit of that?

Mrs Shiner: You are right, I would be foolish to pretend that this is not a significant change, but what is consistent is what the problem is, whether it is the Adult Learning Inspectorate Report or the All-Party Parliamentary Report, whoever looks at this work, they come up with about the same six or eight things which are problematic. When you start to say: "How do we deal with those?", it is not about trying to improve what you have got, it is about saying that we need to look at this in a completely different way. If you have that sort of radical change, then it takes its toll. The trick, I think—and maybe some of the evidence says we have not done it as well as we might—is to keep people informed about what it is you are trying to achieve and keep them informed of progress along the way. We have set up websites, we have had seminars and we have written letters and we are aware that we need to work harder and keep going on that, but that is not a reason not to do it. I think it is a reason to do it well and to move it as quickly as we possibly can because we are trying to break some new ground in terms of how we commission education and then, I think, by its very nature, we need to pilot that. The question you raised about inside the prisons is absolutely right. It cannot possibly make sense to have education and training as separate activities within a prison. As educationalists we know that the best way adults will learn is through the vehicle of a particular skills area. So, you teach them basic skills through construction, catering, cleaning or whatever it happens to be and, therefore, we have always been intending to bring those together. Of course that creates more change for those training officers within the prison sector. We just need to keep going with it, keep testing that we are doing the right thing and keep communicating well. I believe that in 18 months' time we will be in a significantly different place. All the evidence says that the building blocks that we have already put in place are quite considerable. We have been working on the improvement of quality but we have been trying to put some infrastructure in place and to understand what needs to be done. We need to see those working and then to make that major change in August 2006 to get this up and running.

Q717 Jeff Ennis: Continuing on your line of questioning, Chairman, a lot of the evidence we have taken so far seems to indicate that the Cinderella part of the Prison Service or the offender service is the poor levels of aftercare once the prisoner leaves their particular institution. They may be halfway through a course and then when they leave the prison they drop the course automatically, or a lot of them do. Effectively, we have been steered towards a situation where many of the witnesses are saying that aftercare should be a part of the Detention Order and part of the education contract. Obviously, now we have got a division of labour, to

some extent, between the LSC, who would be responsible for the education provision, after consulting local providers et cetera, and I guess the main role of aftercare will be provided by NOMS, the National Offender Management System. I guess if aftercare is the Cinderella part of the system, what is going to be crucial to the new structure will be the relationship between the LSCs, as I can see it, and NOMS. I wonder, Ms Neville, if you could say a few words about how crucial that is to the success of the new structure?

Ms Neville: I agree with the importance that you are placing on that relationship. To date we have worked in partnership with the Probation Service, the Youth Justice Board and obviously with OLSU and, certainly, I think there would be a lot of evidence that that partnership working has helped us to do the job we are doing. NOMS is its new service and is one which I think we are going to be relying on quite heavily in terms of tracking prisoners. I think the other important point is that continuity progression, the concept of a learner journey, is at the heart of the provision which we will be prototyping. For example, again I think it is in the North East, there is a mapping exercise going on looking at the provision in terms of the secure unit for young people and Young Offender Institutions to make sure that progression and pathways are there but, ultimately, the learner is at the heart of what it is we are doing and NOMS is going to have a crucial role to play.

Q718 Jeff Ennis: I wonder what sort of checks and balances there will be, for example, if a regional ROM is not doing his or her job in a particular region and the LSC is aware of this? How would that be progressed, shall we say?

Ms Neville: In terms of the governance arrangements, obviously for prototypes we have project boards but, again, I think it is about clarification of roles and responsibilities between the partners who are delivering. As I have already said, if you take the partnership work that we have had with the National Probation Service on offender learning and skills in the community, it is a very, very strong partnership with clear lines of accountability, a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and monitoring is clearly much easier. There is excellent practice out there from some prisons in terms of post-monitoring, following up on individuals going out into the community.

Q719 Jeff Ennis: Also, we have taken evidence that the contracting arrangements do not really lend themselves to involving the ordinary prison officers within prisons to get involved in educational programmes. It seems to me that we may be missing a trick here because education should not just be about the teachers but about anybody else who is interfacing with the prisoners within the institution. I wonder if this is a problem and, if it is, what are we going to do about it?

Mrs Shiner: I think it relates back to what I was saying earlier. At the moment, reading some of your evidence, the suggestion is that prisoners are getting three or four hours a week of education, but they are getting three or four hours a week sitting in a classroom with a tutor whereas you can learn in a whole range of ways. It is the prison officer who will be with that prisoner for the rest of that week in the main. What we want to do is to take the really good practice around the mainstream FE sector about how you can manage your own learning through the use of ICT and learning materials and so on and for the prison officer to have an holistic view of that prisoner; not just their education but their health, their forthcoming housing needs and so on, and to see them as part of the resource. I do not mean take that too far necessarily by saying they have got to be a health expert or a teaching expert but to enable them to see that person in an holistic way.

Q720 Jeff Ennis: How does that sit with the very short training period that we give officers in this country compared with some of the Western European examples we have looked at?

Mrs Shiner: That is probably for Martin Narey and Phil Wheatley to respond to.

Q721 Jeff Ennis: I would like to get your view on that as well.

Mrs Shiner: I am not an expert on the training of prison officers but what I do know is through our own staff development, continuous development, initial teacher training arrangements that we have in place for teachers in further education, the intention is as we revise those, and we have got a new set of proposals for initial teacher training, training officers in the Prison Service can have access to that training. Therefore, there will be opportunities for them to improve their understanding of the learning that is going on and understanding some of the training needs of that individual. That is not a full answer and I accept that.

Q722 Chairman: Are you not doing a bit of buck passing in the sense that we have taken a lot of evidence, including from Her Majesty's Inspector who says that once they do the seven weeks there is no particular training for prison officers except in restraint? Surely we should be looking at that or is it that you are used to comfortably dealing with the NUT and NASUWT and the Probation Service, the professional organisation, and the Prison Officers' Association are too much for you, that is what is holding all this up, that you have very strong unions that delayed NOMS and will not allow you to educate the prison officers? Is that what is wrong?

Mrs Shiner: I suppose what I was saying was we will create the opportunity for them to access that training and maybe that has not been so obvious in the past.

Q723 Chairman: That is part of the plan?

Mrs Shiner: Yes. Chris, do you want to say anything more?

Mr Barnham: This is on slightly a different point. The picture is not as grim as it is sometimes painted.

Q724 Chairman: It is pretty grim when you see the percentage of people who get any education in prisons.
Mr Barnham: I am talking about involvement of prison officers in education. I can think of particular examples. We have had specific funding for a thing called the Prisons' ICT Academy, which is all about using IT for learning. There are various examples of that. I went to a prison on the Isle of Sheppey where it is run by prison officers themselves, the educational contractor has no involvement in that, and it is one of the most impressive bits of learning I have ever seen in a prison. It is not the case that prison officers do not get involved and cannot get involved, but it is certainly true that what we have had in the past is an unhelpful division because we have contracted out the education service and, for example, we have had vocational training run by prison officers who have got particular skills. One of the things that REX would have done, one of the things that the new service will do, is bring those two things together.

Q725 Chairman: Are you sure that is true?
Mr Barnham: That is true.

Q726 Chairman: It is going to be seamless?
Mr Barnham: Vocational training will be included as part of the overall service. Either it will be done by providers who are contracted by the LSC or it may continue to be provided within the Prison Service. We are not adopting a one-size-fits-all approach; it is quite possible that the Prison Service itself will be an LSC provider as long as they meet the requirements.

Q727 Helen Jones: Mrs Shiner, I am very worried by what you have been saying to us. I would like to highlight something we have found throughout this inquiry, that various people giving us evidence may have the best of intentions but actually no-one has control over the whole system. You may say, "Yes, we would like prison officers to participate, we may make the training available for them", but no-one is actually saying what training should be required because that is not your responsibility, that is a different department's responsibility. Is not the whole problem with this that there is no-one in overall charge of the prison education system, it is split everywhere, and people in front us, the LSC, yourself, may have the best of intentions but no-one has got a grip on the whole thing?
Mrs Shiner: Currently the person responsible for prison education is the governor because the education manager in the prison would report to the governor. They may well report to the Head of Learning and Skills and then to the governor, but currently the governing governor is responsible for education. In fact, they are given targets and Phil Wheatley would hold them accountable for those targets. Currently, it is pretty straightforward and direct: the education manager would deliver the contract on behalf of the provider and the establishment of the Heads of Learning and Skills is there to bring together that education contract and the vocational training within the prison under one umbrella reporting to the governing governor.

Q728 Helen Jones: That is a very interesting answer but, again, it is sending the responsibility downwards. As a Committee, our concern is who has got a grip on this in Government because Government sets the policy. It is all very well you saying to us that prison officers should do this and it would be very nice if they did this, but there is not a way of making sure that comes about, is there?
Mrs Shiner: I misunderstood your question. I was trying to give the answer as to what happens in the prison. In Government, it is split and you are right to state that. It is split with the Department for Education and Skills, and I am the person responsible for setting the policy for education in terms of both custodial and non-custodial, both prison and probation, and for ensuring the implementation of that policy in terms of the education policy, but we have to—and should—work in partnership with our Home Office colleagues because they control the Prison Service and the Probation Service. By working together, we need to be clear about the policy that we want to implement and then to use the levers that are available to us to make that happen. We meet very regularly and we have a governance structure in place to make that happen. A very good example would be how we introduced e-learning into the Prison Service. On the one hand, clearly there are issues about security and access and all of those things that are well rehearsed, and, on the other hand, from an educational perspective we are saying if we want to increase the three to four hours, seven hours, whatever it is that prisoners have in learning, we need to be able to introduce ICT. If we want to be able to avoid prisoners being over-assessed and their information travelling with them, we need to have ICT. Together, the Home Office would pull the levers they have throughout their own line management structure and I would do the same by the way we are looking to the LSC to take this future plan forward. That is the Government's arrangement. Martin Narey chairs a committee called the Reducing Reoffenders Committee, where I sit representing education, and there are people representing housing, drugs rehabilitation, etcetera. A member of my staff, a director, chairs a joint committee with Jobcentre Plus on education and employment. They are held accountable by Martin Narey's umbrella committee. The governance structures are well established and work well. It is part of how a lot of Government is working where a lot of the policies we have cross more than one department and, therefore, the key is to find the right governance structures to ensure that you can deliver.
Helen Jones: I am still not convinced but I know that one of my colleagues is waiting to get in.

Q729 Chairman: The fact is that the Prison Board—we will be asking the Ministers about this later—has a health representative but does not have an education representative. When the governing

governor of Durham was here, he told us two things: one, that he would not have an education person on the top managing committee of the prison; two, other evidence says governors are only going to be there for 18 months on average, so do not expect them to be a consistent thread.
Mrs Shiner: On the Prison Board there is Peter Wrench, who has the education brief, so he is our point of reference for that.

Q730 Chairman: Our information is there is a designated health person on the Prison Board but not a designated education person. Has he got other things to do?
Mrs Shiner: There is not a designated person but there is somebody from the Prison Service, Peter Wrench.
Mr Barnham: He is the Director for Resettlement. In terms of the way the Offenders' Learning and Skills Unit works, which I head in the Department for Education and Skills, I report to Peter Wrench for education in the Prison Service as our route into Phil Wheatley's board. He has a regular report on education issues which comes from us.
Mrs Shiner: You are right, not all of the Heads of Learning and Skills are sitting on the senior management team. We will work very hard to make that happen because the evidence is clear that they are part of the management team and it is a more effective organisation.

Q731 Mr Gibb: This is more of a funding issue. Can I just ask, is the DfES to fully properly fund prison education?
Mrs Shiner: Is it committed to fully funding?

Q732 Mr Gibb: Properly funding.
Mrs Shiner: Yes, within the constraints of a budget that is pulled in a whole range of different ways. The budget has gone up and it will continue to increase.

Q733 Mr Gibb: How much is it?
Mrs Shiner: It has gone up from £93 million to £127 million, is that right?
Mr Barnham: From £97 million in 2003–04 to £136 million this year and going up again next year to £152 million. That covers offenders in the community as well, although that is a small part of it.
Mrs Shiner: I was taking that bit off. Are we committed to spending that money on prison probation? Yes, we are.

Q734 Mr Gibb: You said three or four hours a week in the classroom, which is roughly what we have been hearing, or a couple of hours more maybe. Is that enough?
Mrs Shiner: No, it cannot possibly be enough, particularly when you think of the skills gap for the prison population. It is a significant step on from where it was, and it needs to move on, but it needs to increase, not necessarily by having people sitting in a classroom with a tutor, we need to extend the learning opportunities through a whole range of other ways.

Q735 Mr Gibb: You keep saying this and yet, on the one hand, you say prison officers should be part of this and then you say nothing about their training, it is not your responsibility, but you are the one saying this is going to be the future. Are you there just to craft the words for ministers or are you in charge of running something?
Mrs Shiner: I did not say that I did not know anything about it, I said I did not know as much as others.
Chairman: Quite right.

Q736 Mr Gibb: You are the one advocating this as the future for education.
Mrs Shiner: You are absolutely right. You are right to challenge me and I will respond. In mainstream further education you will have learners with a whole range of demands on their time, either domestic, work, illness, whatever it happens to be, so further education has become a very flexible service. If somebody cannot come on a Tuesday morning because they cannot get childcare there is probably some ICT related activity that they can pick up to take that class, or they may well move away from the area and study in a distant learning way, or there may be a tutorial system using ICT which helps them to learn. There is a whole range of ways. It may be that they have one-to-one tutorials once a month to keep them on track and attend large lectures for the rest of the time.

Q737 Mr Gibb: You are in charge of the policy, what is the number of hours a week prisoners are going to have in the classroom, for instance? That is the first question. What is the numbers of hours a week they are going to have using ICT distance learning?
Mrs Shiner: I do not think I can be as precise as the number of hours. The answer to the first question is we want to be able to increase those hours, but not necessarily for everybody, for those who need it most. That must be the first point. Until we have in place really robust assessment and diagnosis we will not be able to determine that. We have to get that in place first and then we can determine whether somebody needs 10 hours or whatever it happens to be. The point I am making, and clearly not very well, is that learners have a lot of time at their disposal when they are in custody that could be used to much better effect. They could be working on distance learning materials, they could be using CD-Roms, they could be using the Internet with all the necessary security controls in place. The point I was making about prison officers was when prisoners are in the cells or on the wings, it is the prison officer who is there with them and for them to be given an opportunity to understand the learning programme that prisoner is on and to support them where they can would be very—

Q738 Mr Gibb: You are right, they do have a lot of hours. Combine the two together, hours in front of a tutor plus hours in front of the computer per week, on average, what are we looking at as an objective?

Mrs Shiner: I think you have to say the objective is to give them as much as you possibly can. What is the limit? They will be spending some time at work, they will be spending some time on other activities. In theory, they could spend a vast amount of their time managing their own learning once they are motivated and once they have got basic skills in order to be able to do that, which is why getting basic skills is so important.
Mr Barnham: Could I just add to that. One of the best examples I saw very early in this job was when I visited Leeds Prison and I was lucky enough to have lunch there. The primary purpose of everybody working in the kitchens at Leeds is to produce the meals that the prison needs, but many of them are receiving on-the-job training and are achieving qualifications in catering. From our budget in the DfES I do not think we are paying for that through the mainstream education funding but it is one of the benefits of having a Head of Learning and Skills who is looking across the whole regime and asking "Where are the learning opportunities?", many of which are outside the classroom and can be achieved on the job in doing things that people would otherwise be doing. It is quite hard for us to say how many hours of learning have gone into that because people have been doing other things, but we know the qualifications that get achieved and the positive outcomes.

Q739 Mr Gibb: I get the impression that the thinking going on is at quite an early stage in terms of the policy development in this.
Mrs Shiner: No. The whole move towards the funding and planning by the LSC is to enable us to put these things in place because we need part of that mainstream activity to support it. The development of e-learning within prisons is at an early stage but it is on a very clear trajectory to have that in place. The opportunity to be able to have new commissioning from providers where we ask them to provide learning in that way is also part of the thinking, it is all of a piece.

Q740 Chairman: Can I ask Caroline Neville to come in on this because we have not heard whether you think this increase in budget, which is considerable—this Committee is not knocking the fact there is £30 million extra—this £156 million next year is going to be enough to deliver this.
Ms Neville: There are two points I would make on funding and I will answer that question. Currently there is inconsistency in terms of funding across the piece so we are looking at developing a national funding model which would still have flexibility to meet the needs of the individual prisoner's circumstances, but nonetheless be fair and transparent. That is where our experience will come into play in terms of developing that methodology. We want to avoid unnecessary turbulence as we move from one system to another, so we are looking at protection arrangements to ensure that as we develop this new methodology we are not causing unnecessary problems for prison institutions. With regard to affordability, we are in the final stages of confirming the budgets and I am sure that will take place very early in the New Year and both the OLSU and ourselves share the aspiration in terms of quality and in terms of quantity. We feel very clearly that a step change in quality is of paramount importance, and you may wish to come back to that. We are confident that we will make progress on that quite rapidly. There will be concerns about the quantity in terms of the increased provision that we can find, but certainly we will be targeting those resources differently. An example of how we will be targeting those resources differently would be to lead to more qualifications. We want to see more relevant up-to-date outcomes from the offender's learning experience and training experience. We will be using the funding in quite a targeted way. Whether that allows us to increase the quantity of learning in the way that we would like, we have yet to see that as we are undertaking our financial modelling. I think Chris made a very important point, that there is an opportunity for the prison, as a whole, to embrace the learning and skills challenge. We have talked about vocational workshops and we have talked about the catering and the various tasks that are going on in the prison. If we insist, where it is appropriate, that nationally recognised qualifications come out of those experiences then I believe that will be in the interests of the learner as well as in the interests of the local economy. In that way it should be possible to increase in terms of quantity, but at the moment we are undertaking that financial modelling exercise.

Q741 Mr Gibb: That confirms what I thought, that things are at a very early stage of policy planning. Can I just ask Mrs Shiner what the proportion of prisoners entering prison who cannot read properly is?
Mrs Shiner: About 60%.
Mr Barnham: Two-thirds either at or below the level of an 11 year old.

Q742 Chairman: Mr Gamble, would you agree with that?
Mr Gamble: Yes, that is the evidence that we have seen.

Q743 Mr Gibb: Ms Neville, you wanted to have more up-to-date outcomes, so what are you doing to assess the outcomes of your basic literacy strategy?
Ms Neville: Within the prisons?

Q744 Mr Gibb: Yes.
Ms Neville: We take responsibility for the three prototypes from January, so it is obviously difficult to answer the question at the moment.

Q745 Mr Gibb: Let us ask Mrs Shiner. What are you doing in prisons to monitor the outcome of your basic literacy strategy given that two-thirds have a reading age below the age of 11? That must be the most important and pressing matter, so what are you doing to measure the success of current policies and future policies?

Mrs Shiner: It is the most important one. The decision when we started with the Offenders' Learning and Skill Unit was that we would focus on basic skills, although now we want to try and broaden those outcomes. Each prison governor will agree targets for their particular establishment in terms of what they will achieve at the various levels and those targets are monitored and recorded. If it looks as though targets are not going to be met then pressure is put on for those to be achieved. If your question is about the impact then—you will not want to hear this—it is early days in terms of the research that will make the link between basic skills and not reoffending. About 18 months ago we started a major piece of research to—

Q746 Mr Gibb: You are not quite sure yet whether being able to read does matter, is that what you are saying?
Mrs Shiner: What we do know is that the North American research shows that there is something like a 12% relationship between basic skills and reoffending. We do not have any UK evidence.

Q747 Mr Gibb: And until that time you are not going to teach reading, is that what you are telling me?
Mrs Shiner: Sorry?

Q748 Mr Gibb: Until you have had this research you are not going to teach basic skills, is that right?
Mrs Shiner: No, we are teaching.

Q749 Mr Gibb: I am asking you how you measure the success of your teaching reading.
Mrs Shiner: By the targets being achieved and by the fact that—
Mr Gibb: How do you assess those—

Q750 Chairman: I know your style, but you have to give the witness time to answer one question before asking another.
Mrs Shiner: Sorry, obviously I am not answering your question. 60% of people entering prisons have got a basic skills need, not achieving at the level of an 11 year old. Offenders gained 36,000 basic skills qualifications last year, that is about 37% of—
Mr Barnham: It was 46,000. The target was 36,000.
Mrs Shiner: We know what the problem is and we know what we are delivering. I was trying to answer your question when you asked about impact and impact is still part of this major piece of research and the only international research is this work in North America, so we are focusing on that. We know that those qualifications are being achieved but what we do not know is the impact of those, where people are taking them, yet, but we will.
Chairman: I am afraid we have got to move on. We have got a lot of questions for a short time.

Q751 Valerie Davey: I am fascinated by what you are saying and I think with the extra money and the ideas you have got, the potential is there, but still I am not sure whether the emphasis is on achieving for the assessment and the provision for the individual prisoner or whether these targets are institution based. At the moment you seem to be emphasising the governor of the institution, who obviously is crucial, but as far as the individual prisoner, who is going to be moved, there is this wonderful set-up in Leeds with catering but suddenly one of those prisoners is moved to somewhere that does not have catering, who has the levers to ensure that in the future the individual prisoner has the benefit of the education of quality that you are going to provide in an institution?
Mrs Shiner: You are raising a question that is the tension between what we do now and where we want to go. What happens now is that the targets are set for the prison and the prison governor is held responsible for those and we know whether they are achieved or not. What we want to move to is a situation where we assess an individual, we work out what the training needs are for that individual, whether it is dyslexia or basic skills or construction Level 2, and we create a learning journey for that individual, whether they move from prison A to prison B or, indeed, out to a non-custodial sentence, which is going to be more and more the norm in the future. Clearly if they move from prison A to prison B and they are doing an NVQ in construction and prison B does not have a construction unit then what you would want to do is make sure they can do the underpinning theory while they are there, for example, but on basic skills every prison will be able to offer that. What you are trying to create is a seamless journey for that prisoner, who we see as a learner, properly assessed, properly diagnosed and that diagnosis, that template of that learner's needs, follows them wherever they go to the end of their sentence. That is what we are trying to create. Your colleague is absolutely right, we do not have that in place yet but what we believe we are building is the infrastructure to make that happen, that is one funding and planning organisation only buying quality and working at a local level alongside NOMS.

Q752 Paul Holmes: We have heard from a number of witnesses that there is a disincentive in prisons that works against prisoners taking up education, ie they can earn more money to buy phone cards, etcetera, by doing prison work than by doing education and that some governors prefer them to do prison work because the money that is generated is part of the prison budget. Have you got any views on that?
Mrs Shiner: I have heard that in my own visits to prisons but there does not seem to be any evidence that that is actually happening. You hear the stories about you get more money to go and sew bags in the workshop than you do going into education but we have not seen any evidence that is the case. If people are wanting to go into the workshop because it gives them phone cards and cigarettes or whatever, we need to make sure that when they are in that workshop they are learning and they are clocking up some NVQ modules. That is what we are trying to create. Obviously I have not made it very clear, but it is about not seeing learning as that which just takes

place in the classroom but wherever they are. Actually, prisons need them to work, that is part of the operation. There are some wonderful examples with cleaning, with catering, and so on, but we need to make that mainstream and the only way we can do that really effectively is by bringing education and training together and that is why that is so key.

Q753 Paul Holmes: When you say there is no evidence, do you mean there is no evidence of an actual differential in pay or there is no evidence that is a disincentive?
Mr Barnham: We have not got any hard evidence that difference in pay, which are not uniform, there is quite a range of practice, are preventing people from going into education because, indeed, if we had more money to provide more education then there would be the demand for more. It is not that people are staying away, as far as we can tell. The other thing is, it is not just down to an individual's choice. One thing that is clear in the guidance to the Prison Service is whatever pay scheme they have that must not provide disincentives to people to do things which their sentence plan says they ought to be doing. Increasingly, we need people's sentence plans to have their learning needs in them. That happens to some extent now but that is a crucial part of the new service. It is not just down to an individual as to what they do, their needs need to be assessed and they need to be doing things that contribute towards those.

Q754 Paul Holmes: Would there be a disincentive the other way, that if you increase the amount for education then people will just go and sit in a classroom for the money rather than to take part in learning?
Mr Barnham: We would not want that any more than we would want people not doing learning when they need it. I do not think there is any evidence that way either. For example, some prisons, leaving aside the pay, will say, "You cannot do the work that you may want to do to earn income until you have achieved a basic skills qualification", so they provide a gateway: "You can do that cleaning job when you have reached a level that says your basic skills need that we have found has been addressed".

Q755 Chairman: Very quickly, can I just ask the LSC team, with all this shake-up and change is the budget going to be divided up in a different way now? I want Mr Gamble and Ms Neville to answer this because I am determined all witnesses get a chance to say something. If the budget is being changed, are some people in the Prison Service going to lose their jobs, are they going to transfer or have to be retrained? What is going to happen in terms of how that budget flows down to the people who use that budget?
Ms Neville: As we are looking at designing a system for the funding of Offenders' Learning and Skills, we have agreed a number of principles in relation to that funding arrangement. Certainly we are very concerned that there is some protection arrangement so that there is not turbulence in the system as we move from one methodology to another. The changes to methodology will not happen overnight. The Learning and Skills Council is undertaking a root and branch review of the way that it funds post-16 education and training. That review has commenced and the work of that review clearly will be helpful in informing the model that we develop for Offender Learning and Skills. We are not suggesting in any way that there will be a knee jerk change but we will have to ensure there is a phased change to a new methodology. The objectives of the new methodology will be open, fair and transparent across the prison estate.

Q756 Chairman: What is transparent to us, Mr Gamble, is we have the Prison Governors' Association who come here and say that the trouble is most men and women in prison spend most of their time lying on their beds or their bunks doing nothing: not working, not educating, not doing anything, just lying there doing nothing. Come on, are these reforms going to come through to change that?
Mr Gamble: Yes, because it is the business of the Learning and Skills Council to plan and to fund in terms of how new technology is going to enhance the learning experience. As has already been said today, it is not just about the hours in front of various individuals that is critical here, it is exploiting new technology to enhance the learning experience. In terms of developing the curriculum, the whole point of this transfer of responsibility is to ensure that the learning experience inside prison establishments reflects what is happening in what I call the mainstream education and training environment in the further education and work based sector, so there is a commonality in the learning that takes place so that when offenders actually leave custody and either serve the rest of their sentence in the community or, in fact, become citizens within the community, they can access the same learning and be motivated whilst they are inside in custody or on probation to continue with that, because they will see the relevance of that learning and they will also see that it is the same learning that takes place with the same outcomes, the same qualifications and the same job opportunities that are open to all in the wider learning community.
Chairman: That sounds a very exciting prospect. Thank you very much for your attendance and thank you very much for your evidence. As we always say, when you are going home on the tube or the bus or in your chauffeur driven car—I am saving that for Paul Goggins—and you remember something, please communicate it to us, we only want to make this report as good as it possibly can be. Thank you.

Witnesses: **Lord Filkin, CBE**, a Member of the House of Lords, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families, Department for Education and Skills, and **Paul Goggins,** a Member of the House, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Correctional Services and Reducing Reoffending, Home Office, examined.

Q757 Chairman: Can I welcome our colleagues, Paul Goggins from the Commons and Lord Filkin from the other place? What a privilege it is to have the House of Lords here. You can refuse to come but I think you have to come if you are a Minister. We want to make this as good a report as possible so we do value having both departments represented here today. Do either of you want to say anything to kick us off?

Paul Goggins: First of all, can I say how much I welcome the fact that your Committee is doing this inquiry and for the opportunity to participate in it. I will probably regret saying that in an hour or so because I am sure you are going to give us a good grilling. For all the shortcomings which you will identify and make recommendations about, it is worth saying just how far prison education has come in a very short time. Last year, one in 10 of all basic skills qualifications gained anywhere in the country was gained in a prison. That is testament to the hard work that is going on. Indeed, four out of every 10 prisoners are now engaged to some extent in education in prison, 1,000 of them on Open University courses. I got an endorsement for the improvement from an unlikely source last Thursday at a conference I was speaking at to do with rethinking crime and punishment, an important piece of work that is being done, from Tony Adams, the former Arsenal and England centre half who spent some time at Chelmsford Prison some 14 years ago and spoke about how different it is now. There was no education when he was in prison 14 years ago and there is so much more today. The second comment is simply to emphasise that this discussion, this inquiry and the work that we are doing to develop further education and skills training in prison is happening within the biggest reform of prisons and probation that has been undertaken for decades as we develop the National Offender Management Service to do three things. First of all, to rebalance the system so that we have fewer short term prisoners in our prisons doing precisely the kind of thing that you were just describing, lying on a bunk for a few weeks doing very little else when they could be on robust community sentences. Secondly, to make sure that we deliver the new sentencing framework arising from the Criminal Justice Act 2003, where people who go to prison will serve the whole of their sentence, the first half in prison, the second half in the community, under more robust supervision. Thirdly, to make sure that we join up government agencies, voluntary organisations, private sector organisations in the whole business of effective resettlement so that we get a better outcome for the investment that the taxpayer puts in in terms of reduced reoffending. In a sense, that sets the context for the discussion that we are having here specifically on education.

Lord Filkin: First of all, I think a lot has been achieved. If I look at the increase in expenditure by comparison with, say, 1996–97, the spend has roughly trebled. If I look at the numbers of basic skills that have been achieved in prisons from about 12,000 in 2001, we are probably going to hit about 60,000 this year, so we are seeing about a five fold increase in the basic skills being achieved. Also, we have seen a significant shift in terms of the creation of a head of learning and skills in every single prison. Secondly, there is an enormous amount of work and change in progress, as you probably sensed from the previous session, particularly in terms of the implementation of NOMS and the potential that gives for having education and skills straddling both community and custodial situations, which is clearly essential and, secondly, in terms of the capacity of the Learning and Skills Council to be fusing both basic skills and work skills so you have two integrations going on at once, which is pretty obviously necessary for this to work better. The third point is that both Paul and I and other ministerial colleagues are really clear there is a heck of a lot more to be done. We will seek to outline some of that in the rest of our evidence.

Q758 Chairman: Is it not all a bit slow though? This was in our manifesto to radically improve prison education. Normally, you expect to have a manifesto and then a mandate—we certainly have the mandate—and then to deliver. Here we are talking about the next election and, being generous to the very good people that we have just had evidence from, they are talking very tentatively about things that might happen. Some things have improved but a lot of people like us going to three or four prisons and having witnesses realise that we have not really delivered very quickly on this manifesto commitment, have we?

Paul Goggins: I think we have. Every prison now has a head of learning and skills. We have seen relationships developing between the Learning and Skills Councils and individual prisons. Last year, we had a target for 36,000 basic skills qualifications. The Prison Service achieved 46,000. The target for this year is 56,000. Where it really matters in terms of the outcomes for individual prisoners, I think we are making substantial progress. By the autumn of 2006 when the structural changes we are making really are bedded in, we will see further change still.

Q759 Chairman: You may know that I was shadow Minister for Police, Prisons and Crime Prevention quite some time ago when I was Roy Hattersley's deputy. I used to berate the Secretary of State for the Home Department for having 50,000 people in prison. We now have how many?

Paul Goggins: We have 75,149 today, or thereabouts.

Q760 Chairman: That is a substantial increase. Is it possible to manage to get an education and skills programme working when, on the one hand, we have a very large prison population and, on the other, everyone says it is so difficult to do anything because of the high degree of churn in prisons?

Paul Goggins: We have enormous pressure arising from the increasing population. Over the last 10 years, we have seen a 50% increase and a 200% increase in the number of women in our prisons. This is largely because of increased severity of sentencing and so very many of the people going into prison are going for fairly short periods of time. That is why we are rebalancing the system so that people who go to prison for three or four months who could very easily be on community sentences, properly enforced, are in the community and not in prison. Prison should be reserved for the serious and dangerous offender. I think we are beginning to see that that message is getting through. Whilst I gave you a figure for the prison population today, it is around 350 fewer than it was at Easter. There are fewer women in prison today than there were a year ago and I think there is evidence that sentencers are seeing the value of the community sentence rather than a short term prison sentence. There is no doubt that if we can stabilise the prison population we would get less churn; we would have a more stable population and the staff would be able to get on with the job they want to do, whether that is in terms of offender behaviour programmes or indeed education and training.

Q761 Chairman: We were talking about constructive alternatives when I was in the field. Why are we not picking up on ideas like the Australian system of having people going to prison for a weekend, because that is when they hate losing their liberty, but it allows them to carry on with education, work, training or whatever and does not make them unemployable. Are we looking at aspects like that?
Paul Goggins: You will be delighted to know that we have begun a pilot initiative called the Intermittent Custody Pilot at Kirkham for men and at Morton Hall for women, where precisely what you have described happens. Part of the week is spent in custody; part of the week at home, so that prisoners are able to keep hold of their job and sustain their families but also lose their liberty for part of the week. The pilot only began in January but what we have found so far is that there are more people who go on weekend custody and stay at home during the week, rather than the other way round. I think we would all expect that. We are finding a very high adherence rate for those people who are sentenced. I can provide the Committee with accurate figures but we are looking at somewhere in the region of 130 people who have been sentenced to this. Eighty-six have completed the period of custody without any further problem. Only six have been sentenced to full time custody. I think you are right. This would be an effective, imaginative use of custody which helps people to hold on to jobs and family.

Q762 Helen Jones: We have heard an awful lot about what we are doing in prison education. What I think the Committee would like to know first of all is where we are aiming to get to. What do you think the purpose of prison education is? What is the over-arching direction that should be determining all the things we decide to do?
Lord Filkin: I agree. I think that is one of the fundamental questions. There are several goals for prison education. I can think of at least three off the cuff. The most important one is getting people into work.

Q763 Helen Jones: And the others?
Lord Filkin: Seeking to get as many offenders into work will require that basic skills are addressed. One will never get everyone into work for all sorts of obvious reasons so there will still be some who, whilst it might not be possible to get into work, will still have very significant life skill deficits. Therefore, we ought to have as an object of policy reducing illiteracy and innumeracy for social exclusion reasons as opposed to employment reasons. I suppose the third one would be essentially about almost classic reasons for education, by which I mean that it has a value in its own right in terms of what it does to the individual. If you think of the lifer in prison, in that situation, whilst they may not be going to get into work or they might not have illiteracy problems, it is important that there is some meaningful use of the time that they have to spend. Access to other forms of education for them is a different objective but also important.

Q764 Helen Jones: I do not think many of us would disagree with what you have outlined but, from the evidence we have had, it is very clear that for many prisoners it is very difficult to bring them up to the standards where they can go out and get a job while they are within the prison system and they need to work both while they are within prison and afterwards. What progress has been made to get this holistic approach together that continues education during the sentence and after but also deals with the other problems that many prisoners have? Many of them may have drug problems, for instance. They may have problems when they come out accessing housing and getting a more stable lifestyle. Ought those things not to be all together as one package? What progress is made towards delivering that? How, when the LSC take over prison education, are all those things going to be linked together?
Lord Filkin: In essence, yes, we would agree with that. That is why Paul and I and Jane Kennedy in DWP are essentially asking the question. Over and above the good work that has been done so far and the very important and quite challenging work that is going to be done over the next two years that we have to put in place in terms of the changes that are being implemented through LSC, what ought to be the medium term goals for policy and what would that require in terms of changes to a set of systems so that they do, in your earlier phrase, behave like one system which is focused on how to maximise the number of offenders, whether in prison or not, who are helped to get into work and sustain it. That has to be a central goal of policy

across government because obviously if it can work more it will reduce reoffending and it is also better for an ex-offender because they will have we believe a better prospect in their life. We are at the very early stage as a ministerial trio of working with officials about thinking what is the nature of scoping how such a system would perform but you are quite right. A crucial part of that, as well as undoubtedly having an effective system for assessing the skills deficit and aptitude for work, and as well as putting in appropriate training and interventions and an appropriate set of motivations, is the resettlement process as well. Even if a person was motivated and had adequate skills, if they are not off drugs or if they are homeless or if the resettlement process is not supported, that is likely to be nugatory. Therefore, you are quite right. One has to have a broad approach to that across all of those elements.

Paul Goggins: The whole purpose of this is about reducing reoffending. That has to be the sole purpose. We see education as a means to an end, equipping people with skills to gain jobs that can sustain a life outside of crime. In terms of policy, we published in July the National Reducing Reoffending Action Plan and a clear mandate that every region of the country must have in place a Regional Reducing Reoffending Action Plan by the spring of next year.

Q765 Chairman: Who is going to produce that?

Paul Goggins: At the regional level, it will be for the agencies concerned to work together to produce it. Two weeks ago, I was in the north east with the Government regional office, the Prison Service and the Probation Service to publish their Reducing Reoffending Action Plan and every region will have one.

Q766 Chairman: Will the LSC be part of that?

Paul Goggins: Indeed. The LSC were represented at the event. The whole idea is to bring together all of these agencies and say how, on the ground, can we work together in order to achieve that objective of reducing rates of reoffending. At a practical level, this is where offender management really comes in. There will be a named offender manager for every single offender, whether in custody or in the community, who will ensure that their punishment, their programme, is properly enforced. That can be housing; it can be drug treatment; it can be education; it can be offending behaviour programmes, whatever is the appropriate mix for a particular offender. It will be the responsibility of the offender manager to follow that through with an emphasis again on reducing rates of reoffending. That really is the overall goal that we are looking to achieve.

Q767 Helen Jones: Can we go back to the education system? There is undoubtedly some very good work done but we have also had a lot of evidence about poor provision and in particular one of the things that concerns me is the position of staff delivering prison education who are often very isolated from other staff in the further education sector and so do not get the opportunities for career development and so on. We saw how that was tackled when the Prison Health Service was improved by putting it under the Department of Health but we have not yet received much evidence that it is being given as much priority in the DfES. It was championed through the Department. Who is championing prison education inside the DfES which has an awful lot of other responsibilities to deal with? Who is making sure this does not slip down the agenda?

Paul Goggins: You alluded to the parallel development in terms of health. I think it is important to emphasise that we see these as parallel developments. The education aspect of this started a little later than health developments but by the end of 2006, as I see it, all health care in prisons will be commissioned by the Primary Care Trust. All education and skills training will be commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council. We will end up at around the same time arriving at the same commissioning arrangements. It is entirely right in my view—I say this obviously as the Minister responsible for the Prison Service—that we have education and health care run by those who understand it and who know how to achieve higher and better standards and also who would be able to connect those staff who you identify as perhaps sometimes being rather at the end of the system and identify how they can be fully connected to the wider education process.

Lord Filkin: The short answer is I have the ministerial responsibility specifically for what was called prisoner education. I have now called it offender education for obvious reasons. I work to Charles Clarke on that. In the seven weeks I have been there, I have already had three discussions with him about it which is an indication of the priority that he gives to it as well. The other answer to your question is that the perspective I have developed in discussion with Paul, with Martin Narey, with the chief inspector for adult learning and other ministerial colleagues is that we have to work with officials at a further question over and above the successful implementation of what are very important processes underway. That further question is best summarised by: what would a system look like from beginning to end that had as one of its central objectives the maximisation of the number of people getting into work and supporting them doing so? That is the question I, with Paul and with Jane Kennedy, said to officials we wanted to work on identifying the answer to over the next few months, however long is necessary. The reason for that is obvious. Whilst we have some very good processes underway, the real challenge is will those go far enough? Will they be successful enough to maximise the ability to get more prisoners, more offenders—because I think the ambit has to be wider than just prison—into work and to stabilise other aspects of their life sufficiently so that they are more likely to stay in work. By asking that question, we are not being naïve. We are not expecting that the answer can possibly be 95%

because that would be daft. Even if we increase by 10 or 15% the proportion of ex-offenders who hold down a job, we would have made a phenomenal achievement. Therefore, that is why I think it is right that we ask that very tough question about how would you design a system that had that as its objective and then how do you get there having done so.

Q768 Helen Jones: How are you proposing to make sure that this is given enough priority by the LSC who have other demands on them? Let us be blunt inside the Committee. A lot of the pressure is on the LSC and on local Learning and Skills Councils to do certain things but prisoners are not high on anybody's agenda outside them. I am sure they are high on your agenda but they are not high on the public's agenda. How are you going to make sure that the LSC give enough priority to delivering a better system of offender education and that they understand the reasons for doing it? It is not just about education but it is also about reducing the offending and ultimately protecting the public from more crimes and so on.
Lord Filkin: Essentially, by making them aware that success looks like maximising the number who get into jobs and stay there. I say that because it gives some clarity as to what the business is about which all of us need, but if they start to succeed in that, the politics will follow that, if you understand what I mean.

Q769 Jeff Ennis: Paul mentioned progress that has been made in prisons. There is no doubt that progress is being made but we have a long way to go. One of the main focuses of that was the appointment of head of learning and skills within prisons which has obviously been a key driver to take the issue forward. We are talking about adult prisons being some of the biggest remedial education establishments in the country with 60-odd% of the clientele with basic learning problems. We see that in the youth offender institutes we have special educational needs coordinators operating, SENCOs as they are commonly known, as you do in most mainstream educational establishments. We do not have SENCOs in adult prisons. Is there a need, because of the overwhelming emphasis on basic needs in adult prisons, to consider establishing SENCOs?
Lord Filkin: It is not a question I have put to myself before but it requires me to reflect on it because you are quite right. The scale of educational under-achievement for people coming into prisons is about as bad as it can get. I do not want to imply by that that we should be diverting from the LSC route as the way in which we try to deliver the lift. I also have responsibility for special educational needs and what I need to do is to take that question and discuss it with LSC, because it clearly implies that the nature of the educational input they are putting in has to be informed by the best understanding of how you address special educational needs.

Q770 Jeff Ennis: This question goes back to the point I was making with the earlier witnesses about the very short amount of training that prison staff have in this country compared with most other western European countries. We need to involve prison officers more in the individual training and educational needs of the people they are looking after. Is there a need for us to review the amount of training that prison office staff currently have with a view to trying to incorporate a module looking specifically at educational needs of the prisoners?
Paul Goggins: Just having listened to the exchanges this afternoon, I sense that you will have something to say about the training of prison officers. I hope the following comments are helpful to you: it was the case that prison officers received 11 weeks' training. They now receive eight weeks' training and that focuses mainly on security and resettlement. The three week reduction was because fitness training was no longer felt to be part of it, since most of the people who come along are pretty fit anyway. What we need is a fitness test and they can get fit in their own time. However, that is not the end of the story as regards training because what the Prison Service has done is to devolve responsibility and resources down to establishment level for working out what is the appropriate training for that particular prison. Every prison has to have an establishment training plan. Every prison officer has to have a personal development plan and it is possible to follow through training within individual establishments, to take NVQs and so on that are appropriate. You can imagine that the training needs of a category D open prison are rather different than a high, secure prison taking category A prisoners. Therefore, what we have sought to do is to make sure everybody has the basic training so that prison governors can then work out what is the appropriate training for the individual staff within their establishment. It is not quite true to say all we have done is cut the training and left it at that. There is a lot of training that goes on at establishment level.

Q771 Jeff Ennis: We have been informed by other witnesses that the amount of budget per head available for training within prisons is very limited and it tends to go on training for restraint and issues like that rather than education provision.
Paul Goggins: I do not deny that there is a bit of a difference of opinion. I know that Mike New gave evidence to this Committee. He has a particular view on this and the Prison Service will have another view. We need to take a balance. There are resources there and what the Prison Service has sought to do is to place responsibility on governing governors, to work out what is appropriate for their establishment. That is the right approach. We certainly need some training at national level but we need to make sure that the training is appropriate. What happened before was that a lot of training that was done was not helpful to a particular, specific establishment and that is clearly wasteful. Therefore, we have to make sure that what is appropriate is done at each particular prison.

Q772 Chairman: Surely we want to have a well trained and educated workforce in prisons? It is the mark of good management. Digby Jones said the other day that there will be no jobs for unskilled people. Given that prison officers come in at quite a low level of education, surely it would be our aspiration to educate and train them relevantly for the job and to develop their own talents?
Paul Goggins: I agree very strongly with that. What we have now is a system where prison governors must work out with their staff what is the appropriate training for them and make sure that is carried through. The Prison Service staff need to be well trained and need to gain vocational qualifications that are appropriate.

Q773 Chairman: Would you like to see an environment in which prisoners have an entitlement to education and training and prison officers have an entitlement?
Paul Goggins: That is a very good way of putting it. I think the staff do have an entitlement to expect to receive appropriate training. In the end, what are they being trained for? They are being trained to work with and motivate the prisoners who are in their custody and care. What we are trying to do in prison is to change lives and that requires tremendous skill on the part of an officer who has to be responsible for security and safety but also has to be able to motivate and help people change their behaviour and attitude. That is a highly skilled job.

Q774 Chairman: We have seen good evidence of some very highly motivated prison officers, although we are finding prison officers at a senior level a little elusive in coming before this Committee, but we shall make them in the end.
Paul Goggins: I am glad you made that point. It is a point I make whenever I have the opportunity. We have a very dedicated workforce in our prisons who do a fantastic job. They are no longer turnkeys; they are professional people who are trying to change people's lives.
Chairman: We will have the Prison Officers' Association at the highest level here.

Q775 Mr Turner: Could I go back to why the transfer of health care worked? Why do you think it worked?
Paul Goggins: Primarily because people understood that the people who should run health care are the health professionals rather than the Prison Service. That was a message that was understood. Then we needed to translate that into action which clearly required some planning. From April of this year, the first 18 primary care trusts commissioned health care in their local prisons. Next April, we expect most other primary care trusts to be commissioning the services and by April 2006 the whole thing will have gone across. As I visit prisons—I know the Committee has been to prisons too—I can begin to see the difference that that is making. It beggars belief that it is only a little over a decade ago that people who were planning prisons were planning operating theatres within our prisons. It shows you how far we have come. Of course, that is a ludicrous idea and we need appropriate health care run by health professionals. We see evidence of improving physical health care but also improving mental health care as well, which is a huge challenge as we all know in our prisons.

Q776 Mr Turner: With the exception of a very small number of prisoners, health care is a dip in and out for most of us. Our need for health care is from time to time, whereas the need for education is continuous and progressive. Is the analogy absolutely right between health and education and what do you think the LSC has to do that the PCTs do not have to do?
Paul Goggins: I think there is an analogy there because just as there is a high level of need in terms of education for people in our prisons so frankly there is a relatively high need in terms of health care. Many of them have acute health needs. Many people coming into our prisons have drug abuse problems and so on so they do require a relatively high level. What can the Learning and Skills Councils learn? I think the most important thing is to get the partnership relationships right, to make sure that there is good communication. I have seen over the last year or so those prisons that have been able to establish good communication with the primary care trusts. They are able to get on with things and get things in place. They are the ones that will be in the best position. Some of them are the ones that went ahead in April of this year with the new commissioning arrangements. My strong urging is that the Learning and Skills Councils are engaged actively and personally with our prisons so that we make sure that there is good communication so that we can get things in place.

Q777 Mr Turner: I am not quite sure what that means. Engaged actively? What do you want them to do?
Paul Goggins: It starts with proper communication. I am aware that in most cases when it came to the relationship between the primary care trust and an individual prison people got on with it. They engaged in proper conversation about what was required, about what clinical governance arrangements would be in place etc. There were some where people were less inclined to communicate and that is a situation where people are slow to develop the proper systems that need to be put in place. I think the lesson is an obvious one that where people communicate, share an issue and come to a common solution, we can make rapid progress forward. That is one of the lessons from the devolution, if you like, of health care to the primary care trusts which can be transferred across to the Learning and Skills Councils.

Q778 Mr Turner: I was going to ask about the manager. Each offender will have a manager and I assume they will have that manager, as far as practicable, throughout their sentence and any probation or whatever may follow on from that sentence. What if an offender is moved from prison

to prison, as does quite often happen, and the local LSC is commissioning something in the prison where the offender is moved which does not provide continuity with his previous educational experience? What does the manager do?
Paul Goggins: The offender manager literally picks up the case right at the start of the whole process, before court. He would be responsible for writing the report for court, recommending a programme or sentence to the court and making sure that that sentence is effectively carried through, both the custodial elements of it and also the community elements. The scenario that you describe is one in which a prisoner's education would be dislocated and it would be the job of the offender manager to make sure that as soon as possible it was possible to put that education programme back on track. What I am hoping is that as we develop the offender management service with a stronger regional focus fewer people will have to go outside their region in order to be found a prison place. At the moment, about a third of prisoners are imprisoned outside the 50 mile distance from home. You know this very well because of your own experience of prisons in your constituency. I want to see that number reduced because if we can keep more people who are in prison in their home region we can better connect them with the rehabilitation and resettlement services that we are trying to develop.

Q779 Mr Turner: That sounds like a promise to close some of my prisons.
Paul Goggins: There are absolutely no plans to close any of your prisons. I visited the three prisons only two or three weeks ago and I saw in Albany Prison some of the best prisoner education that I have seen with classrooms full. It was very active and very well balanced between workshops and classroom.

Q780 Valerie Davey: Staying for a moment with the analogy of health, the Department of Health before it made its provision and funding did a very robust assessment of need. Has a similar assessment been made for education?
Paul Goggins: We have been discussing some of the level of need that we have already established. Four out of five people who go to prison have had some period of exclusion from school and we have heard about the very low levels of numeracy and literacy. They are well recognised, well established figures. It is because of the need to build on the achievements that we have so far made and to sustain those in the long term and link them ever more effectively with the education and training systems that we are now moving to this latest phase.

Q781 Valerie Davey: We have had an extra 30 million for prison education in the 2004–05 year. Has that money been spent? Is it reaching some of those aspirations that people have been very eloquent about this afternoon?
Paul Goggins: The increase that we had last year, £97 million, was spent; this year, £136 million; next year, £152 million. Add to that £20 million invested in developing facilities within prisons. Fifty-three prisons have benefited from that extra investment. The money is certainly going in as never before. It is not a coincidence therefore that the outcomes are showing signs of significant improvement. There is more going in; there is more coming out. There is absolutely no question of that. The old ethos used to be in prisons: get the work ethic going and somehow by osmosis or whatever the prisoner will catch it and then go into work. What we know absolutely for certain is that it is qualifications that enable people to move into work. As we have been able to see this greater number of basic skills qualifications, work qualifications, we can be very confident that that will feed through over the next few years into higher numbers of ex-prisoners going into work and staying in work. There is a very clear understanding now that it is qualifications that lead to work rather than some sort of process of the work ethic whilst inside.

Q782 Valerie Davey: The expertise clearly lies with the Education Department. How is it directing this funding to meet the needs most effectively?
Lord Filkin: The thrust to date has been quite clearly to significantly ramp up the increase in basic skills training. That increase in the numbers has been remarkable. The sort of questions that we are now asking ourselves—and the three Ministers are working on this together—are will that by itself, even if there were to be more money put in, be sufficient? As Paul indicated, we are clear that it will not be, by which I mean that health is an end in itself. In this context, I do not think that education is an end in itself. In other words, just by ourselves getting more of the basic skills numbers or work skills I do not think is an adequate measure of success. I irritate my departmental officials at times by saying, "I do not think our job is education. Our job is being part of a process that gets people into work." Therefore, why I am banging on about it is that, even if we do world class interventions—and I hope we will—in terms of putting in through the LSC and other processes improved systems to get more and more offenders able to take an opportunity of getting basic skills or employment skills in place, we have to try to look at what would the totality of the system need to deliver. Otherwise, that will be a waste of money, by which I mean we have to see the NOMS focusing on getting people into employment, NOMS supporting the wider stabilisation of that person in the community and Jobcentre Plus and DWP seeing that they share with us a very strong focus in policy terms of getting ex-offenders into jobs and keeping them there. Therefore, whilst we will hopefully do a lot by ourselves, that is why I have been quite clear—Paul shares my view; so does Jane Kennedy and so do Cabinet Ministers on this—that we have to look across those three departments, particularly at how we shape a much stronger system which will not

just put the skills in and make the motivators in prison work but have an appropriate system that makes it far more likely that they will be helped into getting a job and staying there.

Q783 Valerie Davey: Who is doing the research to decide how basic skills are best delivered in prison? We heard the earlier comment about the prison kitchens where clearly, providing food, people are learning basic skills for a job. They are also being involved therefore in needing to do the basic literacy and numeracy. That would appear to be in all our skills debates a better way than sitting people in a classroom; and yet we are still developing classrooms. Who is doing the research to decide how best to spend this 30 extra million, plus plus, which we are anticipating in order that the very things that everyone wants to see are accomplished?
Lord Filkin: I do not know. I can find out but I do not know the answer to that question off the cuff.
Paul Goggins: The research which the Home Office is carrying out in this area is in relation to what interventions can make the biggest impact in terms of reducing reoffending. We are just beginning a five year study that will look at a range of interventions. Education and learning will be one of those interventions that we will seek to measure over time. We have a hunch, that we are backing with substantial resources, that this will lead to greater employability and reduce reoffending but we have to make sure that we have the research results in place that confirm whether or not that is true.

Q784 Valerie Davey: I hope the Education Department somewhere can give you the professional advice as to which way to teach because that seems to be fundamental.
Paul Goggins: That is fundamentally why, as with the question of health, we believe that education should be in the hands of the educationalists, the professionals, to deliver because they will know best what to do.
Lord Filkin: A fuller answer to the question would be that that is one of the questions that we will undoubtedly have to address as part of the fairly root and branch review I have been seeking to outline for you for two reasons. We have, within whatever money there is currently, to ensure that it is applied to where it can have most utility. It is a brutal question but it has to be because you have to say, "If that is the amount of money there, how is that money going to be most effectively used" to achieve the goals I talked about which were about maximising the numbers into employment. It also lays a foundation, if you can demonstrate that, for making a legitimate argument that it is better to redirect other resources if you can demonstrate that you are getting effective outcomes in that way.

Q785 Chairman: Whilst we would agree wholeheartedly that education should be in the hands of trained people in education, the evidence we have from some of the small groups is that things like toe by toe, teaching literacy but using prison officers who are fully engaged, are a wonderful way to supplement the professionals. We were very encouraged by toe by toe and we would not want that to be excluded. If you get a holistic learning environment, that is one of the benefits, is it not?
Paul Goggins: I agree very strongly. If prison officers have a role to play there, other staff have a role to play and voluntary organisations and others who come into the prisons in large numbers to help with this and other important tasks that go on in prison can add tremendous value to the basic education task. My point simply is that the overall framework and delivery should be the responsibility of those who plan and fund the education process.

Q786 Chairman: Lord Filkin, you said you did not know that particular area of research. When we were in the Nordic countries, we picked up on two problems. One we seem to be more reluctant to talk about here and that is that 60% plus of people in prison in those two countries we looked at recently were on drugs. To educate someone who is on drugs, you have to get them off drugs and encourage them in a drug education and rehabilitation programme. They were experimental also in terms of attention deficient syndrome in prisoners and using Ritalin. Are we conducting any experiments like that in British prisons? Are we learning from their experience?
Lord Filkin: I would agree with you on the drugs issue which is why one has to see this as a total process to get people into employment. It is all going to be failing without success on drugs.

Q787 Chairman: What about attention deficit syndrome?
Lord Filkin: We can follow your lead on that.

Q788 Paul Holmes: The witnesses earlier this afternoon were enthusiastic about the example that Val has just referred to about prisoners doing the work in the prison kitchen and doing basic skills and combining the two together. We have heard from witnesses in previous sessions that sometimes it is not as good as that and, because a prison is obsessed with meeting its key performance targets so that the Ministers will praise them at the end of the year, they run classes and the classroom door says KPT classes. When you ask the prisoners what they are doing, they say, "We are doing KPT." Is there a danger of this? Are you aware of this happening within the system?
Paul Goggins: I do not make any apology for setting targets because the evidence is that as we set those targets and fund the activity that goes behind those targets we see a substantial difference. Of course it is important that we are also adding value, that we are not just repeating things for the sake of hitting the right numbers in terms of those targets. They have to make a real difference. I was also taken with the example that was given of linking the skills training to a very practical task

which needs to go on in a prison, namely to provide food each and every day. I think there are real opportunities there to link that basic task in a prison with good training and education but more than that: to link those people into real jobs outside of prison once they are released. We know that in the catering industry there are huge opportunities at the moment for people to move into jobs in kitchens and elsewhere. It is getting that join up between the education providers, employers, the Prison Service and the Probation Service so that we manage people through and we are not wasteful. The worst thing that could happen is where people are wasteful with resources, where there is repetition of the same courses with the same offenders. What we have to do is continually add value and link all these things together.

Q789 Paul Holmes: I assume yourself or members of your department will have looked at the previous evidence we have had. That negative effect of target setting has been raised. Are you not alarmed that there may be prisons where they are just so obsessed with ticking the box that they are running KPT classes rather than educating the prisoners?
Paul Goggins: I would be alarmed if there were prisons that were merely seeking to tick the box. The balance that we need is one where people know that they have to be aspirational and ambitious in terms of delivering more and better outcomes for the individual offenders in their care. It must be a meaningful process. It cannot be just literally a question of catching the numbers. It has to be about adding value. From my visits to prisons—I am aware that members of the Committee have also undertaken a number of visits to prisons—I am satisfied that for the most part that balance is being achieved. The important thing is that when it is achieved it can change people's lives.
Lord Filkin: What we were talking about earlier was looking at what would be the characteristics of a system that was more likely to maximise people getting into employment. Firstly, you want all of the system to have that as the objective of policy. I do not by that mean letting people get out because obviously that is part of the job, but you are looking for a system in principle whereby LSC, DfES, the Probation Service, the Prison Service, Jobcentre Plus all recognise the success around this part of the business which is getting people into employment. Obviously you hang the performance management system off that so that the motivators are aligned with the direction of policy. That is some of the medium term thinking that we will be doing around this because that is where you have to try and reinforce the system to be performance managed and rewarded as a system around the objective of policy.

Q790 Paul Holmes: Whenever you set targets which are good for measuring progress, driving people on and so forth, there is always the controversy about NHS waiting lists or teachers protesting in schools and people work to the target rather than delivering the goods. In a previous evidence session we had somebody saying, "But we are doing really well because we have reached this year's target for prisoners going into employment when they leave the prison". Other witnesses are saying, "Yes, but all that is based on is the prisoner saying, 'I have an interview when I leave'" but the Department or the prison does not know whether that does turn into a real job or not. You are saying you have hit a target but you have no idea whether you really have.
Paul Goggins: We have to find some way of representing the achievement which we believe does happen when people attend a fresh start interview, because clearly some people do go on to gain a job. The system that we operate we are happy with in so far as it goes. What we need are much better systems for tracking the progress of individual offenders, which brings me back to the issue of offender management. At the moment, somebody leaves prison and if it is a short term prison sentence that is the end of it until perhaps they reoffend and they are back in the system again. Under the new arrangements, they will be supervised after release and we will be able to track them to see whether they did turn up for the interview, whether they did obtain a job and were able to hold on to that job. That will be a far more meaningful system of monitoring than we are currently able to achieve, both in terms of developing the technology to underpin that and have the offender management system in place. Both those things together will help us to be more effective. To return to your model of bad practice, I would describe it as bad practice if people were simply chasing the numbers. We have of course a robust system of inspection at all our prisons and wherever bad practice was found I would expect Ann Owers and her team to make that very clear as indeed she does with some force on a very regular basis. We will not tolerate poor practice of that kind because it is about adding value.

Q791 Chairman: What jumps up and hits you when you go to a prison is nothing too nasty but it leaves the feeling that there is very little enterprise in a prison. I always get the same feeling as when I am walking around a university. I want an entrepreneur to be on the campus to shake up the entrepreneurial potential of the establishment. I find that in prisons too. What can you do? You run the Prison Service. You are the Minister responsible. Do you ever say to Martin, "How do we get managers who are a bit more entrepreneurial here? How do we encourage them to stay in an establishment for a bit longer?"
Paul Goggins: I am not sure I agree with your assessment. As I go around prisons—and I have been to quite a few over the last 18 months—I find a huge spirit of entrepreneurial attitudes, bearing in mind that the prison governor and his or her staff have first of all to keep everybody in that prison secure and safe. We have massively reduced the number of prisoners escaping from our prisons and that is a primary task which they have. Beyond that, I find great energy, enthusiasm and

imagination. I find partnerships with voluntary organisations. We have 900 voluntary organisations working in our prisons today in partnership with the Prison Service. I see health professionals and educationalists coming in. I think we have a tremendous spirit. What we need to do is to sustain it over a long period of time.

Q792 Chairman: You sound a bit happy-clappy. You go and applaud what is after all very patchy. We as a select committee are always looking for systemic achievement and you do not get that if you just say, "I keep going round and I see encouraging signs." What this Committee knows about education is that it has to be directed. Somebody has to be motivating it. Why does everyone send us to Reading? Everyone goes to Reading. Why are there not more Readings? Then you ask the governor and the governor says, "We are a terribly parochial prison. We are doing it" so a lot of people say, "Reading are doing that" so the systemic raising of achievement seems to be difficult in prisons.
Paul Goggins: I disagree with you because I have seen enough evidence of it over the last 18 months to suggest that there is a great deal of spirit in the way people approach their jobs. If I can correct one piece of information which from the Chair you shared with the Committee—

Q793 Chairman: The turnover of governors?
Paul Goggins: It was that governing governors stay 18 months. The latest information that I have is that the average is 22 months.

Q794 Chairman: That is not very good.
Paul Goggins: If it was 18 months and it is now 22 months, that is a move in the right direction. It is certainly a move I would want to see sustained but, if there is a sense in which this is a haphazard system that is in crisis, I would not agree with that. We have 137 prisons. They all have to be well led and well managed and we want top quality people doing that. Where the Prison Service moves a governor into another prison, it is a bit like buying a house. There can then be a knock on effect. Others have to move as well. What the Prison Service must do over a period of time is develop a new generation of governing governors. They need to make sure they get experience in different establishments along the way. It is a complex task.

Q795 Chairman: So is running ICI or Glaxo SmithKline.
Paul Goggins: My feeling is I think the period for which governing governors remain in place is getting slightly longer. That is welcome but it is a well managed process because obviously I would be very concerned if it was not.

Q796 Chairman: What we are trying to bring home to you, because you are in a parallel universe in some sense to us only in the sense that we are education and you are home affairs, is if we saw that there was that sort of turnover of college principals, vice-chancellors, heads, we would be very deeply disturbed because we do not think you can run any establishment or manage it well with that sort of turnover.
Paul Goggins: I understand that. Would I prefer it if governing governors were in post for longer than an average of 22 months? Yes, I would. I will be expecting that that period will get longer still. Do I expect that a good sign of a governing governor having been successful is that they are in post for 10 years? Not necessarily. We have to understand that the Prison Service is itself a system where people perhaps move around rather more rapidly than one would expect a head teacher of a local comprehensive school to do.

Q797 Chairman: If education is going to be valued, you do not want a system that we tripped over in one prison where the governor said, "The next governor coming in might not value education." Indeed, we had evidence from one governor who said, "I am not having anyone from education and skills on the senior board in my prison. It is not that important. It is a subsidiary thing." If you do not value and put on the prison board an educationalist along with your health person, how can you expect us to believe that you are prioritising education?
Paul Goggins: There should be more consistency of approach. I would expect the heads of learning and skills to be on the senior management team and I believe that in most prisons they are.
Chairman: It has been a very good session. We have had such excellent answers and I have to say to our colleague from the House of Lords, thoughtful answers. Both of you were thoughtful but he was even more thoughtful than you, Paul. It is nice to have a better class of witnesses. Thank you.

Supplementary memorandum submitted by Paul Goggins, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Correctional Services, Home Office

Further to the evidence given at the meeting of the Education and Skills Select Committee, I thought it might be helpful to provide some examples of the various pay schemes operating within Prison Service establishments.

Prison Service policy requires that prisoners receive payment if they participate constructively in the regime of a prison. The pay schemes and rates of pay that operate within establishments are a matter for local management, subject to national criteria.

Governors and Directors of contracted out prisons must have and publish a local pay structure that:

— Reflects Prison Service priorities.

— Supports and encourages constructive participation in regime activities.

— Does not provide disincentives to participation in constructive activities, which are part of a prisoner's sentence/training plan, or learning plan, intended to reduce the risk of re-offending.

— Complies with the parameters of the Prison Service Orders on Prisoners Pay and on Incentives and Earned Privileges policies.

— Rewards good performance and penalises poor performance.

— Is open, fair, balanced and affordable.

All Governors and Directors of contracted out prisons must ensure that the prisoner pay structure in their establishment is reviewed annually as part of the business planning process and that information on the pay structure is available to all prisoners.

Whatever type of scheme an establishment operates, it is essential that it is rational and structured, the requirements of the scheme are clear to both prisoners and staff and it is not applied in an arbitrary or discriminatory way. Prisoners who take part in a prison regime either in work, induction, education, training or offending behaviour programmes will receive at least the national minimum rates of pay.

There is a common assumption that payment for education is always less than that for employment. In fact the position is more mixed.

I have attached an annex setting out some of the many examples of pay systems around the country. These illustrate the process of review and the way that pay systems are not only supporting education but can also be seen by both staff and prisoners to be fair and balanced.

Examples of Prison Pay Schemes and Reviews Undertaken

HMP Lindholme

At HMP Lindholme there is a 5-staged process. At stage 1 all the prisoners are interviewed and during this induction period a learning pathway (sentence plan based on gaining skills) is created and they are paid £7. Stage 2 is an assessment period in either production workshops or education where they are paid £10. Stage 3 is entry to the learning pathway and pay is £12 per week. Stage 4 is continuous learning paid at £15 per week. Stage 5 is qualified status or Peer Partner. £18.50.

HMP Swaleside

A complete review of the regime is being undertaken. Report due January for implementation from April, with the intention of making learning and skills central to the operation of the establishment. In the meantime the instruction below was put out to incentivise prisoners to get more engaged in basis skills learning.

HMP Standford Hill

A pay review was conducted during summer 2004 to re-focus education pay. As a result pay was increased from an average of £7 to £8.40 per week. Attendance has remained acceptable but not been much affected. They will be looking at an integrated regime model next year to reward educational attainment.

HMP Canterbury

Conduct regular reviews of prisoners' pay, most recently in spring 2004. Currently those employed in full-time education receive £8 with bonuses paid for accreditations achieved. Looking at other ways to incentivise education eg by giving greater access to gym. Other current initiative is to deliver "embedded basic skills" within the workshop environment (funded in the short-term by OLSU) by a teacher on 1:1 basis or with small groups. Although very new, this is proving very successful targeting "hard to reach" learners who have shown an aversion to a classroom setting.

HMP Cookham Wood

Full time education is one of the higher paid jobs and bonuses are given for accredited courses and other educational achievements. Literacy and numeracy attract a £3 bonus (level 1, 2 and entry level). Planned accredited courses and other educational courses attract £1 per course.

Blantyre House

All prisoners are paid the same wage but all are expected to undertake education on a part-time basis along with a part-time job whilst at Stage 1. All education is needs based.

HMYOI Deerbolt

HMYOI Deerbolt is currently in the process of reviewing prisoners pay, which currently averages £6.50 per week for all employment except the Laundry and Kitchen, which are paid at a higher rate of £15 per week, this reflects the importance of such work and in the case of the Laundry the unpleasantness of the task.

Within all education and training courses the pay rate is £6.50, but bonus payments of £5 are made for successful completion of accredited courses and the gaining of nationally recognised qualifications.

HMP Kirklevington

HMP Kirklevington reviewed pay rates in the summer of 2004 as it does every year. The pay rates were increased and the review team considered the resettlement ethos of the establishment when applying increments, in particular to community work, education and full-time employment.

The team considered that using a high payment to encourage prisoners onto education was not required at HMP Kirklevington Grange. On entry to the prison the needs of prisoners are identified using a formal system of testing and this together with the sentence planning provides the targets for prisoners with the opportunity to move to full-time external employment being the incentive. The need is for prisoners to qualify, prior to taking on community work or full-time paid employment with the establishment providing the training opportunities.

HMYOI Wetherby

A recent review conducted by the Governor of HMYOI Wetherby found that the pay for trainees in education compared unfairly with other activities. Trainees working in the kitchen were paid up to £15, with trainees in education getting £7.50. The current system also failed to allow staff to reward trainees' good behaviour but allowed them to apply sanctions by reducing pay for bad behaviour.

As a result a new system has been developed this includes an element of the pay that allows staff to recommend both increases and reductions in pay for positive or negative behaviour, the system will be introduced shortly. There will be parity of pay across activities, but pay will be decided by behaviour as well as attendance in all areas of the prison.

HMP Leeds

Is currently reviewing pay. At present HMP Leeds pay prisoners £0.80p per day + £2 per week for a full week's attendance giving a £6 per week basic pay to all prisoners. If a prisoner passes an exam they will receive an extra £2.50.

In industries the basic pay average is £7.50 per week, however, each workshop is bound by a pay policy that sets rates for training at £4.50.

Supplementary memorandum from Lord Filkin CBE, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families, Department for Education and Skills, and Paul Goggins, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Correctional Services and Reducing Reoffending, Home Office

In Q786–787, Barry Sheerman Asked Whether Ritalin was Used to Treat Attention Deficit Disorder in Prisons

Ritalin is a mainstream accepted treatment for Attention Deficit Disorder and when offenders on Ritalin enter custody, prescriptions are continued. In addition, it can be prescribed as a specialist intervention when deemed necessary, as is the case with patients in mainstream society.

In Q783–784, Valerie Davey Asked for Details of the Research Being Done into How Best to Teach Basic Skills

The National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy are running a suite of five inter-linked studies on effective teaching and learning practice in reading, writing, numeracy, ESOL and ICT, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). The projects run from 2003 to 2006 (ICT March 2005) and they build on methodological insights from the influential American Institutes of Research report, "What Works Study for Adult ESL Literacy Students".

The projects aim to identify "what works", that is, the teaching activities that help to develop and improve the language, literacy and numeracy skills of adult learners. Research will identify correlations between teaching interventions and learners' progress and attainments, and, in particular, the classroom and instructional variables that can be correlated with improving learners' language, literacy and numeracy development.

Details of the five studies are as follows:

Reading (Greg Brooks, Sheffield University)

The aims of this project are to investigate (a) the range of approaches to the teaching of reading to adult learners, (b) changes in learners' attainment and attitudes, and (c) the correlation between the two, and to make recommendations for effective practice, for intervention studies and for increasing learners' employability. The research questions are:

- What is the range of naturally occurring variation in the teaching of reading to adult learners in England, and what are the correlations between different practices and changes in learners' attainment and attitudes.
- What are the implications of this for teaching, initial teacher training and CPD, for employability, and for policy.

Learners' attainment and attitudes will be measured at three points (pre, mid and post), and teaching sessions observed systematically, in about 70 classes in order to achieve a pre-test sample of about 500 learners, with a target post-test sample of at least 250. Statistical analyses will correlate variations in pedagogy with changes in learners' attainment and attitudes.

Initial findings regarding the profile of classes indicate that the largest age-group represented is the 30–49 year-olds. 55% are women. 52% said they had no educational qualifications although 61% had taken a course in the last two years.

Writing (Sue Grief, LSDA)

Building on phase 1 undertaken in 2002–03, this project will investigate the correlations between classroom practice in the teaching and learning of writing in adult literacy provision and the progress of learners as they develop the skills of writing and their confidence as writers. The data collected will be both quantitative and qualitative. Statistical analysis will be used to correlate pedagogical approaches with learners' progress.

The project aims to:

1. analyse the relationship between classroom practice in relation to the teaching and learning of writing used within adult literacy programmes and:
   - the progress made by learners in the skills of writing at word, sentence and text level;
   - change in learners' attitudes towards themselves as writers and their ability to use writing in their everyday lives;
2. further analyse and describe reasons for the effectiveness of strategies for the teaching and learning of writing used by teachers and learners;
3. produce a report on the findings of the studies that can inform practice and policy in the teaching of writing;
4. produce and disseminate a toolkit for teachers that can support effective practice in the teaching of writing; and
5. identify questions for further research on the development of writing skills in adult literacy and implications for learners' employability.

Phase 1 of this project involved a process of reviews, to inform the design of research tools for phase 2. A report on this process, which included current practice with teacher and learner focus groups, and consultations with practitioners, managers and researchers in the field of adult literacy, has been published by NRDC.

Key points include the high value placed on the mastery of spelling and punctuation by learners, in contrast to teachers' emphasis on the expression of ideas. Findings also suggested a number of variables that may be significant to the teaching and/or learning of writing—these will tested in phase 2: authenticity of materials and communication; collaborative approaches; making the process of writing explicit to learners; contextualisation of writing tasks and the relevance of teaching and materials to learners' lives.

Outcomes will include a research report and a toolkit for teachers of adult literacy developed in conjunction with the reading project; these will be available in 2006.

Numeracy (Diana Coben, Kings College)

This project has developed the following research instruments: teacher interview schedule, learner interview schedule, classroom observation schedules which comprise of an open-ended schedule, an "episode" schedule and a reflective observation schedule, learner attitude questionnaire, learner background questionnaire, numeracy assessment instrument, researcher handbook. A selection of the *Skills for Life* Survey test items is being used in the assessment instrument, under licence.

Emerging findings are as follows:

— Learners made highly significant gains between the two testing occasions, accompanied by a small positive change in attitudes.

— Overall, however, no significant differences in progress were found between different classes and teachers;

— Of all the learner background variables (ethnicity, first language, age, qualifications in mathematics, numeracy course at work, age left school, gender, employment status, motivations for attending the course), only two variables, ethnic group and first language, seem to have a significant impact on learner progress. Learners whose first language was not English made more progress than learners whose first language was English, although this may reflect the extent to which their initially poor grasp of English impeded their performance at the first administration of the test.

— No significant correlation was found between higher class scores and teachers' years of teaching experience to adults, or to their level of qualification.

— Learners' reasons are multiple and complex but can be categorised under two main headings: for instrumental reasons and for self (in fact, "self" can be further sub-divided into "mathematical" and "social" reasons).

— Although the majority of learners say that they can get by with the mathematics they know at the moment (a finding in line with that of the Skills for Life survey of need (DfES 2003), some still want to learn more.

ESOL (Mike Baynham, University of Leeds and Celia Roberts, Kings College)

This project is observing classes in seven venues in inner and outer London, as well as Kent, and in seven venues in the Leeds/Bradford/West Yorkshire area. The lessons take place in colleges of further education, adult education institutions and in community-based organisations. The levels range from Entry 1 to Entry 3, with the majority being at Entry 2. A total of 70+ learners in London and 70+ in West Yorkshire are being assessed in the first round of observations.

Research questions set by this project are:

1. What is the range of naturally occurring variation in the teaching of ESOL to adult learners?
2. What correlations can be established between different pedagogical practices and learners' progress?
3. What is the impact of course length and intensity on student achievement?
4. What lessons can be drawn for effective pedagogical practice in adult ESOL?

Classroom observations, assessment results and interviews with learners and teachers have led to some interesting early messages. Classes showing progress tend to have a high degree of learner involvement, including learner collaboration: "talk is work". Materials from authentic sources or those that are learner-generated are also associated with learner involvement and progress.

It was also found that ESOL teachers are faced with the challenge of responding to extremely diverse learner needs. A class may contain some students with a high level of education in their first language, alongside those whose education has been severely disrupted or recently-arrived refugees. The key question is not merely "what does effective practice look like?" but "effective practice for whom?"

ICT (Harvey Mellor and Maria Kambouri, Institute of Education)

Prior to the Effective Practice study a range of observational studies were carried out looking at the use of ICT in adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL classrooms. Findings include a broad spectrum of integration of ICT into basic skills; at one extreme, it was seen as just another teaching tool, at the other, an important new literacy. It was also found that most teaching consisted of a group presentation followed by an activity supported by individual tutoring.

The findings informed the development and testing of effective strategies for the use of ICT in these fields through a series of trials under the Effective Practice stydy. The project team are looking BOTH for development of literacy and numeracy skills, AND for development in ICT literacy skills.

A range of teaching interventions were studies, from e-portfolios to community provision, digital video and family numeracy. Learners were assessed in October 2004 and will be again in March 2005 using a specially developed ICT test and either a literacy or a numeracy test. Tutor development will me observed through critical incident interviews.

Tutors have noted a strengthened belief in a learner autonomy learning methodology and a greater confidence in experimenting and using new technology with learners to achieve specific goals.

Tuesday 8 February 2005

Members present

Mr Barry Sheerman, in the Chair

Mr David Chaytor	Paul Holmes
Jeff Ennis	Helen Jones
Mr John Greenway	Jonathan Shaw

Witnesses: **Mr Levi Smith, Mr Afrim Mahmuti, Mr Mohammed Saleh** and **Mr Lasells Hazel,** examined.

Chairman: Can I first of all thank you very much for coming to talk to the Committee. I am Barry Sheerman and I am the Chairman of the Committee. All Committees in the House of Commons are made up of 11 Members of Parliament and on investigations like this we do not always get a full turn-out but we got a very good turn-out this morning. If I go round we have Jonathan Shaw, who is a Labour Member of Parliament; Helen Jones, who is a Labour Member of Parliament; and so is David Chaytor; I am a Labour Member of Parliament; John Greenway, who is a Conservative Member of Parliament; Jeff Ennis, who is a Labour Member of Parliament; and Paul Holmes, who is a Liberal Democrat. You have got all three Parties but we reflect the majority in the House of Commons so it has not been fiddled to have more Labour members; that is the majority in the House of Commons. We have seven Labour, three Conservative and one Liberal Democrat. The job of a committee is really to look at what the Government spends its money on and to see if it is good use for the money. A lot of it is about value for money. A lot of the stuff that we do is really looking at all the programmes that the Department for Education and Skills does. Up until a few months ago the Prison Service and the Home Office ran prison education and training but they have changed the rules and it is now done by the Department for Education and Skills, so it means that our group can have a look at you. We have been doing our homework. We have been to Reading Prison, the young offenders' institution there. We have been to the Isle of Wight to look at three prisons on the Isle of Wight. We have looked at a prison in Finland, a prison in Norway, and two or three weeks ago three prisons in Vancouver because we wanted to see what they do in different countries to see how they compared with what we do. We will not ask you any personal questions. You can put anything on the record but I am just telling you that this session is on public record. Mary is the verbatim reporter and this is very special because normally we take evidence in select committee in Parliament in our usual room and it is all very familiar to us and we have the verbatim reporters taking every word down and all that, but on odd occasions we come out and we have a public session elsewhere. So here we are, we are in Feltham Young Offenders' Institution, not very far from where I was born. I was born in Sunbury just down the road here. I was reminding some of the members of the Committee when I was a kid the only lively thing anywhere near here was the airport. If you wanted to see a bit of life you had got to cross the road and look round the airport.
Jonathan Shaw: Great days!
Mr Greenway: That was when the airport had a Nissan hut!

Q798 Chairman: And as Mick Jagger said to me as we went over there—! Just so we get the spelling right, what is your name?
Mr Hazel: Lasells Hazel.

Q799 Chairman: I am not usually as bad as this but I have got a terrible cold and I have just been interviewing the Prime Minister for two and a half hours. My colleagues have been here since nine o'clock but all the Committee chairmen every six months interview Tony Blair for two and a half hours so we were trying to give him a hard time. We are not going to give you a hard time. We are looking at how good prison education and skills are. Someone comes into prison, yes, they have been convicted of something, and they are serving a period of time in prison or in a young offenders' institution, and it is our view that prison education and skills should equip people to come out of here or come out of young offenders' institutions and take up life pretty successfully in as good a job as they can possibly get and to get settled into a normal way of life again. You are the experts on what goes on here so most of the questions we are going to ask you are about what you are offered here. If you do not mind telling us one thing, it would be useful if you say roughly the length of time that you are here. You do not have to but it will enable us to make comparisons between what is available to short-term offenders and longer term. You will wonder what the hell this is all about. Do you want to say anything to us just to break the ice? You are very welcome. Why did you volunteer for this then, Levi?
Mr Smith: I did not volunteer for it. My education teacher asked me to do it and I said yes I will do it basically.

Q800 Chairman: What does she teach you?
Mr Smith: She teaches me reading, writing, all sorts, English.

Q801 Chairman: What part of the country are you from?

Mr Smith: I am from Ireland originally

Q802 Chairman: Northern or Southern?
Mr Smith: Dublin.

Q803 Chairman: The real Ireland! Afrim, what about you, did you volunteer for this?
Mr Mahmuti: I did not know what was going on. The teacher just told me some MPs were coming. I was a bit shocked sitting with MPs like a famous person, which I am not. Then she said the MPs would ask some questions and we want some lads who have been here a long time and short time as well to tell them about what the prison is like and I said, "Alright, I will do it, I will volunteer for that." It is a pleasure to be here.
Jonathan Shaw: It is good of you to come.

Q804 Chairman: We did speak informally to prisoners in other parts but you will be the only formal ones and this will all be in the document that will be published on our report. Mohammed, what about you, did you volunteer?
Mr Saleh: They asked me and then I volunteered and I said, "Yes, I will do it." They asked for me to explain to you what prison is about and I said I would volunteer.

Q805 Chairman: Good. Lasells?
Mr Hazel: The same, I volunteered as well. She asked me about it. I said I would not mind telling them what happens in education and things.

Q806 Chairman: It is not going to be a state secret as to how old you are; so how old are you?
Mr Hazel: 17
Mr Saleh: 20.
Mr Smith: 17.
Mr Mahmuti: 18.

Q807 Chairman: Let me start off by asking you what sort of education and training do you get here?
Mr Smith: All sorts. You get a lot of English, you get all sorts.
Mr Hazel: It is a mixture.

Q808 Chairman: Yes, alright, let's ask you a more difficult question. How long have you been here?
Mr Smith: I have been here a year and a month.

Q809 Chairman: Okay. We are pretty naive, as you would expect from Members of Parliament, so tell us about what happens when you arrive.
Mr Smith: When you arrive you are in shock. You do not want to come to a place like this. You do not want to be in a place like this obviously, but when you come here you just get your head down, and you go to education. You start learning more stuff about it.

Q810 Chairman: How long does that shock last before you start thinking about getting on with education?
Mr Smith: A couple of days.

Q811 Chairman: As short as that? So when do they do the assessment of what your educational needs are?
Mr Smith: The next day basically.
Chairman: Very soon after you arrive?

Q812 Jeff Ennis: Do you think it ought to be later? Do you think they ought to give you more of a bedding in period because you are in that state of shock? Would it not be better to delay it for four or five days before they do the educational assessment or do you want to get it out of the way?
Mr Smith: If it is done then and there it gets you out of your cell and more or less gets you used to it, if you are doing stuff like that.

Q813 Chairman: Can I just ask the others that question. Was that your experience of how quickly you got assessed for education? Where are you from originally, Afrim?
Mr Mahmuti: Albania.

Q814 Chairman: Your English is very good.
Mr Mahmuti: Thank you. When I arrived in here it was my first time in prison and my first time in prison in this country as well. I did not know how the prison was going to be like. When I saw it I thought it is not quite that bad.

Q815 Jonathan Shaw: Not as bad as Albanian prisons?
Mr Mahmuti: I have never been there either. I have never been to prison so I do not know what people say and if it is bad. All the prisons I knew about I had just seen on TV and in films. I was not that shocked when I saw the prison, but I was a bit upset because what I thought was I should not be here and thought I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. So that was my imagination.

Q816 Mr Greenway: How long have you been here?
Mr Mahmuti: For 13 months now.

Q817 Chairman: Mohammed, how long did it take before you were assessed?
Mr Saleh: It took me about three weeks for me to know everything about prison and how the system works. This is my first time being in prison so how I thought prison would be when I was coming towards Feltham I thought it would be what people talk on the street and what you see in the films—the governors do not really care about you and inmates having fights with each other. When I came here after about three or four weeks I got used to it and I thought it is different, people are more polite. Some governors respect you but there are some governors that do not but you have to keep your head down.

Q818 Jonathan Shaw: When you are saying governors, are you meaning officers or staff?
Mr Saleh: Officers. Sometimes you get officers that show you respect and we show them respect back. Some governors come into work on the wrong day at the wrong time so they take that out on us, if they are having a problem with their family or whatever.

You get a mixture of different governors who have got attitude but you cannot say nothing to them or argue with them because they are the governors and we are the inmates. Apart from that, we just keep our mouths shut. There are certain inmates who argue with the governors and either get put in basic or in segregation.

Q819 Chairman: Have you been anywhere else bar this?
Mr Saleh: No.

Q820 Chairman: So this is your only experience?
Mr Saleh: This is my first time.

Q821 Chairman: Lasells?
Mr Hazel: I got assessed the next day. I came from Hollesley Bay which is in Ipswich. Before that I was in Ashford and Bristol. As soon as they assess you they know what level you are in English and maths. You do not have to go to education but it is a good thing to go to because you are out of your cell more and if you are scared of being locked in your cell all day it takes your mind off stuff. When you go to education you get to express your mind. When I first came it was the same thing. People talk about jail but it is not like people say and what it looks like in films because they talk about 24-hour or 23-hour bang up. It is not really like that. Basically you are out of your cell all the time. If you wake up at 7.30 in the morning and the TV and electric goes off at eleven on the juvenile side, by the time it is 10 o'clock you are tired, so even though you have been out of your cell and you are not going anywhere, you are still tired. Education helps you because it is not just maths and English. There is music, art, food technology, and when you go to the gym it is not just weights, you can play football or rugby. There is a rugby pitch outside so it is good. The one thing I like about education is when you go to education they do not just say, "Do these sums." They offer you what you want to do basically so if you want to do division you do division, if you want to do algebra you do algebra and things like that. It does help you because otherwise you lose track and then things you remember doing in schools seem harder because you have not done them. It helps to stay back on track.

Q822 Chairman: I was very rude. Would you like a cup of tea or coffee while you are sitting there?
Mr Hazel: No.
Chairman: We are all sitting here having a cup of tea and did not offer you one. Okay. Jonathan?

Q823 Jonathan Shaw: What would be interesting to hear is about what you think the education and training programmes in Feltham are going to do for you. Ultimately we represent your families and lots of other people, and generally we represent 70,000 people each and they want to know what all this money is being spent on. They also want to know are these people going to do it again. So what is the education programme going to do for you?
Mr Mahmuti: I think education is going to help me to stay out of crime. That is what I think, that education helps to educate yourself to help you get out of crime. When I first came in here they offered me so many things. They offered me a one-to-one teacher for my English and spelling and reading and writing in English, which was really helpful. I did a course in mechanics. I had done a course for three months and a half and I am qualified for it as well. I did some kind of short course but I think that is helpful because when I first come in here what I thought was I wanted to be a plumber because I know some bits about plumbing but they did not have that course in here. I was a bit upset. They asked me if I would like to join the mechanics course. I did not really know much about cars but I said, "Okay, I will have a go and if I like it . . ." I really enjoyed it and when I come out I think I will do mechanics again because I really enjoyed it. I think it did help me to achieve something.

Q824 Chairman: Is that the course that Ford helped to create?
Mr Mahmuti: Yes.
Mr Smith: I was also doing Ford's as well, motor mechanics and I did not know anything about motor mechanics. I got educated from that. With the reading and writing as well when I do get out I will be looking for a job in motor mechanics.

Q825 Jonathan Shaw: Can feel some benefits from the programme in terms of your rehabilitation?
Mr Smith: Yes, you can.

Q826 Jonathan Shaw: Staying out of trouble?
Mr Smith: Definitely.
Mr Saleh: I was doing the half training course of painting and decorating and then I was doing a training course in gardening but then I finished with that. The only way that I know will keep me out of trouble is by me keeping myself occupied is to be a fitness instructor. I used to go to the gym a lot but when I spoke to the gym governors about whether they are doing a course and getting a certificate in that so basically you have got a certificate to say you are qualified as a fitness instructor, I thought if I can do that at GCSE or A level, but they told me they do not do it any more. I know there are a lot of guys, inmates from different wings that want to be fitness instructors but, without doubt, they need to get the qualification while they are in here instead of coming out and then going to college and going through all that long process. By the time they are doing that, who knows, they can just go back and do other crimes on the side.

Q827 Jonathan Shaw: So it is about getting the courses. You want to do plumbing. You want to do fitness instructing. What about yourself?
Mr Hazel: I have not been here that long but what I would like to do is the same—fitness instructor, sports and recreation, things like that. They do not really do that in here. If you get the fitness

instruction then that is the first stepping stone to go all the way up. So that is what I would like to do as well.
Mr Saleh: When you come out you can finish off half of the course that you have done here to make it easier for you and so then—
Mr Mahmuti: May I excuse myself for five minutes?

Q828 Helen Jones: Could you tell us a bit about what your experiences of education were before you came here? Were they good or bad? If they were bad, what is it particularly that has made the difference for you in here? What has been done that you think has got you back into education? Is it the courses? Is it the teachers? Is it a mixture?
Mr Saleh: Before I was in here I was an ignorant child. I never used to listen to anybody. I just did what I had to do and followed other people doing crimes, so whatever they were doing I used to follow them and do what they did. Basically I was a follower. Since I have come here doing certain jobs right, now at the moment I am working as an education orderly, so I see inmates in different classes. I just go and clean different classes and if there are other inmates that need help if they are stuck with maths or English I know because obviously I have been trained and they have taught me how to do it.

Q829 Jonathan Shaw: Is that what that is? Listeners?
Mr Saleh: Listeners that is the next job. That is a two-week training course.

Q830 Helen Jones: So you have been given a bit of responsibility; is that what you are saying?
Mr Saleh: If inmates have got problems with family out there or with baby mothers and they are here for Christmas, and certain inmates that think they are going to commit suicide or kill themselves, they prefer to speak to a listener like me. To keep me occupied I can sit down and listen to a person and how he is feeling. So the anger he has got in him he can take it all out and talk to me so once he has finished talking to me he is okay—but he would prefer to talk to an inmate than talking to the governors.

Q831 Helen Jones: Levi, can you tell us perhaps—
Mr Smith: When I first came in here I did not know A to B. I did not know how to read. I did not know any letters. Then I met the education teacher one-to-one and ever since then she has been teaching me. Now I am just getting on with reading.

Q832 Helen Jones: You have had a lot of one-to-one support rather than being in a class?
Mr Smith: Lots of one-to-one.

Q833 Helen Jones: That has worked for you?
Mr Smith: Definitely it has.

Q834 Helen Jones: Before you came in here what had happened with your education? Had you had a bad experience?
Mr Smith: When I was on the outside, I am a traveller obviously and I had never been to school in my life. I travelled up and down the country. When I came into here that is when I started education.

Q835 Helen Jones: So you have started from scratch really?
Mr Smith: Yes.

Q836 Helen Jones: What about Lasells?
Mr Hazel: My education was good in school but the difference is when you are doing education in school you have got a class of 30 children and some people do not want to work, some people do want to work, and you have got the misbehavers and the good. You learn but you do not learn as much because in here there are five, six, seven, eight people to a class. If you do need help it is not one-to-one one with the teacher but the teacher can show you what you are doing wrong and what needs to be done right. It is easier. You can tell her what your weaknesses are and what you are good at. If you need help, for instance I am good at maths and stuff but the only thing I have problems with is algebra. It seems to me pretty confusing—
Jonathan Shaw: Do not worry about it!
Chairman: Do not take any notice of this lot; they all failed maths!
Helen Jones: No I did not!

Q837 Chairman: And John is a good mathematician.
Mr Hazel: It is hard. I can do the easy ones but it gets confusing and I just do not know how it works basically but it seems like I am not the only one so that is good!

Q838 Helen Jones: No, you are definitely not. Really what you are all saying to us it is that one-to-one support has been valuable for you?
Mr Smith: Yes it is. When you are in a group and asking you are not getting much help but when you are by yourself with an education teacher then—

Q839 Helen Jones: It takes out the embarrassment factor?
Mr Smith: Yes, it does.
Helen Jones: Thank you for that, it is very useful.

Q840 Jeff Ennis: Is there any stigma attached to doing education in this institution? In other words, is it seen not to be manly to do a particular subject or whatever or does everybody accept education for its value now in Feltham?
Mr Smith: Some lads do and some lads do not. Some lads come in here and they do not care about education. Some lads do come in here and they do want to be educated before they get out again.

Q841 Jeff Ennis: Do we have a number of students who change their attitude while they are in here and think, "I am not going to do any course," when they come into the prison and then by the end they have started doing courses and are benefiting from them?

Mr Hazel: What happens when you see other people doing things like painting and decorating and things, even though some people do not mind doing it, they think a three-month course is too long, but you are not going anywhere so you might as well. When you see people doing good and they are getting awards and they are getting merits and things and they realise when they get out that can help them get in a job. They think, "My uncle is doing painting and decorating," or, "I can help paint granny's house," and things like that. It helps you. Even though some people do not want to do it, eventually they look on the bright side and slowly --- some people are just too hard-headed but you get the ones that come around eventually.

Q842 Jeff Ennis: Do the staff have a big influence in changing people's attitudes when they come in? Are they very helpful in trying to bring people on?
Mr Smith: They are very, very strict on swearing basically, coming out of your cell, make sure your shirt is tucked in. Make sure you bring out your shower kit. If you do not bring out your shower kit you do not have a shower. They are very, very strict. It makes you learn basically.

Q843 Mr Greenway: Let's check this is accurate to start with. Are we right to think that these vocational courses—painting and decorating, bricklaying, motor mechanics—are about the three most popular? Is that about right?
Mr Hazel: Yes.

Q844 Mr Greenway: Why do you think that is? Why are they popular? Is it because there is a good facility here for these three things and other people think they want to do it? Do they want to do it because their mate is there or somebody else they like is there and it is the thing to do or is there a genuine feeling that those three skills are good things for them to do?
Mr Smith: Some people go into the workshops and they mess about sometimes. They are not into the course. They cannot be bothered. They just go there to talk to other lads and to get out of their cell for the day. Most of us go there to do our courses basically and get our certificates so when we get out we have got some kind of qualification so it can help us try and get us a job.

Q845 Mr Greenway: Why is it those three things? What I am trying to find out is what is the attraction of painting and decorating and bricklaying?
Mr Saleh: Most of the people in this prison, all the inmates, the only thing they can think of every time when I ask them, even people that are first time landing into jail, the first thing they will say is a mechanic or bricklaying or painting or decorating. That is what us teenagers think about as being employed—mechanics, painting and decorating and bricklaying. That is the only thing we can think of.
Mr Mahmuti: Probably because you would find a job when you leave and get some money as well.
Mr Saleh: It is easier to get employed by them jobs than being employed in other things like with a BT company.

Q846 Mr Greenway: So there is a purpose? There is method behind their choice? There is something they are thinking about, "When I get outside I could do this"?
Mr Saleh: Other people have been employed outside as painters and decorators and in bricklaying. Most of them are getting to the age that they are getting old so they need youngsters to get experienced so they have got finally in the future to say, "Yes, they are more experienced."

Q847 Chairman: Do you get any careers advice in here, jobs advice about what sort of thing you should be looking at?
Mr Saleh: Not really. It depends if they are in a good mood when they come into work. Most of the time when they come into work and they are not in the mood, they explain it to us but not as clearly so that we understand what they are saying. Sometimes they just say, "Do that. Make this wall painted, that, that", whatever. Sometimes people are confused, especially people that do not really understand English. So especially for people like them they need to sit down and talk them slowly bit by bit for them to understand, but some of them do not do that.

Q848 Chairman: How many hours of education do you get a day?
Mr Saleh: I do not know. I work as an education orderly so we start about 8.30 until about 11.20 and then we go to lunch and then we come back to education at about 1.35 until four o'clock for tea time. When it is tea-time certain people get cells, different people got banged up.

Q849 Jonathan Shaw: They have that in the evening sometimes, do they not?
Mr Saleh: Sometimes you get evening education, different wings on different days, but they do not learn, they just watch TV.
Mr Mahmuti: Sometimes you might get an hour and a half for one-to-one, sometimes you might get an hour basically. That helps a lot. Every Wednesday I go down to this other education teacher, his name is Silver or something, and I get two hours there one-to-one

Q850 Chairman: So if you are adding up the hours a week how many hours do you reckon you do in education or training?
Mr Smith: About eight hours, could be more.

Q851 Helen Jones: You said you were good at maths!
Mr Hazel: I would say about 30 to 35 hours. Sometimes education gets cancelled. It does not always get cancelled because sometimes you do something else, you might get education cancelled but they take you to the gym or something. It depends. If it is not cancelled I would say about 30 to 35 hours a week. Sometimes you do not have education, you have gym so—

Q852 Jeff Ennis: What would be the reason education is cancelled?
Mr Hazel: I am not really sure.
Mr Saleh: There are two different sides in one wing, there is the A side and the B side. If the B side has got education and about three or four lads misbehave they will cancel it straightaway and you are banging up, you are not getting education. The main thing that irritates me is when there is a group of six or eight inmates going to education, and if out of eight people one person makes a mistake, instead of the governors telling that person to go back to his wing, they make the whole class go back. That is not fair. It is not really all their faults and basically they are missing half their education.

Q853 Mr Chaytor: Is there anything that you would have liked to do or now having experienced the range of classes you would now like to do that you are not able to do or do you think the facilities here provide you with everything you think would be useful?
Mr Mahmuti: I have only got five or six weeks left now. When I first came it probably would have been nice if they had plumbing and electrician courses because I think there is good money when you get out if you work as a plumber.

Q854 Mr Greenway: So those courses are not available? There is a carpentry course?
Mr Mahmuti: Electronics is basic for two weeks. I mean electronics proper like installation of a house.

Q855 Mr Chaytor: You cannot get a qualification in electronics. There is not a long enough course to get a qualification?
Mr Mahmuti: It is only two weeks.

Q856 Mr Greenway: There is a joinery course?
Mr Mahmuti: No.
Mr Greenway: There is no joiners course. Have people asked for that? Maybe I have got that wrong. Maybe that is what it is, people have asked for a joinery course.

Q857 Chairman: Are you feeling alright now? If you are leaving here soon, when you leave have they told you here what sort of help they will give you? It is alright getting a course or an education in here but when you leave it is getting back, having a place to stay, finding a job, all those essential things. Have they started talking to you about that?
Mr Mahmuti: Yes I had a meeting last week with my DTO youth offending team and Connexions were there and Connexions are looking for a place in the area so they can find me a college and work because I am going to be living in East London so they are going to find the nearest college because I want to carry on doing mechanics, and they are going find me the nearest place I can go to to carry on doing mechanics and part time at the weekend Saturdays and Sundays I can work at Kwikfit doing the tyring. That is what they are trying to do, so hopefully it will work.

Q858 Chairman: That is not a bad package.
Mr Mahmuti: I am really happy with it.

Q859 Mr Chaytor: But when you leave you are attached to a probation officer who you will have see how frequently?
Mr Mahmuti: We have not spoken about it yet but is just going to be a couple of times a week and we have curfew times to discuss.

Q860 Mr Chaytor: That person's job is to make sure—
Mr Mahmuti: Make sure I go there on time.

Q861 Mr Chaytor: At the local college?
Mr Mahmuti: Yes.

Q862 Helen Jones: I know when you come in you get an assessment done on your reading and writing skills and so on, but it has just gone through my head listening to you that some of you must have some other useful skills, practical skills. Levi, you saying you had been a traveller so you must have a lot of practical skills that I would not have a clue about. Did anyone sit down with any of you and work out what you are good at, what skills you had that might be taken a bit further? Did that happen at all?
Mr Smith: No.

Q863 Helen Jones: Would you think that would be useful if it did happen?
Mr Smith: Maybe, maybe.

Q864 Chairman: But Levi you seem to have grasped this opportunity to get your basic skills going?
Mr Smith: Yes, definitely.

Q865 Chairman: From what you said you went straight in to say you have got some real skills that you never had before.
Mr Smith: Yes, I have.
Chairman: All four of you seem to be thriving on it.
Helen Jones: You are all the success stories, are you?

Q866 Mr Chaytor: Can I ask about that. The fact that you are here is because you obviously see a value in the education facilities, the education classes here, but what about other lads who do not. Can you give us one or two examples, not naming them but just tell us a little bit about other inmates who have no interest whatsoever and why do you think that is, what can be done about it, and what is likely to happen to them when they leave?
Mr Saleh: The reason why inmates act like that is because for example most of the people in prison especially adults on my side, the B side, when they go to music all they can see is either a drum or a keyboard but there are some of them who are more experienced and want to be qualified to play a different instrument. That is what they should be having different instruments that people can do instead of one keyboard and a little recorder and a drum player. That is not good enough. A lot of

people come in, see that, and then they just muck about, get into a fight and then start drawing pictures on the wall.

Q867 Mr Chaytor: That is just the limitation of the facilities?
Mr Saleh: Yes.

Q868 Mr Chaytor: Are there a lot of the inmates here who have got an ability to play music when they come in? Is that a strong feature?
Mr Mahmuti: Most of the teenagers like music.

Q869 Mr Chaytor: Like it but that does not mean they can play an instrument, or would they like to play?
Mr Saleh: They would like to play because most of them sing, they MC, they rap, that is why they would prefer to have all different instruments, so they can use different instruments with different beats so they can rhyme it up with the song they are singing.

Q870 Chairman: So you would like to see a greater range of music and taking music more seriously?
Mr Saleh: Yes.
Chairman: Okay. Any other things you would suggest? Paul, you have been very quiet.

Q871 Paul Holmes: Just to ask do the prison officers do any of the training or is it all teachers who come in from outside?
Mr Saleh: It is just the teachers who come in from outside.

Q872 Paul Holmes: Is that good or bad? Would you prefer to have prison officers involved?
Mr Saleh: I would prefer to have prison officers as well because we see them more. They are all over the place. If we are going to the gym or going to the toilet or the next wing or we are visiting, we see them more than teachers. If they are having a break they could sit down and have a chat and they could give you advice. It is better to come from both sides instead of coming from one side.

Q873 Paul Holmes: It is not strictly on education but how much tension is there between the inmates and the prison officers? For example, some of the officers I was talking to this morning were saying that they thought that attacks on prison officers were becoming a bit more common now.
Mr Hazel: What it is like is prison officers at the end of the day are officers so whatever they say goes basically, but that does not mean they are right, so certain officers think that because they have got the badge and radio that means they can tell us what to do. They say "jump" and we say "how high?" That is what happens. To tell you the truth if you respect certain officers they respect you but certain officers try to take it past the limit. If, say, one person does something, then that is it, they are telling us our social is over because of one person's silly mistake or what someone else does. They try to take it out on all of us. Some people get a grudge and that grudge builds and builds and builds.
Mr Saleh: Then they start to hate all the governors even the ones they showed respect before. It just kicks off from there.

Q874 Paul Holmes: So do you ever get any of that tension between yourselves and the teachers or is it just between yourselves and the officers?
Mr Hazel: If it gets out of hand teachers just call for the officers.
Mr Saleh: They press the green button on the alarm and that is it.

Q875 Chairman: Does that happen very often?
Mr Saleh: It happens a lot. When I work in education it happens a lot.
Mr Hazel: Sometimes it is over pettiness and people like to instigate and stir things up, so it does happen a lot.
Mr Saleh: It starts when people talk about earnings, how much money they make, what drugs they used to sell, and that is how it starts off. They both start to argue, especially if they are from different ends, and it starts to build up and someone can say something wrong that will get to the person and that is when it kicks off.

Q876 Chairman: This is in the classroom and people are falling out? They are not falling out with the teacher, they are falling out with each other?
Mr Saleh: When the guv comes in they change it and take their anger out on the guv and it kicks off with the guv after.
Mr Smith: When the lads come in on induction week the lads are on there for a day or two days and they are shifted off onto the wing. They should spend more time on that induction wing and get taught a lot more about the prison before they get moved off to another wing. When the lads come in, the guvs do not know nothing about these lads, how serious are they on the outside, what they have done in the past on the outside. When they come into the other wings the guvs do try and push these lads to a certain limit basically and these lads cannot take that much pressure for what they are giving it to them, and that is why the lads break out sometimes.
Mr Saleh: That is not a smart idea because when they come to Feltham they go straight to the officer, talk to them the first day they come in, and the next day they get moved to the next wing and they do not know nothing about them, their background, what they are good at, what they can do, so when they get shipped out to the next wing something happens and then whatever happens that person gets into trouble for it, not the governor, the one that took him to the next wing. When it is their fault they try to get out of it and then blame the victim for whatever he did when they should have let him stay here longer at least for about a month to find out what they are good at, what they can do, what wing is suitable for them because there are all these different wings here which are suitable for different people.

Q877 Chairman: You think induction and assessment should be longer?
Mr Saleh: Yes.

Q878 Paul Holmes: A lot of people are here for less than a month anyway. Is that a problem because quite a lot of people are in and out fairly quickly?
Mr Hazel: What happens is some people have short sentences, some people have long sentences and some people are on remand so they might be here for a couple of days and then they go. It is more a thing where if you are on induction and you do not know anything about prison, as soon as you get onto that induction wing that is what you see first. You do not know what is happening but you know there are other wings just like this with more people more settled in. When you first come into prison you are not settled in because it is your first time, you do not know what is happening. You do not know what education looks like, you do not know what the gym looks like, you do not know how everybody else feels, so with induction they should let you settle down until you are more humble and you know you can talk to the officers. When you come in you do not talk to officers straightaway as much as we do on our normal wing. On our normal wing we have fun and play games but on induction you do not open your mouth unless you are spoken. So I reckon what should happen is stay on induction for at least a month so they can settle in properly and then get moved because you have some wings where there is not even one person that is on basic and other wings where you have got all ten people on basic. When you are on basic you are barely out of your cell.

Q879 Chairman: What does "basic" mean?
Mr Hazel: No TV and—

Q880 Helen Jones: No privileges?
Mr Saleh: No canteen.
Mr Hazel: No privileges basically.

Q881 Mr Greenway: No canteen so that means no phone?
Mr Saleh: There is another thing as well. When other people from different wings start from standard to get enhanced to move from Quail to Teal and Wren, that is the advanced wing, the way I see it a lot of people when they get to enhanced are still in the wing and they have to wait because basically there is a queue for them to wait to get to the next wing. How I see it is they should build a bigger place with more cells because when people take a long time to be moved obviously a week later they could do something stupid and go back to basic. It is better for them to move them quicker instead of moving slow.

Q882 Paul Holmes: You say there are quite a lot of fights that start in the classes. The lads who are causing the fights, are they the ones who are not really bothered about education, they are just there to pass the time?
Mr Saleh: Mostly the lads who cannot be bothered with education just start on the one that does his work or someone that they think, "Look at him, he is Mr Perfect," or whatever and they will say something to get him angry. You will say to him, "I might be perfect but do not talk to me like that because I will show you the same way how you are talking to me", and that is how it gets into a fight and all that.

Q883 Paul Holmes: So is there a big gap between the people who want to use education and the ones who do not?
Mr Saleh: Yes.
Mr Mahmuti: When you have a fight, if someone comes up to you and punches you and you punch them back, if you carry on doing the fight, they will nick you as well. They do not look at it from the point of view he came first. It should be seen as self-defence. They nick both of you together. Surely if someone comes and punches me I will not just stand there, I will reply. They say if someone punches you, just put your head down and just go to officers. There are not many people who will do that and they nick both of you and it should be the one who started it, and that is it.
Mr Saleh: The majority of the governors in here do not do their job right. Since I have been here for the last seven months on remand they do not do their job right. For example, I am a listener and if someone in a different wing wants to speak to a listener we do not know. He could commit suicide or something and the governor tells me, "Give me an hour and then I will call him," but then they do not. My job is for me to listen to an inmate if he has got any problems. If he does not want to speak to a governor my job is to sit down and listen to him and then try to keep him alive instead of committing suicide. If they are not doing their job properly whose fault is it going to be? It is going to be my fault.

Q884 Paul Holmes: Are they not doing the job properly because they are just being awkward or because they are rushed doing other things?
Mr Saleh: I have not got a clue.
Mr Smith: They make out they are busy all the time but they are not. They think they are busy but when they are behind the doors they are all playing games with themselves.
Mr Saleh: They just sit in their office and drink coffee. If you say, "Guv, can I get my kitchen stuff?" they will say, "Wait, I will do it," and about 25 minutes later you come back and still see them in the same place bussing conversations, laughing, which is not really fair. Some governors, for example the drug test governors, when you are not around, if you are working or in a workshop, they can go to your cell any time without you knowing to check if you have got any drugs hidden but the way I see it is we might be criminals or in prison but no matter what we are they should still show us respect. They should go to our cells and keep them the same way they are. About three times the drugs governors have come to my cell, walked in there, checked everything, they could not find anything but just to check if I have got a phone or any drugs, and they leave footprints on my bed and on my pillow case. That will get an inmate upset and he will take his anger out on the governors. For what? The next governor is doing his dirty job. That is what I do not understand.

Q885 Paul Holmes: Can I ask you about some of the facilities that you have got here. We have seen the library for example and a lot of money has been spent doing up the library. Do you go there very often?
Mr Smith: We all go there.

Q886 Paul Holmes: How often do you get there?
Mr Smith: I go there about once a week. I get a couple of books.
Mr Mahmuti: Twice a week.
Mr Saleh: I work just next door to it so I go every day.
Mr Hazel: Once a week.
Paul Holmes: Can you use a computer in there?
Jonathan Shaw: There are Learning Direct courses.

Q887 Chairman: Do you get any IT courses here?
Mr Smith: Yes.

Q888 Chairman: Have you done them?
Mr Smith: I have not had a go at any of them yet because I am only just coming up with my reading and writing.

Q889 Chairman: Do you have ambitions to do some?
Mr Smith: Yes, I am.

Q890 Chairman: We are coming to our last few minutes. If you thought we have asked daft questions and have not asked you the right questions, now is your chance to tell us anything we should know that we have not picked up. Is there anything about the education and training particularly that you have not said that you would like to see improved or you think is a big turn off?
Mr Smith: I pity the education teachers sometimes because there are not enough of them in here to try and teach all of us lads. They try and do their best. They are rushed off their feet every day. Sometimes they cannot even get a rest day.
Mr Hazel: Sometimes if you go to education and you look in one class they might have two teachers but then someone else's lessons are cancelled. I see that as a waste because even though some people need extra help, I can understand if our class has two teachers it might be a certain reason why they have two teachers, but if you have got two teachers there must be a reason why education is cancelled. My education has been cancelled for the last couple of days but you have got classes with two teachers. I do not know what is going on. It is a waste. The worst thing is if education is cancelled. It might be cancelled from 1.30 for the rest of the day. You come out for dinner and they are telling you there is no social basically, and I have been banged up since 1.30.

Q891 Paul Holmes: What is the usual reason they would give for cancelling classes?
Mr Hazel: I do not know. Short on staff is what they say.
Mr Salah: That is what happens most, short of staff. That is another thing they need to sort out about their staff.

Q892 Paul Holmes: They are short on teaching staff rather than short on prison officers to take you to the lessons?
Mr Hazel: Sometimes they get short on prison officers. I can understand it if an officer is sick, we all get sick, but if you do not have association, you might have court the next day or you might need to phone somebody urgently, something like that, because they are short on officers you cannot have it. On my side on the wing everyone is on the top level, is on enhanced, so they might give all the people in enhanced association but the standard do not get it. Obviously you are on enhanced so you get more privileges but everybody needs to shower and make a phone call.
Mr Saleh: Everybody should get treated equal not different, no matter what level or standard they are. If they have got court the next day they should be able to take them out one-by-one, take them to the shower and have a shower rather then bang up and have a shower in your sink. I do not know why they even say that.

Q893 Chairman: Is there anything you want to say?
Mr Mahmuti: I agree with him. They probably need more officers working here. When it comes to association probably they just need more officers.

Q894 Mr Greenway: I have got the impression that you are all pretty impressed with the education facilities that are here but are there shortcomings, are there things that you think they should be providing that they are not providing?
Mr Saleh: These inmates are all different characters. They come from different countries and different cultures and how I see it is they should build more classes and teachers from different cultures. For example, they should be able to do French, Spanish—

Q895 Chairman: There is no language education, just English?
Mr Saleh: Geography, history, RE, to learn about background histories, about Germany, World War II. Basically they should build more education than what it is right now. If you think of it a lot of people just keep going every day and see the same education class and do the same thing every day. Obviously they get fed up and they will think, "Forget it, let's just do something to get the whole class to go back to their wing," and for everyone to bang up basically, to spoil it for everyone.
Mr Greenway: You want more choice, more variety.
Chairman: We have come to the end of our session but can I say it has been a pleasure to hear you. Thanks for being so forthcoming and honest with us. Let me say that if you ever need us and you want to contact us you can write to me or write to the Committee. If you can remember any of our names it is your right to write to any MP and they will divert it to where they think your constituency was. If you

have not got a constituency when you are in prison, if you write to us through me, I will pass it on to the person who is going to help you. Alright?

Q896 Jonathan Shaw: Good luck.

Mr Smith: It has been a pleasure being here with the lot of you today.

Memorandum submitted by Peter Blunt, Director, Prison Education Services, Strode College, Somerset

BACKGROUND

- Strode College has 27 years experience of delivering education/training to offenders in custody. College has Beacon and COVE status.
- Currently hold contracts to deliver to 11 prisons/YOI in the South West—the third largest provider of prison education in the UK.
- Employs 300 staff to deliver, manage and back up the services.
- Won Beacon Award for Prison Education.
- The Director has spent 42 years in prison education:
  - four years part-time evening teacher;
  - six years education manager in a Borstal (YOI);
  - 25 years in Prison Service on Grade 7 in HQ Education Branch and Regional Office; and
  - six years as Director of Prison Education at Strode College.

STAFFING ISSUES

- Not a problem because of the following action taken by the College.
- "Home grown" teachers through long standing link with University of Plymouth. Joint recruitment of mature students to PGCE/Cert Ed courses based in eight of our prisons.
- Bursary scheme: 80 teachers given 40 hours of paid time to either shadow or teach.
- Open evenings/displays.

RETENTION

- Mainly due to poor working environment (accommodation, equipment/materials—retention is less good in urban areas (Bristol).

TRAINING

- College has a large training programme published/revised every six months for prison staff. Based on lesson observations, SARs, ALl reports, changes in policy, new courses.

TARGETS

- We believe these to be necessary, They focus learners, teachers and prison managers. However, they have the effect of narrowing the curriculum and reducing progression routes to higher level courses (beyond level 2). The KPTs are very often unrealistic and are imposed on the prison without negotiation with contractors who know the ability of learners.

GOOD PRACTICE

- Recruitment/training—Bursary and PGCE/CertEd.
- Access to HE courses leading to high level take up of University places on release.
- Community Art Exhibitions for the South West.
- Through the gate mentoring scheme (contract worth £370k with Somerset LSC for prisoners serving less than 12 months); below level 2 in basic skills and returning to Somerset. Also similar schemes in Bristol 2002–04.
- IAG provision in most prisons. Three of our prisons were the first nationally to gain the Matrix accreditation. Strode College has appointed a regional IAG development officer to assist the remaining prisons in achieving Matrix.
- Contracts with other organisations to give "added value" to provision in prisons.

— Regular senior manager visits to every prison at least every two weeks.
— Monthly meetings of education managers ($\frac{1}{4}$ business, $\frac{1}{4}$ training).

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

— Accommodation in many prisons is not fit for purpose. Specialist rooms for arts/crafts/cookery/vocational training is non existent in some prisons. "Art" rooms exist without running water!
— Capital—The expansion of learning and skills cannot take place in most prisons without significant provision of additional teaching accommodation.

  ALT consistently report on poor equipment, materials and accommodation.

  Contractors are not consulted on bids for equipment, materials and accreditation fees. Allocations are based on historical data. Considerably underfunded.
— ILPs—use of these is now embedded in the South West but transfer of these in and out of prison is very patchy. An electronic system is becoming an urgent priority.
— Involvement of LSC—This is very much welcomed— especially the integration of learning and skills for all offenders both in custody and in the community. Prototype has been introduced in the South West with indecent haste!
— Creation of inmate businesses as "action learning". Prisoners to implement business plan created during the Firm Start (Setting up your own business) Course.

Witnesses: **Ms Anne Loveday,** Head of Learning and Skills, Feltham, **Mr Dayo Adeagbo,** Education Manager, Feltham, and **Ms Jane Birch,** Juvenile Education Manager, Feltham; **Mr Vic Pomeroy,** HOLS, HMP The Verne; **Mr Peter Blunt,** Contract Manager, Strode College; and **Ms Fiona Dunsdon,** Education Manager, HMP Littlehey, examined.

Q897 Chairman: Welcome everyone to this session. You probably know that I am the late arrived Chairman of the Committee. The Chairmen of all Committees interview the Prime Minister for two and a half hours every six months and that is the duty I had this morning, so apologies for my late arrival. The team has been having a really good visit and in the last hour we have got straight into our formal interviews. It is very unusual for the Select Committee to hold formal interviews outside of the House of Commons. It is a great pleasure to be here doing so at Feltham, especially, as I keep saying, as I was born about three miles away in Sunbury so Feltham figured reasonably well in my early youth. Can I just ask you to quickly say who you are and what job you do and then I will go through our team.
Ms Dunsdon: I am Fiona Dunsdon and I am Education Manager at HMP Littlehey. Littlehey is a male prison of 706 men currently in what I guess you could call a fairly rural location near Huntington in Cambridgeshire.
Mr Blunt: I am Peter Blunt. I am Director of Prison Education Services in Strode College in Somerset and we have contracts covering 11 prisons out of 14 in the South West. We are also a prototype area for the new LSC provision starting in August next year. We have 300 teaching staff working in 11 prisons.
Mr Pomeroy: Vic Pomeroy, Head of Learning and Skills, HMP The Verne in Dorset. Just out of our window is the prison ship. We have 600 prisoners. We are a training category prison. Half our population are foreign nationals. Most will be going out of the country on release. I am currently sitting on the board regarding the changes to the LSC and the prototyping.
Ms Loveday: I am Anne Loveday, Head of Learning and Skills at Feltham. Do I need to say everything because we have had a huge introduction this morning?
Ms Birch: Jane Birch, Deputy Education Manager here at Feltham, responsible for juvenile education.
Mr Adeagbo: Dayo Adeagbo. I am the Education Manager responsible for the YOs and juvenile education at Feltham.
Chairman: Excellent. You will know about select committees. They are nearly always 11 members and they reflect the majority in the House of Commons. That means there are seven Labour members, three Conservatives and one Liberal Democrat. All Parties are represented here today. Jonathan?
Jonathan Shaw: I am Jonathan Shaw, I am a Labour MP and I represent Chatham and Aylesford in Kent.
Helen Jones: I am Helen Jones, Labour MP for Warrington North
Mr Chaytor: I am David Chaytor. I am the Labour MP for Bury North.
Chairman: I represent Huddersfield.
Mr Greenway: I am John Greenway, Conservative MP for Ryedale in North Yorkshire.
Jeff Ennis: Jeff Ennis, Labour Member for Barnsley East & Mexborough in South Yorkshire.
Paul Holmes: Paul Holmes, Liberal Democrat. I represent Chesterfield in Derbyshire.

Q898 Chairman: So a good selection here. As you know, prison education has not been in our remit for very long so as soon as it became part of our bailiwick we decided to have a look at prison education and training. We are well on with our inquiry now. We have looked at Reading, we have been to three prisons on the Isle of Wight. We have looked at a Finnish prison, we have looked at a Norwegian prison, and we looked at three prisons in British Columbia last month. We have been quite busy and we have taken a lot of oral evidence and we have received an enormous amount of written evidence. We are getting to the stage where we are

starting to think we know a little bit about it but you will probably be able to disabuse us of that right now. One of the dangers in this is if we ask a question and everyone chips in with the answer we will only get three questions done, so could you help sort us out on who should lead on a particular answer. We will box and cox and see where we come up to. It is very interesting talking to some of the inmates here. They were very positive about the educational provision here and really thought that they were getting great benefit from it. There seemed to be a range of opinion amongst the four of them about how much education access they had during a day. What is aimed at for someone who wants to get as much education as possible?

Ms Dunsdon: At Littlehey our model is primarily part time so most of our students would attend either mornings or afternoons. What we hope to move on to eventually is in the other half of the day they would have the experience of working. We are not quite there at that stage but that would be the model. I guess between 13.5 and 15.5 hours of actual classroom work each week. Open University students of course would do a lot in their cells as well.

Q899 Chairman: Yes but one of the inmates was saying how much he had valued the basic skills whereas other evidence we have taken says this Government and Home Office obsession with basic skills as a driver is crowding other things out of what you can offer inmates.

Ms Dunsdon: I think that is very true. The key performance targets for literacy and numeracy have been in many ways very successful. They have really focused the mind and they have driven a lot of improvements and we are seeing that coming through with the prison population. The standards of literacy and numeracy are definitely higher than they were two or three years ago. However, I think what has happened is we have seen very much a narrowing of the curriculum, certainly in my prison and I do not think my prison is different to any other prison. I do think talking to prisoners as well, as I did before I came here because of course they are the most sensible people you can speak to, they also felt there is very much a focus on qualifications which they thought, yes, that is very important but to the extent of it affecting learning for learning's sake, and I think we need to swing back a little bit from that.

Q900 Chairman: There is a controversy in British Columbia—and I will pass on to the rest of the Committee in a moment—and there seemed to be two schools of thought: one that wanted a broad, diverse range of education provision and then there was another voice more from the non-educationalist, from the prison administrators, that they wanted courses that actually equip people to confront the problems that had got them into prison in the first place—containment of violent behaviour, addressing addiction, and a series of programmes. I certainly came away from the experience of those prisons seeing quite a big divide between addressing particular problems that a prisoner has as against a broad range of education. Does that debate go on here as well?

Ms Dunsdon: Yes, I think it does. I think the way round that is having an individual learning plan that is linked to the sentence plan that actually works properly. I think that one of our greatest failings is the inability for prisoners to take planning from one institution to the next. From the administrative point of view, we work with not even 20th century but 19th century administrative procedures and there can be a potential clash. However, there does not need to be because both things dovetail together with proper planning.

Mr Blunt: It is very rare that you will find inmates with a single problem, they have got a multiplicity of problems, so it is the assessment to find out what the issues are and then an individual learning plan and sentence plan to address all of them. In a prison in my own patch where we had an inspection only a couple of weeks ago, the accommodation there in a big local prison for 600 only enables 12% of the population to access education, so there are other issues. It is not about what we would like them to have; it is what it is possible for them to have both in terms of funding and more and more now in prisons, in terms of lack of accommodation. It is not just the lack of accommodation in its totality, it is lack of accommodation fit for purpose and certainly in all the practical skills there is very little accommodation in education units left now because when KPTs came in, as has already been said, a lot of the wider curriculum was jettisoned and with that you lost the specialist rooms.

Q901 Mr Greenway: We ought to put on the record what we discovered this morning.

Ms Loveday: I think the model here is completely different to what Fiona said but we have to keep in mind that Fiona's is an adult male prison and we have a mix of children and young offenders, and I think our model is something to be copied, but it is not cheap, it is very expensive. We have something like 31 hours of purposeful activity a week, which includes education, training, the gym, life and social skills, and addressing that offending behaviour. It is a complete holistic mix of everything that they need. Just to defend literacy and numeracy, what we have found is that if you put some people on to practical courses, you are able to support them very, very well with literacy and numeracy. Levi Smith, whom you have just met, did not attend formal education classes. He got his literacy and numeracy accreditation through support in the workshops. I am all for raising standards in literacy and numeracy and I think it is fantastic but you do not have to do it that way. Yes, you do have to have special classes for people like foreign nationals but there is a different way and there are different models around that complement everything that you have been discussing here.

Mr Adeagbo: Just to confirm what has been said, I have been to an adult prison and I have worked at Pentonville so I share some of what you are saying but here it is considerably different. For the juveniles we have been very lucky to have funding from the Youth Justice Board and what we have got is what you are talking about, whole areas of education and learning. We even have evening classes and Saturday classes. This is resource led. It is also training led. Some of our teachers have had to retrain and some of the challenges there are still to be looked at in terms of professional development of teachers. Those areas will enable us to teach basic skills in a way that should be done which is as skills for life, integrating it, embedding it, and making sure it has a purpose for the learner not just in a discrete way and that way it does not put them off, instead it enhances them and they can benefit from that.
Ms Dunsdon: Can I just say I think the profile for young people in prison is slightly different from adults. With ours the part-time provision is what has come down from the prison board as being ideal and it does allow for offending behaviour work in the other half of the day. It is not as if people are sitting festering in their cells for the other half of the day. They are doing active courses like that.
Mr Pomeroy: Can I say from another angle that at HMP The Verne we have a selection of things but we also have a selection of perverse incentives. Quite often the provision is led by those perverse incentives. For example, if you attend an offending behaviour programme you are likely to get released early. If you attend education then that does not affect it so much. If I were a prisoner I would be going for the best option to get out first not what is my best option to change me. The other perverse incentive is pay and the fact is if you work in a kitchen you are going to get favoured food or favoured hours. Those incentives work against the individual's needs. What happens is the prisoner is going for his wants and totally ignoring his needs. Coupled with that is the perverse incentive for the establishment that we still have to run the ship, feed the prisoners, clean the prison, and so that drives against it as well and you have got to get that balance right. The other thing that works against us in a way is a bit jargonistic, I know, but it is the parity of esteem between education and vocationalism. I think education is what underpins vocationalism. Certainly something that stimulated me in life was work and education became meaningful to me. What we deliver in prison with Soskice and Finegold is a low skill equilibrium for prisoners on release. We give them low skills so they will get low pay when they are released.

Q902 Chairman: What was that?
Mr Pomerey: Research done by Soskice and Finegold that said Britain was trapped in a low skill equilibrium which is low skill/low pay and if we are to succeed with prisoners we have to move to a medium skilled/medium pay which gets them out of the benefit trap. The only way you get people out of the benefit trap is to give them the ability to earn above the benefit, which is at level three.
Ms Loveday: One of the really interesting things that has happened—and this is exactly what Vic is saying—you have all heard of Business in the Community and we are building up very strong links with that and although it is very small here because of our churn we have already got people going to Cisco, which is next door to us, to do cookery. We have got people out there that have got jobs in pubs doing cookery. We have got an arrangement with Kwik-Fit coming on so they can go and learn their tyre Kwik-Fit bit with the prospect of possibly going to take an apprenticeship on release. Reading have the Transco thing.

Q903 Chairman: Have you not got a sister programme to that? They have got Transco and fitters?
Ms Loveday: We have got a Ford motor mechanics workshop.

Q904 Chairman: It is the same sort of programme, is it not?
Ms Loveday: Yes.

Q905 Chairman: How successful is that?
Ms Loveday: Not that successful but not because there is no will there, but simply because we have a 35,000 a year turnover here. We are only talking ever in any of these things about one or two guys. On that point it is successful, we do our very best, but we do sometimes transfer people into Reading so they can go on the Transco course.

Q906 Paul Holmes: We were told this morning that Ford has pulled out of it here now because you have only got people very short term and they cannot get the continuation.
Ms Loveday: Ford has backed it. They gave us a KA but ReMIT, which was a training arm of Ford and is now a national training company in its own right, are in here and they were funded by the Learning and Skills Council who withdrew the funding because we could not show that the guys would definitely go on to somewhere else to do an apprenticeship. However, I have written right up to Martin Narey and I have heard that I am going to get my funding back. We do short courses.

Q907 Paul Holmes: Vic talked about the problem of low skills and we need medium and higher skills but that requires a longer course. You have got a majority of prisoners even in the adult prisons who are there for a relatively short period of time so they cannot complete on the course. You have talked a bit about trying to ensure that when they are out of prison they can carry on the course but is not one obstacle to that the fact that in England we move people around prisons so much, often away from their home area? How do you get the continuity between prison and college, for example?

Mr Pomeroy: What we are doing currently is prototyping apprenticeships which means that the Learning and Skills Council is breaking the rules about the age of apprentices, about apprenticeships being in prison and not just outside. The frameworks are there in the community but we do not have access to them in prison. We will have 30 apprenticeships in wood machining in industry. We will take people to The Verne. If they are long-termers they will probably get transferred to Leyhill so we will link that course to Leyhill so that we can anticipate at the beginning of the sentence that they will be released to Leyhill, they can then continue the course at Leyhill and then get released which means they can then go into the industry within the area and continue that apprenticeship. The beauty about the framework is that in prisons we have artificial frameworks that do not match to outside. If we have a formal apprenticeship that is recognised by industry (because the issue outside is the employers do not recognise in prison what we do)—and if we do a formal apprenticeship in prison which is the same framework as they accept outside and we progress it to the next prison where possible and then into the community, then the employer will link into that.

Q908 Paul Holmes: When you said "where possible" if a prisoner from Parkhurst is going to somewhere in the North of England, is it always or usually or not very often possible to carry that apprenticeship through?
Mr Pomeroy: What you would have to do is target those particular prisons to take that particular learning journey so we are looking at a particular group that would normally come to The Verne and go on to Leyhill because you can track it and prisoners will go on that journey through the prisons.

Q909 Paul Holmes: When we were on the Isle of Wight in the three prisons there we got the impression that it all seemed to be much more random than that and you could not plan where the prisoners were coming from and where they were going to and you could not plan through the system at all in that way.
Ms Dunsdon: I think the reality is that it is far more random because we are not planning sufficiently. The individual learning plan and sentence plan is still not good enough.
Ms Loveday: I think the population explosion has a lot to answer for. An example in here is that if there are 20 guys coming up to court that we know are coming in here we have to get rid of 20. However good our individual learning planning is and what we had planned for those guys, they have to go where there is space.
Chairman: This is wonderful evidence you are giving but we have a verbatim reporter and she is going to mix your names up. It is not a seminar, it is formal evidence and I would not want you to be misquoted.

Q910 Mr Chaytor: I was just going to pick up Anne's point about you having to get rid of 20 people. Where do they then go? If these 20 are not on remand here but they have got sentences here they can be shifted mid-sentence to somewhere else?
Ms Loveday: They can be shifted anywhere. The worst scenario was about a year and a half ago when we were shipping them from here up to Castington, which is next door to Scotland.

Q911 Mr Chaytor: From the point of view of the Service as a whole why is it not more efficient to send the ones who are newly sentenced to the prisons that have the vacancies.
Ms Loveday: I think the whole idea of putting people into prisons like this is we are local to London so that we serve the London area and try to keep them as close to their families. People have already asked that question and I think that is being discussed by the Youth Justice Board and Juvenile Group whether it is efficient to do that.

Q912 Jonathan Shaw: And whether it promotes a child's welfare?
Ms Dunsdon: Of course some prisoners have to move for offending behaviour courses. We are a national resource for sex offender treatment programmes and drug rehab programmes, so we have prisoners from all over the country who come to Littlehey specifically for those programmes.
Mr Adeagbo: I think there is a need for research in this area because we have got two conflicting issues: do you keep the young men or learners nearer home or do you keep them away and give them stability over a period of time where they can have re-settlement programmes and where the outcomes might be better? Keeping them near their home may not be in their best interests. We do not know. There is a need for serious research into what we are doing because the turnover is really excruciating. It is a challenge for us in teaching and learning and we have to devise OCN ten-hour programmes to survive to give them any meaningful outcome and accreditation. Somebody needs to do some research.

Q913 Chairman: We did admire the British Columbian system which had federal prisons for sentences over two years and the local prisons for sentences that were below two years. It seemed to introduce a stability to the system because you had two kinds of prison experience. Can we touch on a thorny issue (but I hope you will be as honest as you can on this) and that is contracting the education provision outside. Some people love it; some people hate it. There is certainly a lot of division about it. Any comments on does it work better or would you like to go back to having it provided in-house?
Mr Pomeroy: We are into change which means our contract is up for renewal because the Learning and Skills Council is taking over the contractual issues. I believe it is beneficial. I believe it was a good move. I think it opens up the possibility for prisoners to have access to external opportunities. If people come in and out it stops isolation and institutionisation of

teachers. I believe with the new contracts it will make it even more exciting by opening up financial frameworks which are mainstream frameworks by getting into the contractors. With the Learning and Skills Council it means that we link into their funding methodologies. Currently—and Peter will probably tell you in a minute—the contract is dead. We buy hours; and we cannot buy anything but an hour. The problem with the current contract is we buy an hour of education. If I want to deliver individual needs I have got to seek to get a teacher to deliver those hours. Under the funding methodology of the Learning and Skills Council we can pull down additional funding to support each individual learner. I think it is an exciting period of change.

Q914 Chairman: To push you on this, again when we were in other countries, Norway in particular, what they were trying to get is normalisation so that if somebody was in prison they would have the Feltham Technical College providing it so if someone left here who was a local prisoner they could continue uninterrupted. I know that is an ideal and your offenders come from all over the place but is there not a charm about being related to an institution that would be available to them when they leave?
Mr Pomeroy: That is if the prison serves a local area. If you take Portland, 5% of Dorset is in prison because we have three prisons on Portland with 2,000 prisoners and a population of 8,000 so what we have got is a local college and if we start doing that we will skew the community to be looking more like Australia used to. Where you have got a local prison in London where you can divert people back to the local area it may be beneficial but certainly if you look at where we serve in Dorset it would not work because it would resettle a load of offenders straight into Dorset.

Q915 Chairman: Peter, you will be in favour because you need the money, do you not?
Mr Blunt: There is not a lot of that about! I have been involved in prison education now for 40 years in all sorts of guises and in all of that time prison education has never been delivered in-house. It has always been in some way contracted out. In the early days it was very, very loosely contracted out but it has always been provided by outside people. I dread the thought of it going in-house because then that would be going against what everybody wants which is normality. We want to tie in with what the provision is outside and certainly the quality levels that exist outside and if it went in-house it would be so incestuous. I know having spent 25 years at Prison Service headquarters, I thought I was up-to-date and when I left the Service and came into a college I realised how far I was out of date. It is as stark as that. You soon get out of touch when you are out of mainstream.
Mr Adeagbo: Can I just say the new dispensation is only as good as the head of learning and skills who is contracting. It is as good as the ethos and the culture that has been built over a period of time. We have had four years together and we can say we are moving in the right direction. We have got to be very careful. It is a good ideal to have four or five contractors delivering different areas of learning and skills provided there is back-up and support for the head of learning and skills to make the right choices.

Q916 Chairman: Why do so many classes here get cancelled because of lack of staff?
Mr Adeagbo: We have difficulties with staffing. Feltham, as you know, has not really been having a very good name.

Q917 Chairman: ESA is supposed to be providing educational staff. Why is there an absence of teachers in the classroom?
Mr Adeagbo: The difficulties we have is that prison education staff are different from college staff. They are not easily transferable. The teaching principles here are slightly different because we are dealing with different learners and colleges are only beginning to realise that working with juveniles who are disaffected from schools—

Q918 Chairman: When First Bus tells me that they cannot run 15% of the buses in my constituency because they cannot get the drivers, I find that no excuse at all. They are contracted to supply transportation for my constituents and they damn well should do it. I would have thought any contractor if it is contracted should have coverage for sickness. We should not have a situation where teachers just because it is a prison establishment are able not to turn up without any cover.
Mr Blunt: Can I just say how we deal with that in the South West. We used to have a difficult staffing issue and to a certain extent we still do in one urban area in Bristol where there is virtually no unemployment and therefore recruitment is difficult. We realised about three years ago with the expansion of education, certainly in FE where the Government was encouraging more people to stay on, we were going to have a staffing problem three years hence and we decided to look at three things. The first thing we did was to go into partnership with the University of Plymouth and we advertised publicly for people who had professional backgrounds, who were not teachers, but who might want to consider prison education, and we put on PGCE courses and Cert Ed courses for those people. We have been recruiting now and well over 100 have graduated from that scheme. So they are home grown teachers. They did their teaching practice in all our prisons and we gave them a 30-hour prison module which was equivalent to 20 credits for an MA course in prison management which we are also starting at the University. That was one thing. We have home grown a lot of our teachers throughout the South West and they are really outstanding. You can tell when you interview the people who have not been through that compared with the people who have been through that. There is a world of difference in their knowledge and their skills and their

understanding. When you think about it, it is a very big decision to take for someone outside to apply to become a prison teacher. They do not know what goes on behind a high wall. This is one way of easing them into it. It is part of normal teacher training with a specialism for prison education so if they do not like it after that they can still go back to mainstream. That is one way.

Q919 Chairman: That is a good, flexible, innovative way to approach the problem. Why are your contractors not doing that sort of thing?
Ms Loveday: They are under an action plan. I think part of the problem is with the current contracts they do not have any teeth. We are hoping with the new contracts that they will have teeth.
Mr Adeagbo: There are other issues.
Ms Loveday: Slightly to support the contractor, I have to say that the quality of teaching staff that they do recruit is excellent but recruitment is slow simply because of the area that we live in. Every other prison in this area will say they have problems recruiting and also we have to have enhanced security clearance here which takes sometimes three weeks or sometimes it will take seven months. So you may have half a dozen people lined up to support you but by the time you have got them they have got jobs elsewhere.
Mr Blunt: They want a job now not in seven months' time.
Ms Loveday: Exactly, that is one of our problems.

Q920 Chairman: You are all pretty happy with the contracting system so long as it is good contractors?
Ms Loveday: Yes.

Q921 Helen Jones: I wanted to do a follow-up. Perhaps Dayo or Anne could tell us, when you have recruited staff to work here, what keeps them here? It is a difficult job. What are the best ways of keeping those staff within the system so that we get a pool of experienced staff who know what they are doing? What are the hooks that keep them working here?
Mr Adeagbo: Two things and Jane will reflect on some of the care and pastoral support that we offer them in terms of quality of training and pastoral care, but what is important is that we train them and we pay for their training. It takes a certain type of member of staff or teacher to want to come here. They have got to have a feeling for our children and that is important when they come here. We have a lot of support.
Ms Birch: We do. When teachers come into the establishment I think they are wrong to expect they will be teaching five days a week, for instance. With us their contact time is much less. In fact, they only teach 3.5 days a week so they have a lot of departmental duty time which is taken up by planning, organising meetings, et cetera. They also have staff support meetings. We have meetings to discuss quality of teaching, learning strategies, and how to deal with difficult behaviour, et cetera, so we have a very positive behaviour management back-up both dealing with difficult behaviour in the classroom and also for staff.
Mr Adeagbo: Can I just add that it is difficult. We get tears at the end of each day. It is difficult for them coming back every day and it is challenging but they keep coming back so it takes a certain type of staff to work in a juvenile establishment.
Mr Blunt: I agree that staff developmental opportunities are absolutely essential to what you are talking about. Also I think good communication is as well. There should be regular visits from a contractor to the prisons and also staff in prisons should have regular meetings so that they are always up-to-date and they know not only what they are doing but why they are doing it.

Q922 Chairman: Where do they hang out here? Do they have a place where they all mix, a staff room?
Ms Loveday: A staff room.

Q923 Chairman: Is it a pleasant environment?
Ms Loveday: Oh yes, there are three gyms.
Mr Blunt: But that is not the case everywhere.

Q924 Chairman: It is interesting when we looked at pupil behaviour and looked at what was happening in Los Angeles where they have developed a core of teachers who wanted to work in challenging schools or who wanted to be in tough urban situations. They recruited them because they wanted to do that job, they trained them and they kept them together as a cohort even if they went into different schools. The management of the team and the focus had much better results and less turnover than regular teachers. There is no room for a programme like that for you?
Ms Loveday: I think we are doing it here. We have debriefs. We allow them to shut down once a month on a Wednesday afternoon at three o'clock so they all do training, whether it is prison training, we have a child psychologist who talks to them about behaviour management. All the support systems are in place for team working. Here I think we have got it just about right. We have got a very strong quality improvement group which is totally focused on raising standards and quality but we are a team and it is across the prison which is more the answer to some of your questions than just looking after individual teachers. It is looking after everyone and making sure they feel valued as a team.
Mr Adeagbo: There needs to be more professionalisation of prison staff. The different levels and career paths need to be looked at in the future to try and make it more professional.

Q925 Chairman: A question some people do not like—and we are more free to ask it when we are abroad—is we have a group of prison officers in this country that are very undertrained, in our view, compared to a year's training in Scandinavian/ Nordic countries and much longer in British Columbia. Here it is only six or seven weeks, no formal qualifications, a written test and then that is

it, is it not? How far can you have an educational culture of learning here if your prison officers are not involved?
Mr Blunt: That is not always the case. In our prisons, for instance, we have made an offer, again through the Plymouth University scheme I was talking about, of a Cert Ed for every prison instructor and in some prisons they have taken that up, very successfully so.
Ms Loveday: We have also done that here.

Q926 Chairman: Explain the difference between a prison officer and a prison instructor.
Mr Blunt: They are prison officers with a specialism in a particular workshop.

Q927 Chairman: What percentage would that be?
Ms Loveday: Like motor mechanics. I have got eight of my 15 who have done 7407, Part 1 which is the basic teaching certificate

Q928 Chairman: Out of how many prison officers?
Ms Loveday: Prison officers are not instructional staff.

Q929 Chairman: No, but the point that was made to us in other places was that it applied to all prison officers.
Ms Loveday: Every prison officer who goes through the current training does have a basic literacy and numeracy input. They have some training in that.

Q930 Chairman: At what stage?
Ms Loveday: I am not quite sure.

Q931 Mr Greenway: So the guys we saw this morning in the painting and decorating workshop, were they instructors or were they prison officers?
Ms Loveday: Instructors.

Q932 Jonathan Shaw: They have got a Cert Ed?
Ms Loveday: No, the 7407 is the first part of the teaching certificate.
Mr Pomeroy: I am linked into what Peter is talking about which is extremely successful so everyone in our gymnasium now has a Cert Ed Level 4. I am going back to the low skill equilibrium; it is the same argument. We have got a low skilling of people to begin with. The majority of prison officers historically were not employed to do the job they are doing now and have not been converted to what we call the "new" job. So what is the new job? The new job for instructors is quite clear. We want them to be Level 4 trainers and teachers. We want them to be high-skilled. That is what we are doing. The prison officer who has been left I would say in the old turnkey role has not signed up to the new prisoner learning journey and the new prisoner attitude because the prison officer is the most important person in the prison, in my view. Without the prison officer nothing works. I think the prison officer has been left out. I do not think it is the prison officer's fault. The training is out of date for the modern prison officer and therefore I cannot see prison officers buying into it because they do not understand it and I do not blame them for not understanding it. I think really the training is out of date. We need to talk to them about the new culture. They need to buy in because if I want my prisoners to get to education it is the prisoner officer that gets them up in the morning, the prison officers that feeds them, the prison officer that encourages them. The most important person in the prison is the prison officer.
Mr Blunt: Apart from the technical bits of searching and keys, I do not understand why the Prison Service does not contract out prison officer training as they do for prisoner training.

Q933 Jonathan Shaw: How is it out-of-date, Vic?
Mr Pomeroy: If you look at the NVQ criminal justice framework nationally it has not worked. The private prisons have bought into it considerably but the national service are having trouble initiating NVQ programmes. Even so it is seen as a custody award and does not encompass all the things we are doing with prisoners because it is seen as contracted out or somebody else's job. The prison officer is isolated from that and feels isolated. I think the prison officer needs more involvement in that and needs to use prison officer skills more appropriately because I think the skills are there but the training has not been available.

Q934 Jonathan Shaw: So the prison officer from his training very much sees his role in isolation to all the other organisations and agencies that might be working in the prison?
Mr Pomeroy: Yes, they become a threat to everything the prison officer does, security-wise, movement-wise. Every time we get involved we move the prisoner more than necessary and we bring in tools that probably cause problems, so the prison officer has to buy into that to want to do that.

Q935 Jonathan Shaw: Can I move it on a bit to contracts. This is obviously a crucial stage in terms of the contracts. You are saying you have got a pilot. Can you tell us how the pilot is going and what is different about it and what are the problems?
Mr Blunt: In one way it is a very easy question for me to answer but in another way it is a difficult one because we are in the middle of putting together tenders now to gain the contract. Some of the things that are in the contract I do not particularly agree with but it is not for me to argue at this stage because the die is cast. The specification is there and we have to live with it. What is happening is that the LSC is looking for an integrated approach in providing education for offenders, not for prisoners but offenders both inside prisons and in the community, and the contract for offender education has been split into four strands. The first strand is about the overlaying of an induction system which will go across all the other three strands. The second unit is basic education, the sort of things that we are doing currently except that split out from that in strand three is arts and personal and social and life skills.

The fourth one is to do with e-learning, resource-based learning, distance learning. The LSC is looking for four lead contractors in the South West to cover 14 prisons and for the whole of the community-based offending population, 29,000 offenders, they are looking for four providers. At the moment that contract is out and the tenders are due in on 17 February so we are not in a prototype yet. It is due to start in August.

Q936 Jonathan Shaw: Following on from that then can I ask, and perhaps Anne you would like to answer this question, as a head of learning and skills, how do you react to what Peter has said and does that provide you with any confidence that there is going to be sufficient flexibility?
Ms Loveday: I think there are a number of questions which I hope the prototypes are going to answer.

Q937 Jonathan Shaw: What are they?
Ms Loveday: Some of the questions on funding strands and continuity of provision. We have just had a huge discussion about the actual management. If you have got your four different providers, who is going to have the overall management and who is going to knit those teams together within the provision? I think there are a number of questions that the prototype will answer for us. Obviously equality of provision is one, but for me I think it is a very exciting prospect. I think it is new, it is forward looking, it will give us a chance as heads of learning and skills to be innovative.

Q938 Jonathan Shaw: How is it going to do that?
Ms Loveday: At the moment you are constrained within the one contract. We have got a PICTA workshop which is a good example there. I could buy that PICTA workshop in from Cisco Systems up the road. Why do I have to be get it from somewhere else. I do not have to be stymied. It is straight into the provision I am in at the moment. I can get best value for money.

Q939 Jonathan Shaw: You will be able to pick and mix what you want?
Ms Loveday: I will be able to pick and mix and get what is was the best for my establishment. Previously we have spoken about the exclusivity of establishments. What will work here will not work somewhere else but I know what will work here and the staff know what will work here so it gives you good choice. It is very exciting.

Q940 Jonathan Shaw: I suppose my only concern is if there are only going to be these four providers.
Ms Loveday: That is only one model, is it not?
Mr Blunt: There are two other models, one in the North East and one in the North West which are based largely on what happens now but are geographically based rather than based on the four functions I have just been describing.

Q941 Jonathan Shaw: I suppose the question it throws up is it sounds good in theory but there is concern about whether the infrastructure is available out there and will all your picking and mixing that you are going to do, Anne and Vic, mean that it is not sustainable for these contractors? Am I right, Peter, is that a problem, or Fiona?
Mr Blunt: There is that possibility. It depends if all the providers are appointed. It may be that we are bidding for two. If we get two and the other provider gets two there will only be two providers. We could bid for all four if we want but we have chosen not to. I agree wholeheartedly with the way in which the LSC has become involved and will become the provider and the funder. I think that is a really good move. Hitherto we have not been well served with the people who have managed it before.

Q942 Chairman: I am being a terrible spoilsport but we are coming to the last three or four minutes of this session. I want to tell you that we are very grateful for the quality of the stuff that you are giving us but we have now got about 30 seconds each for you to tell us anything you think we have missed or something else you would like to tell us. Fiona, you can start.
Ms Dunsdon: First of all, staff and the new contractual arrangements. We have got some good experienced staff in prisons and we do not want to lose them. Some of them are very good. This is what worries me very much. We need an electronic transfer of inmate records as soon as possible. We have been promised it since "granny was a boy".

Q943 Jonathan Shaw: It is coming soon.
Ms Dunsdon: We are still waiting. I would plea that all the money that has been spent on things like the PriceWaterhouseCoopers consultancy—and I think this is at least the second or even third time they have had some money out of the budgets relating to prison education and the aborted REX project—if we could concentrate on spending money at the coal face for our prisoners. Everybody who works in prison education, you asked what kept them there; it is because they love the job basically. I hate to see this waste of public money when it could be spent on computers for my boys.

Q944 Chairman: We should do a report that says PWC should give the money back.
Ms Dunsdon: If I could just say if anybody would like to visit Littlehey it is only 40 minutes from King's Cross and I would be delighted to show you around.
Mr Blunt: I would like to make two very quick points. There are two of the things that are outside the remit of the LSC which I think are tremendously important. The first one is accommodation. Something has to be done about the quality of prison education accommodation. It is okay in the new places like this but for every one of these there are ten where it is extremely poor. That is the first thing. Materials and equipment is also outside the remit of the LSC and we have got to rely on non-existent

systems for the allocation of funds for them. Finally in a prototype region I would like to think that there would be a possibility of actually creating a secure college in one of the prisons where every prisoner was a student.

Q945 Chairman: I like that. Vic?
Mr Pomeroy: Mine is a weighted score card. Again I am back to perverse incentives.

Q946 Chairman: I like that. This has got to be in.
Mr Pomeroy: The biggest deficit that a governor can have is to lose a prisoner. Unfortunately last year we lost three prisoners and we went from being one of the top five prisons in the country to being bottom. Does that mean that we became a bad prison overnight? I do not think so. We out-score all our educational targets, our training targets and all the rehabilitation targets. The weighted score card is so perverse in terms of security that it means when you are making decisions in prison those low order things on the score card are ineffective. Prisons are failing and the adult learning inspectorate is still not on the weighted score card.

Q947 Chairman: Because of my cold I thought you kept saying the waiter's score card and I was saying to our Clerk, "What's a waiter's score card?"
Ms Loveday: I agree about the weighted score card because we would love to do much more ROTL—release on temporary licence—where students go out to college, go to motor mechanics training, or whatever. Simply because of that weighted score card it is so difficult to get anybody out of this prison. Once we had 20 boys down to go for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. At the end of it we got four cleared and by the time they were going out they were all released. Realistic key performance targets and secure funding and let people like me have my budget please by at least the end of April. I am still getting dribs and drabs of money to come in from 1 April budgets. We do not know where we are often in prisons. We get so much money from different areas. That is one of the things. Consistent resources and what I have said this morning, I would like eight learning support assistants for the YOI side please. Thank you.

Q948 Chairman: Thank you.
Ms Birch: Movements. Just an example. In one classroom last year 2004 we had 1,400 boys in the art room of the YOI side. Prior to that there were 600–800 boys on the juvenile side in one year. We could do so much more if we could keep boys here for longer. We have had to write our own accreditations in order to meet their needs, which we can do and we are working so hard to try our best to do that but the movements are phenomenal.

Q949 Chairman: The last word to you.
Mr Adeagbo: To me it is to refocus on what we are missing. It breaks my heart when a young man goes out from here and is a broken arrow and he comes back within a year or two. We need to focus on why that happens. We need to have the same quality of provision that sometimes we are able to provide and reach this learner. When he goes away and leaves this gate and there is nothing out there for him and he comes back, it makes all our work meaningless.
Chairman: That is very important, too. Thank you.

Q950 Jeff Ennis: Can I come back to a point that was made earlier on and it is specifically to do with the movement of prisoners. We referred earlier on to an example of 20 moving out to allow 20 to move in from the local community. Is any cognisance taken of the 20 who would be moving out in terms of where they are in their educational course work at the time and would that be a reason for allowing a particular prisoner to stay in this institution rather than be one of those to be moved?
Ms Loveday: It is needs led. We do have holds on people up to 12 in this whole prison of 600 and something prisoners, but if it is required they have to go. It breaks our hearts.

Q951 Jeff Ennis: How did you manage to keep Levi Smith here for 13 months?
Ms Loveday: Some of them are here for a longer time. It is just the average. As I said this morning, if someone is here for 12 hours that shoots it all the wrong way for you. So you are talking average.
Chairman: These guys will fight like mad for the health and safety of workers but when it comes to giving our verbatim reporter a 15-minute break between sessions they still keep talking. That is the end of this session. We could talk informally during the break if any of you can hang around for a couple of minutes. Will you stay in touch with us? If you think of anything you have not told us or you think on the bus home or in the car home you should have said this to us will you communicate with us because we want to make this a seriously good report. Thank you.

Witnesses: **Ms Emma Flook**, Numeracy Team Leader, **Ms Lizzie Foster**, Literacy Team Leader, **Ms Francesca Hinchcliff**, ESOL Tutor, **Ms Pat Sandom**, Instruction Officer, BICS, **Mr Ian Hinds**, Principal Officer Physical Education, and **Ms Karen Chaffey**, Librarian, Feltham Prison, examined.

Q952 Chairman: Can I welcome you to the Select Committee's hearing here in Feltham. We do not often meet outside the House of Commons. We do occasionally but it is pretty historic when we come to a young offenders' institution and take formal evidence. I do warn you that everything you say will be taken down and it will appear in our report, indeed even faster I think it will be on the internet shortly. Could you quickly introduce yourselves and we will introduce ourselves and then we will get started. I will first say that we are pretty privileged to have had so much help from yourselves and other people we have met. We have met inmates and we have met some of the people that manage the education and skills here and in other institutions. We are beginning to be slightly dangerous because when a Select Committee has taken enough evidence to know a bit about it they start thinking they know everything. We have looked at three prisons on the Isle of Wight. We have looked at Reading. We have been to British Columbia and looked at three prisons there in Vancouver. We have been to Finland and Norway. We have been around a bit. We are getting to the end of our deliberations. The evidence we have been taking has been pure gold but we have not in a formal setting talked to many who deliver the teaching at the sharp end. Ian, could I start with you.
Mr Hinds: Ian Hinds. I am Principal Officer at Feltham, Head of the PE Department, and I have been here for seven years, 22 years in the Service. I have been a PO for the last 16 months.
Ms Chaffey: Karen Chaffey, Library Resource Manager. I have worked at Feltham for 13 and a half years, always in the capacity of the library. I started off as Library Assistant.
Ms Sandom: Pat Sandom, I run the industrial cleaning course here at Feltham and I have been here since May 1991.
Ms Hinchcliff: I am Francesca Hinchcliff. I have been at Feltham for a year and a half. I am the ESOL tutor in education and that is about it for now.

Q953 Chairman: You must have Yorkshire blood in you with a name like Hinchcliff.
Ms Hinchcliff: Yes, a little.

Q954 Chairman: Most of the MPs here are from Yorkshire so you will get quite a welcome.
Ms Flook: Emma Flook, Numeracy Co-ordinator. I have been in my role almost a year now. Prior to that I was a Numeracy Tutor.
Ms Foster: Lizzie Foster, Literacy Co-ordinator and I have been in post round about six months.
Chairman: So a nice range of experience and diversity of backgrounds. Great, excellent. Jonathan?
Jonathan Shaw: Jonathan Shaw. I am a Labour MP and I represent Chatham in Kent.
Chairman: Used to be a social worker when he worked for a living!
Jonathan Shaw: Anything else you want to say about me?
Helen Jones: Helen Jones. I am the Labour MP for Warrington North.
Chairman: Teacher and lawyer.
Mr Chaytor: I am David Chaytor. I am the Labour MP for Bury North.
Chairman: FE lecturer. I am Barry Sheerman. I chair the Committee and I am the MP for Huddersfield. I used to be a university teacher as well.
Mr Greenway: John Greenway, Conservative MP for Ryedale in North Yorkshire. I did spend ten years on the Home Affairs Select Committee when I first entered Parliament. I was Shadow Prisons Minister and I have been here several times before.
Chairman: He used to be a policeman.
Mr Greenway: I was a policeman for five years, a long time ago. One of my sons is a policeman.
Jeff Ennis: Jeff Ennis. I am Labour Member of Parliament for Barnsley East and I am an ex primary middle school teacher.
Paul Holmes: Paul Holmes. I am the Liberal Democrat MP for Chesterfield in Derbyshire and I was a secondary school teacher.

Q955 Chairman: So you can see we are all-Party and we reflect the House of Commons majority so there are 11 Members, seven Labour, three Conservative, one Lib Dem. That is why we are balanced like that. We are going to ask all sorts of daft questions but is there anything any of you would like to say to kick off how you view prison education and training as it is today here. Is it good, bad, horrible, wonderful, average?
Mr Hinds: I think it has moved on an awful lot. I have the biggest experience of prison service having worked at Latchmere, Wandsworth and Feltham on two spells. I arrived as Feltham got absolutely slated with a Chief Inspector's report and it has come on leaps and bounds. It is fantastic. The facilities are second to none, they are absolutely superb.

Q956 Chairman: One of the reasons we chose to come here was because you turned round Feltham from a time when it had something of a reputation five years ago and whether that was well deserved or not everybody in the community has said that we should go to Feltham, so you must be doing something right.
Mr Hinds: I think there is an issue. Resources is the toughest thing. People always start talking about money but Feltham definitely benefited from being slated in the way that it was and then getting the resources to put it right. Once it had been recognised it was failing, people said let's do something about it. There are probably other jails within the Service that are not as high profile as we are that could do with those resources now, but do not take it away from us.
Jonathan Shaw: Do not give it to anyone else!

Q957 Mr Greenway: Would it be fair to suggest that there were all those new residential blocks—or they were new, they are about 18 years old now—but that the culture did not change initially? The culture

seems to me to be significantly different to the last time I was here which was probably about five or six years ago?
Mr Hinds: I think up until four years ago Feltham had all these different units working independently. You could walk around a unit and say "This is Partridge unit," and then you would go on to Quail and say, "This is different, it operates in a different way." Now they are very similar and the juvenile units operate to the same and the YOI units operate to the same. That has definitely given a better balance across the establishment.

Q958 Chairman: One of the things that we are picking up as we talk to witnesses is that there is some discussion about whether more prison education should be focused on basic skills and targeting skills or whether that is not crowding out other things you could do usefully for changing prisoners' lives. Is there too much emphasis on basic skills, in your view?
Ms Sandom: I do not think it is too much emphasis. They need basic skills. A lot of them arrive at Feltham and their reading and writing is very, very poor. A lot of them are kicked out of school at a very early age. I have had lads through the courts who finished school when they were ten years old.

Q959 Jonathan Shaw: Ten?
Ms Sandom: Yes because they are so disruptive and the schools cannot handle them. They put them out. They perhaps go once or twice a week to one of these centres but they do not always turn up. They are thrown on the scrap heap. It is like looking at a ten-year-old and saying, "You are finished, you are nothing." They are not. They have abilities there. Some of them do want a lot of help with their reading and writing skills and some will accept that help.

Q960 Jeff Ennis: Has the emphasis on basic skills crowded any other areas of the curriculum out, do you think, particularly for the younger students under 16?
Ms Sandom: Some of those under 16 do not want to go to formal education. They like it more informal. They consider they are adults. The law says they are children but they are not. If you look at a six foot six lad who is 16 years of age you can hardly call him a child. He is a young adult, an adolescent but he needs that help and he needs the encouragement and more often than not the one-to-one is what works better rather than sticking him in a class with half a dozen pupils. They can come on to training which will benefit them when they get out but also reading and writing skills and being able to add up, basic mathematics. They actually need that.
Ms Flook: We have a numeracy tutor who works alongside the workshops, the mechanics, the paints. She withdraws them on a one-to-one basis and teaches numeracy alongside those subjects, very much related to what they do.

Q961 Jonathan Shaw: Is that new?
Ms Flook: No.
Ms Sandom: She has been doing it for quite some time. She used to do it group-wise and take the whole group but found it worked better taking them away from that group one-to-one.
Ms Flook: Giving them 20-minute minute blasts and they do that every other day. That is hugely beneficial for them.
Ms Chaffey: I think that will come more into effect when you have the learning support assistants helping out the tutors in the class and then they would do the one-to-one.

Q962 Jonathan Shaw: We have heard lots of good things about learning support assistants.
Ms Sandom: We could do with more here so that every lad has access to an individual tutor for basic skills.

Q963 Chairman: What do they do?
Ms Sandom: They do maths, they do basic reading. There was one here that I had on a course who could not read and write at all but with one-to-one tuition that lad came on and could read. He was a traveller and had never been to school in his life.

Q964 Jonathan Shaw: He was sitting in your chair a little while ago.
Ms Sandom: It would not be Levi Smith, would it?

Q965 Chairman: He told us he could not read or write when he came here.
Ms Sandom: He could not read at all. He could not recognise his name. The first thing they taught him to do was to write his name and you looked at it and it looked like a child's who had just started school but he is a young man. Then he was a bit frightened of using reading and writing. He was frightened of making a mistake. It certainly helped with the one-to-one tuition he had. His tutor used to come over to my workshop, take him away for half an hour and read with him and then put him back.

Q966 Chairman: What qualifications do the learning support assistants have?
Ms Sandom: I am not sure. Most of them are volunteers.
Ms Foster: There is a range.
Ms Flook: They should all have at least GCSE standard maths and English.
Ms Foster: Some of them have degrees, they are educated and they tend to move on to do teacher training.
Ms Flook: They receive training in-house.
Ms Chaffey: The LSAs though are only towards the juveniles. When you have the YO side you have to rely on VSE board of education volunteers and they are matched on a one-to-one basis with students that way. You do not get LSAs for young offenders.

Q967 Chairman: They deliver things like the Toe by Toe? That works here, does it?

Ms Chaffey: It has been used.
Ms Foster: It is in evidence here.
Ms Chaffey: It is not used here all the time but it has been used at times and I think it is still used sometimes.
Ms Foster: There is an imbalance on the YO side because the boys can go to VSE voluntarily or they can be recommended, but very often we could do with support in the class with the YOs regarding their basic skills. Juveniles are covered with LSAs and that works extremely well but there is an imbalance on the YO side.

Q968 Chairman: Can I ask a very simple question. What is your relationship with prison officers? Are they supportive of education? Do they understand as well as you do that prison education is important and should be delivered? Is it a good, harmonious working relationship or are there difficulties?
Ms Sandom: In the main it is quite harmonious. You can talk to the officers. You can phone and talk to the unit staff or even go over and see the unit staff and if you have got a particular problem with a lad they are very supportive.

Q969 Chairman: One of the things we have been worried about as a Committee is that prison officers in this country as compared to other countries get a very short amount of training. They only have to have a short written test, no qualifications and a six to seven-week training period. That is very, very short for most professions. Do prison officers continue to be trained?
Ms Sandom: They receive training all the time. You would know more on that.

Q970 Chairman: Anne Loveday told me there was no more training once they had qualified as a POA except for training in restraint.
Ms Sandom: They have training all the way through. There is JASP training for juveniles.
Mr Hinds: You are absolutely right because the current new officers course is five weeks on the college and the rest of it then within the home establishment. Of those five weeks on the college, one week of that is control and restraint, so 20% of their knowledge is control and restraint, which is a vast percentage of a prison officer's training.
Ms Chaffey: My partner is SO Training in here. He has been in the Prison Service for about 16 years. The training has come down from when he started. He would be one of the first to admit that. You have an eight-week training course and you get five weeks of training in the classroom and three down weeks where you are at your establishments. You get control and restraint which is done every year and then they do JASP training as well working in this prison. The other ones who work at Wormwood Scrubs and Wandsworth will not get that because they are not working with juveniles.

Q971 Jeff Ennis: Going back to the imbalance in funding in terms of the juveniles getting better funding levels and more learning assistants, et cetera, is that more of an attraction to tutors to teach in that age range, as it were?
Ms Foster: Although Feltham A and B is on split sites it is one educational department and at any given time we can teach on either side.

Q972 Jeff Ennis: So there is no attraction one over the other?
Ms Foster: No because although we have staff that have been on A for some time you can be called to teach on B, so there is no real attraction and I would say there is no real incentive.
Ms Sandom: On workshops we mix the two together. We have them from A or B. Often that works better than having six juveniles or six YOs.

Q973 Jeff Ennis: Do you think that the mixed regime could be extended across the whole curriculum or not?
Ms Sandom: I do not know. The YJB prefer them kept separate, do they not, for most of their classes and what have you. We find it works in the workshop better because the older ones tend to say to the younger ones, "Don't act stupid because we are going to be sent back." It tends to work that way. There is not a great deal of difference in their ages anyway.
Ms Chaffey: When I started we used to have class visits into the library and there was mixed education then. It was not split up into the juveniles and YOs and the class as a whole is fine and there is no problem with the mixture of ages.
Ms Sandom: We have not had a problem. It is much better. We are a mixed world, are we not, a mixed society. Some of them are 16 to 18 but the moment they are 18 they are considered to be an adult and they go on to B side, but there is not a lot of difference. One lad could be 17 years and nine months and the other one just 18 but we put one on one side and one on the other. There is only a three-month difference in their age group.

Q974 Chairman: They are legally children until they are 18.
Ms Sandom: I know.
Ms Chaffey: I think it highlights the differences in education on either side because the education is not the same on either side. The education department would be the first to admit that.
Ms Foster: How do you mean not the same?
Ms Chaffey: There are more resources available for the juvenile side than the YO side.
Ms Foster: Yes, I would agree with that.

Q975 Chairman: What would you want to change in the system that we have at the moment? How would you improve it?
Ms Foster: For me personally as a teacher within this establishment I would like to see more support for YOs. It is heavily weighted to the juveniles. If we are looking at 26 as being a kind of cut-off point when

boys seem to reduce their offending dramatically or stop, I think there needs to be input from 18 to 22 in establishments that take them to 22. To me it seems false economy to not support the YO side as regards their basic skills. I think it is crucial that if they are here until they are 22, for the ones that come out of here or they go somewhere else but they are finishing a shorter sentence, there needs to be an input into that side as well.

Q976 Helen Jones: Francesca, how many different languages are you dealing with here most of the time? What proportion of young people come in here with English as a second language or do not speak any English at all?
Ms Hinchcliff: On average I think it is about 25% of the inmates in the establishment are foreign nationals. That varies slightly month on month because last month it was about 23%.

Q977 Helen Jones: We are only talking rough figures.
Ms Hinchcliff: I could not give you an exact percentage but probably around ten to 15% come in with English as a second language who are unable to speak English fluently, shall we say, who come into the ESOL classroom, and on the YO side they tend to be a slightly large proportion than the juvenile side but the numbers vary obviously depending on the movement. So there are a substantial amount of lads who come in here who need support with English. Obviously there are foreign nationals who are Caribbean who come over and English is a language they use as well as another quite fluently. It is still quite a high proportion.
Mr Hinds: I think there is a huge number of different languages now though. I am trying to remember what it was before Christmas. It was 60 or 90 different languages within the establishment at the time and that is phenomenal.
Ms Hinchcliff: Predominantly the languages that are dealt with are East European—Romanian and Albanian. We have quite a large proportion of those students and from the former Soviet Union Eastern Bloc countries, the Balkan states, North and West African regions, and some Far Eastern languages as well. Of course, if you are looking to the Indian sub-continent there are a vast number of languages there as well. There are countless really, a lot.

Q978 Jonathan Shaw: As many as you want.
Ms Hinchcliff: Unfortunately I cannot speak them all but I try.

Q979 Mr Greenway: This Learning and Skills Needs Analysis, which now having raised it we might be able to somehow or other put it in the evidence, is fascinating because it suggested that 30% of those needing language assistance are Albanian.
Ms Hinchcliff: There are an awful lot of them, yes.

Q980 Mr Greenway: 14% from Afghanistan and 14% from Portugal, Somalia Croatia, Vietnam, so it is a real mix and it must be a very difficult job for you.
Ms Hinchcliff: It presents challenges definitely because obviously some students do not get on with others from certain other nations. There are cultural clashes, there are historical clashes between various nations and that can present an entire problem in itself in a classroom trying to control situations that bring up these sorts of issues.

Q981 Jonathan Shaw: If the UN is not able to keep the peace there is not much you can do!
Ms Hinchcliff: Yes, of course the diversity of language as well, trying to cope with a number of students whose first language is completely different. Trying to engage them all into a familiar topic can obviously present challenges but I would not say it is entirely problematic, no.

Q982 Chairman: If someone says to you here is a Government setting you targets to meet, do you wake up in the morning thinking, "Gosh, I have got to meet these targets"? Is there a bit of you that says, "I would like to respond better to the individual needs of individual prisoners"? Is there a tension between those feelings?
Ms Hinchcliff: I would not say there is a tension. I think there are definitely areas which you have to look at collectively and there are certain targets that will affect the group as a whole that I have to meet. However, I think you can take a bit from both. You do get time to spend with individuals and you can learn a lot from them. What you can gain from sitting and having conversations with them can benefit others in the group so they complement each other quite well. Obviously at times it is difficult to deal with meeting targets that affect this diverse group when in some ways it is completely impossible, especially as within the classroom itself I have a mixed ability group so I do not deal with just one level of student who meets, for example, a level one or an entry three; I have the whole range. So let us say in a given class of eight I would have perhaps two or three who can barely speak a few words of English, I may have a couple who can read quite well but are unable to communicate verbally. I may have a couple of level one or two students whose English is quite good and who are working towards accreditations in various different aspects in other classes as well. So within that it is a challenge to differentiate and to meet all the individual needs but at the same time there is only one of me so therefore I have to try and accommodate all of them into a familiar topic so it is quite challenging but it does seem to work. The students are very considerate of others. They are generally willing to help each other and support each other as well. It does work. I have to say I feel fortunate because overall in education as a whole I seem to have a very calm, respectful group

of students who are all very keen and willing to gain something from education. I know in other classes it presents a little bit more of a challenge with non-ESOL students, shall we say, but different cultures have different responses towards education. The students I have from Asia, especially China, Japan, countries where education is considered very important and they have very high standards, are very bright, very keen, very conscientious, and it is marvelous to be able to work with these students who are focused on achieving accreditation and setting their own high standards for themselves.

Q983 Chairman: You have not been in the job that long?
Ms Hinchcliff: Not here.

Q984 Chairman: Can I ask the same question as I asked your colleague; what would you want to improve?
Ms Hinchcliff: ESOL itself does not have an allocated LSA. It was considered by the former learning support manager that LSA provision would not affect ESOL, therefore I would love to have an assistant in the classroom because given the diverse range of students it would be fantastic to have someone to work with individuals, so funding for that would be ideal. Also resources. Teaching ESOL in a prison environment means that the resources that I use and the materials that I use generally I have to create myself or adapt materials that are on the common market, so to speak, being used by other establishments, so some funding or research into creating resources specifically for this sort of environment would be fantastic.

Q985 Chairman: So there is not a learning resource centre?
Ms Hinchcliff: No, ESOL is not awarded one of those and also more staff and more classes because—

Q986 Chairman: That came out before. Is there sufficient classroom space?
Ms Flook: There are not enough numeracy staff, never mind the LSAs. The turnover of staff is massive.

Q987 Jonathan Shaw: Turnover?
Ms Flook: Yes.

Q988 Jonathan Shaw: Tell us about that then.
Ms Flook: Since I have been here we have been constantly under-staffed. You cannot get qualified staff through the door to start with. When we are interviewing we are only ever seeing a couple of people. It just does not attract. It is not attractive to numeracy people because they are in such short supply anyway. My background is secondary school, and to make the move to come here they need additional—
Ms Foster: I think it is also because of lack of career structure. Once you come in as a teacher that is kind of it.

Q989 Jonathan Shaw: You cannot become a deputy head?
Ms Foster: It gets fewer at the top unless you cross over into the prison establishment. Realistically when you come through the door as a teacher that is it.

Q990 Helen Jones: Can I come back on that because it is something I have raised a few times because it strikes me there is a contrast with what happened with the prison health service where it was equally difficult to get qualified staff and keep them because there was not a career structure. I would be interested in your views, both of you, on what we could do to attract people to work in the Prison Service as teachers. How can we give them satisfaction and make them a career structure? Would it be by spending some time here and some time out in colleges? What in your view would help?
Ms Flook: I came from secondary. I took a break for a few years and then came here, my reason being I have always liked working with challenging children. I started out as a tutor and I do not think I would have stayed if I had not got my position, so one of the important things for me was to be able to progress. Also some of the conditions of it not being school. You asked about the conflict between the key performance targets and the curriculum you are delivering. There is an ability to deliver something slightly different from what you do in school. The boys that we see have failed in school and we ask why have they failed in school and hopefully being able to deliver something that is maybe slightly different and possibly having more freedom to do that.

Q991 Helen Jones: I am thinking out loud really but if we could put in place a system that attracted people here based on the opportunities to try out and learn new teaching techniques, perhaps to do some research into those teaching techniques, would that in your view help? The opportunities for promotion within the system are always going to be very limited, are they not, because there are so few people and therefore so few senior posts.
Ms Foster: I think for me—and this is my second teaching post in a prison in a YOI—it is to do with once you are in through the gate you are isolated from other teaching establishments and I think particularly if the contract is through a college, which I understand virtually all prison education is, there needs to be a connection with the college and some integration with the teachers here, with NESCOT for example, or whoever the education provider is, so that teachers here are not feeling isolated. We work with the toughest children and I think there needs to be recognition that you are not on your own with it and not wait for staff training in six months' or 12 months' time. There needs to be a structure from the minute a teacher comes in so that there is support and connection with the college provider and with other colleagues, maybe a special

needs department in a secondary school. There should not be this acute isolation as teaching professionals in prison.
Helen Jones: That is very interesting.

Q992 Chairman: If it was a local provider would you value being part of a staff where half of your time was devoted to this establishment and half was there?
Ms Foster: I do not think that would be practical myself.

Q993 Chairman: No.
Ms Foster: I think once you are in you are in but I feel there needs to be clear support and not waiting for staff to feel undermined and under pressure and then they leave. Prison education is a very useful stepping stone. It is not the end of the world. In a sense it is like the beginning because once you have worked in a prison outside they tend to be rather interested in you.

Q994 Jonathan Shaw: You just said there was staff turnover but you did not give us any detail about it.
Ms Foster: In the two years I have been here I was the only full-time numeracy teacher when I was employed. Other staff were sessional, doing it on a day-to-day basis. Now we have got three, one of whom has just applied for a different job. That is including myself so there are two others. We have basic skills as well who teach literacy and numeracy.
Ms Foster: It needs full-time staff and more weighted to working full time.

Q995 Chairman: How many of them are there altogether? How many tutors and teachers are there here?
Ms Foster: The whole team is round about 100, with LSAs, everybody in together.

Q996 Chairman: Do you feel yourselves a community here?
Ms Foster: Absolutely, absolutely.
Chairman: And you have got a base? I have not seen it. Have you seen it?
Mr Greenway: No, we have seen the classrooms.

Q997 Chairman: But you have got a home, have you, there is a collegiate feel about being here?
Ms Foster: Yes, absolutely.
Chairman: So you do not just come in here, do a few hours and then disappear?
Mr Greenway: You are well-motivated.
Chairman: That is useful because these are some of the things we did not know. David?

Q998 Mr Chaytor: Can I ask about the distinction between those who are working for the NESCOT contract and the permanent employees of the prison. Pat, Karen and Ian, you are under contract?
Ms Sandom: No, I am employed by Hounslow Library Service.
Mr Greenway: Are you?
Mr Chaytor: So we have got a third complication. We have got three employers.
Chairman: So you are a missionary for Hounslow?

Q999 Mr Chaytor: Does that cause difficulties of communication or linear management or overlap or whatever or is that just not an issue?
Ms Sandom: I do not think it is really an issue.
Ms Foster: I would have to say not at all.
Ms Sandom: I work for the Prison Service at the moment but that could be altering very shortly. There is this programme going through again at the moment. We had the REX project and they have now changed the name again, it is OLASS or something, and it is going through that and training comes under the umbrella of education. I prefer working for the Prison Service.

Q1000 Mr Chaytor: But would you argue that education should be under the umbrella of the Prison Service?
Ms Sandom: Yes. It used to be when I first came here that they were Prison Service employees.

Q1001 Mr Chaytor: What has been lost by the contracting system?
Ms Sandom: The teachers went over to Hounslow Borough College.

Q1002 Chairman: In 1993.
Ms Sandom: That was a couple of years after I came here. Before that time although I was employed by the Prison Service (because all instructors were) all the vocational training instructors came under the umbrella of education so it was a complicated situation because although the head of education was my immediate line manager because I was then classed as a civil servant he could not write reports on me so he had to give the information to somebody who was also a civil servant who could then write down. It was a ridiculous situation because you had to go through so many different people. I had a line manager at that time but a G4 had to write up (because he was also employed by the Home Office) my PPR appraisal form every six months at that time. I prefer working for the Prison Service.

Q1003 Chairman: Do the six of you meet every day?
Ms Sandom: We all see each other. We do not all know each other because there are so many staff here and, not only that, you go to your own different areas. We do meet up and obviously we would have contact, for example, if I need assistance, perhaps if I had a lad who was having difficulty because of a language problem because English was not his first language. We take them all to workshops. We hope that they can speak enough English and obviously we have to say to them providing we can get through to them the health and safety issues because we are using electrical machinery, providing we can do it with sign language, we will do it with sign language. We try not to bar anybody. Everybody is equal as far as we are concerned here.

Ms Hinchcliff: There is a strong liaison between all of us in training and education.
Ms Sandom: When it is actually needed we call on each other's resources.

Q1004 Mr Chaytor: What happens if there is a clear conflict between the work that had been done with students in different environments because your responsibility is to the head of learning and skills within the prison presumably, and it is the education manager for NESCOT, the contract work, to whom you are responsible? If there is a fundamental conflict as to how some work is being delivered or how teachers or instructors are dealing with particular inmates, how is that resolved if you cannot resolve it one-to-one between yourselves? What I am getting to is is there confusion or an overlap in the line management and where do responsibilities as head of learning and skills come into conflict with the role of the education manager?
Mr Hinds: It is quite a solid management structure. Anne obviously oversees the function and then within that the workshops have their own managers over there, plus they have got these two POs who operate over there as well so if they have got a problem with the discipline side of it, for example, getting prisoners to the workshops, they can go straight to them. There are education staff and education officers over there. Also the education POs co-ordinate with them so again they have got someone to go to. If I have got a problem with anything I go straight to Anne. We do not need to do that. If I have a problem with anyone else, and touch wood, I do not, honest, if I had a problem with the library, if we clashed on something, we would discuss it and sort it out. It is pretty good like that. The learning and skills structure has come into the jail fairly recently where we have come under this umbrella and the Quality Improvement Group, that we are members of, again addresses all of that, so hopefully it is sorted before it comes to being a major problem.

Q1005 Chairman: If you all got together and one of you said, "Look, I have got you all together because I think there is real potential for a course we are not doing. It is really appropriate for our people. Why don't we do it?" Could you do that? Is it possible? Could you have an impact on the curriculum?
Mr Hinds: Yes.
Ms Sandom: Yes, they listen to what we have got to say. If we come up with some sort of idea that is beneficial to the course we go through our direct line manager.

Q1006 Chairman: Where does that go to? Does that go to straight to the Governor?
Ms Sandom: My direct line manager is Barry Smith. He is workshops manager and I believe you met him this morning. He was escorting you round the workshops. Then through him to Paul Wilson who is the enterprise manager and then to Anne. That might sound a complicated system but within ten minutes you can do it, it is only a phone call away. I think we all work pretty well together in here.

Q1007 Chairman: I was interested because two of the inmates said this morning they would both like to be physical exercise instructors, that was their career wish.
Mr Hinds: There is no money in it!

Q1008 Jonathan Shaw: Just glamour!
Ms Sandom: That would not have been Levi, would it, because at one point he wanted to be the Governor but I did not worry him with it because I did not think he would make it.

Q1009 Jonathan Shaw: How would you change the curriculum in the prison? How would you say, there is a course, we would really like to do this? Who would be out there looking for a partner to do it?
Mr Hinds: If it is PE-related I have a free hand. Obviously I would keep Anne informed on it provided it did not impact upon any more resources.

Q1010 Jonathan Shaw: What about Pat, you are mainly industrial cleaning are you not, if you said, "Look, if people go to industrial cleaning when they get out of here it is not a good enough wage so I have got an idea for something rather different," would they listen to you?
Ms Sandom: Yes. I would not say I would get my own way but they would listen. Funny you saying that, we have come up with something recently. We have one instructor to six trainees whether they are juveniles or young offenders because they need the individual attention. One of the things I have been saying for such a long time is we are not getting the lads who work in our serveries on the units serving the food training in cleaning. The officers say they cannot bring them over because they need them on there to clean the unit so I came up with an idea. I do not have my group on a Friday morning and I go unit to unit and I train them on up six lads at a time. So far five units have already said it is okay. It only went out a week ago when I mentioned it to Barry and it starts this Friday and we are going to do it, so I am taking the training to the prisoners rather than them having to come to the workshop just for one morning a week. That way we introduce a bit more cleaning because it is not the easiest task to get prisoners onto because the majority of them being young men think women have smaller feet because they get closer to the kitchen sink! They tell me that quite regularly. Then we clean the blood off the wall! Seriously a lot of them because they are young men, it is like "men do not clean" for some reason.
Chairman: I have got a new man to ask you a question here.
Jonathan Shaw: Do you clean?
Helen Jones: He even does behind the fridge.

Q1011 Jeff Ennis: I did actually the other day but never mind. It is really on the organisational structure between the different players and deliverers of training. Do you have formal staff meetings as such?
Ms Sandom: Yes we do within our own groups.

Q1012 Jeff Ennis: Is that just within your own groups?
Ms Sandom: When the Governor calls a full staff meeting, yes, and then that is anybody that works within Feltham that is available to attend will attend.
Ms Chaffey: Are you talking about education and training?

Q1013 Jeff Ennis: Yes.
Ms Chaffey: Then we have these monthly QIG meetings where all the team leaders and everyone will come in here and sit around the board room.

Q1014 Chairman: What does that stand for?
Ms Chaffey: Quality Improvement Group.

Q1015 Jeff Ennis: How long have you had that structure? Does that go back many years?
Mr Hinds: It goes back two years.

Q1016 Jeff Ennis: So it is quite a new innovation and what difference has that made? Has it made a big difference?
Ms Chaffey: It means we all get to meet and talk. Ian is sitting round the table, Anne is sitting round the table, all the lead tutors, the head of learning and skills, and we all swap information.
Mr Hinds: Anne herself as she gets a development plan from that group can say, "I can see where I need where to put my resources and what bids I need to put in as a whole," otherwise we all go off in different ways and come back with nothing.

Q1017 Jonathan Shaw: Ian, at the beginning you talked about the changes to this institution. We are aware of the two events five years ago and there is the inquiry going on at the moment. You have said there have been changes. I have been trying to understand listening to you what are those changes and how fundamental has education and training been to those changes?
Mr Hinds: We used to do over 150,000 prisoner hours/activity hours in PE a year. We did 130,000 last year. Somewhere 20,000 have gone and it is not because we have stopped working; it is because there are so many other choices going on for prisoners. They are out of their cells a lot longer now. There is a big violence reduction policy that has had a tremendous impact across the jail. 20% of new prisoner officers' time is spent doing C&R. Once they have spoken to a prisoner and thought that has not worked, what is the next option: "I suppose I should do this". That is not where it should be so that has been a big push in the last nine months. There are major changes. It is a lot cleaner. It is more decent around the establishment. You walk around and people enjoy it a bit more I think. I think they are major changes.

Q1018 Jonathan Shaw: What about the contribution that education and training have made?
Mr Hinds: The fact you have got a whole new education block for the juvenile unit. The YJB obviously funded and put a lot of money into that but the education department was not as big as it is now and able to deliver. The Prison Service is doing a lot more contracts now. NESCOT are the education suppliers. We have got the NHS trust looking after the health care. Does that then allow the Prison Service to look after its core job? I think it does. If NESCOT do not come up with the goods the Prison Service will get another contractor in. Before it was just the Prison Service. It was under our umbrella and probably a bit too cocooned and secretive for its own good.
Ms Hinchcliff: Can I add to that. In terms of achievement in education, I think nowadays there is a lot more focus on achieving targets within education accreditations and we are achieving considerably more accreditations within the department in a whole range of subjects, which I think was not so much a focus before and it has been pushed to the limelight and I suppose from our perspectives we are really seeing some results. The lads are coming through. Not only are they in a better environment on the whole through all the changes in the establishment but in education they are achieving qualifications. They are gaining so much more in terms of their whole life and social aspects as well.
Ms Foster: I think that ties in with something that I mentioned to you earlier, Helen, about support for staff from the outside, from any college provider. For example, with curriculum development that is a major area and I think we try and do things ourselves but we are not entirely sure that we are doing it according to a greater plan.
Helen Jones: You need to be tapped into what is going on outside.

Q1019 Chairman: Why is your college not tapped into you? You are an employee.
Ms Foster: I will not answer; we will all be out of a job. I do not know. I would presume that because they are providing education, we are the education department and we are left to get on with it. When certain structures are in place you will see better development and in turn the children will benefit. Again for me it is absolutely crucial that we should be given the support. It should not be something that should occur when there is a crisis or when there is an inspection looming. It should be running alongside 52 weeks of the year that we are open.
Mr Hinds: There has got to be a balance as well. You raised the question about target setting and the question of balance with that. It is all about the individual, is it not, because if you set a target for so

many level twos or so many level ones, when Francesca is dealing with someone who is nowhere near any of those levels, that is a bigger achievement.
Chairman: We are persuaded of that.

Q1020 Mr Greenway: It is quite interesting. I saw my FE college principal a couple of weeks ago and she was bemoaning the fact that they do not get as much money comparable with the schools and that is what you are saying to us post-18.
Ms Hinchcliff: The other issue is the turnover of inmates is so very high. Trying to account for added value, value add, whatever, is also a challenge because we want them to progress but we never know when they are going to suddenly disappear or when they are going to arrive and how to give them every opportunity. Giving them the opportunity to develop is also difficult because you think you are heading in the right direction and all of a sudden they disappear.

Q1021 Paul Holmes: I just want to explore a little bit more about how you estimate how successful what you do is. Francesca said that in the last few years you can see there are a lot more people who have achieved accreditation at various levels so that is one measure of success. From the point of view of the inmates, do they all value what you are offering? Do they all want to take part? How big is the minority that just do not want to know or who just come along to the class to get out of the cell but to mess about?
Ms Foster: Ian mentioned a while ago about the reduction in violence. Although I am new to Feltham I have seen a change already in the last six or seven months in the boys' behaviour. If their behaviour is manageable by themselves it has an impact on how they behave in education. We can do all sorts of fancy things in education but if their behaviour is really unmanageable—and we were witnessing, for example, officers having to use control and restraint on a regular basis—that has a huge impact on the education department and the boys themselves. With that violence reduction that has certainly helped on education. We can then look at what we deliver because we know that the boys are beginning to look at how they behave themselves and the output is increasing.

Q1022 Paul Holmes: Can all the inmates access the courses they want? Are there waiting lists. Is there a chunk of them who just do not want to know?
Ms Foster: There is a chunk that do not want to know but that is no different from colleges and schools.
Ms Hinchcliff: They are all able to access education but in terms of what specific course I think perhaps with you there are certain restrictions on class sizes.
Ms Sandom: We only ever have six per instructor. If there is more than one instructor you have 12 for two and 18 for three, but they have to apply on a job application form. Then information is put down about them because obviously we have got things like tools, especially in some of our departments. The bricks department has some quite horrific tools in there so you have got to be careful of that. They go from the job centre on to the security department and if there is nothing known about them that is really anything to give us cause for concern, then even if he is the most atrocious young man we have ever come across we find we challenge his behaviour in the workshops. If he is very lippy we challenge it. "Why? Have you thought of this? Have you thought of that?" And more often than not you can turn them around so they are at least reasonable. Once or twice you just do not. You get one or two that you would not anyway in life but that is life.

Q1023 Paul Holmes: Is there much peer group pressure from some others to say "you should not be doing education"? One or two of the boys who gave evidence earlier said there are incidents in class where one kid will pick on another because he is a swot and he is working, and it will end up in a fight and then the officers have to called be in. Is there much of that sort of pressure?
Ms Sandom: I have been here 13 and a half years and in the workshops I do not think I have pressed the alarm bell more than ten times. You are talking about less than one alarm bell a year.
Mr Hinds: It is different in the workshops because they specifically apply for that. In education it is a little bit different.
Ms Foster: Do we have many?
Ms Flook: For boys who are more vulnerable who are liable to bullying we have a Phoenix Centre so it is a special room for vulnerable boys and also there is outreach on the units which can be done. So I do not think there is—

Q1024 Paul Holmes: But Francesca has said twice now it is a bit different in education to the workshops and you also said it was a bit different in other education than English as a second language so what is the problem that you keep hinting at?
Ms Flook: I think in education juveniles are not applying for it. They have to come if they are not doing anything else and there are consequences for them if they do not come down to education.
Ms Foster: Initially there is resistance but—

Q1025 Paul Holmes: At the other end of the process you have got a fair degree of enthusiasm to take part in the various courses and then you are getting more certification. How far do you know or is it just a gut feeling and can you measure where the improved education facilities that are now here lead to less reoffending or can you not quantify it in that way?
Ms Hinchcliff: It is difficult to quantify.
Ms Foster: Only if you read it in the reports.
Ms Hinchcliff: It works on an individual basis.
Mr Hinds: We only see our failures. There are the ones that come back. I have had thousands of successes because I have never seen them again but that is the only way you can see it, when the same ones come back.

Q1026 Paul Holmes: There was talk in our brief about the learning mentor scheme and saying the inmates who took part in that were getting half the re-offending rates of other inmates. Is all that sort of thing not reported back to you, how successful different things might be?
Ms Sandom: On workshops we get some that we do hear about. They will phone us up and say they have got a job or they will get in touch with Connexions. That is another good agency here. We had in October an employers meeting day where all the instructors went down and we had the employers from outside who could offer them jobs provided they had done certificates of training. We had a cleaning company there and I know one or two of mine have gone for that. That does not mean to say they will not come back into a prison because a lot of it depends on they go back to the same area, back to the same friends and it all starts all over again.

Q1027 Paul Holmes: One final question. When we were in Canada there was a lot of emphasis that had come down from the regional government to put much more emphasis in education into things like anger management, personal life skills, that sort of thing. Some academics told us it was a waste of time but some of the inmates we talked to said this was really good. What is the balance here between formal education, basic skills and life skills?
Ms Sandom: We do the Open College Network course. That runs alongside the courses that give them some communication skills.
Mr Hinds: We run an anger management course in the gym. That is a four maximum on that, very specific, very tailored. The majority is referred by the residential staff for that.

Q1028 Paul Holmes: Because the Canadian example made it a condition that you took all these courses in order to get your remission time and get released early otherwise you served your full sentence. Again a couple of inmates we were talking to earlier on this morning were saying the yoga class is great, we relax, it takes the stress away, it stops us getting so angry, things like that. How important is this?
Ms Chaffey: They are stopping yoga classes.

Q1029 Paul Holmes: They were saying do not stop it. That is what they were telling us this morning.
Ms Chaffey: I do not think the yoga classes should be stopped. Just because you cannot get an accreditation against it, it has other functions as well. You cannot accredit everything. I think it is nice to get accreditation but you should not have to accredit everything.
Chairman: On that note of agreement, I would like to say thank you. It has been a very good session. We hope you will remain in contact with us. If you think of something you should have said to the Committee or we should have asked when you are away from this room please drop us a line or an e-mail. Please keep in touch. We hope to make a very good report and it is only with your excellent evidence and frankness that we get the material to do so. Thank you.

Witness: **Mr Brian Caton,** General Secretary, Prison Officers' Association, examined.

Q1030 Chairman: Brian, can I welcome you to our deliberations. You will know that we have been inquiring into prison education and skills for some weeks now. It has certainly been an area we could only get involved in fairly recently because before that it was a home affairs' bailiwick and now it is ours. So as the Committee on Education and Skills we are very keen to write a very good report and we could not do that without your help and co-operation, so we are very delighted that you managed to see us today. We have had one of your colleagues in front of us, as you know. You and I go back quite some time. When I used to be Roy Hattersley's deputy we used to meet regularly on prison matters in obscure broadcasts on radio stations and so on, and of course with your long association with Wakefield and Yorkshire you will probably know some of the usual suspects around this table, including Jeff Ennis who I do not know if you ever had as an inmate?
Mr Caton: Probably should have, Barry!
Jeff Ennis: I went to Hemsworth Grammar of course in Wakefield.

Q1031 Chairman: Let's get down to the business then. This is a serious inquiry and we want to write a good report. We have visited three prisons on the Isle of Wight, we have been to Reading, we have been to three prisons in Vancouver, British Columbia, we have been to a prison in Finland and a prison in Norway so we have not done bad for a shortish inquiry. We are learning quite a bit. We have talked to a lot of prison officers in our visits and made comparisons with other areas. Prison education and skills: is it going the right way? What do you think?
Mr Caton: I would like to think that the way in which we are being steered currently is going to be helpful in tackling the offending behaviour, particularly of youngsters, through providing the three things that I, in my experience, find that prisoners need on release. First of all, they need somewhere to live; secondly, they need the skills for life; and thirdly they need the skills and the opportunity to get into employment as quickly as possible. Without those three areas, in my opinion, it is highly unlikely when you look at where the vast majority of prisoners come from that they will avoid falling back into the same ways that got them there in the first place. My view has always been that for those who spend so much time with prisoners, with trainees, with young people in prison, which prison officers do, to have a position where the prison officers' life skills are not utilised to the full extent

and where prison officers are not actively involved in the various aspects of education, including social education, I think we are somewhat missing trick. I was very proud to join the Prison Service a fairly long time ago in 1976. I joined at a long-term prison, a dispersal prison in Wakefield but a prison that also had the responsibility for people who were in the first part of a life sentence and were serving very long terms. Equally, I think it would be fair to say that we had a greater input at that time on the issues of making sure that prisoners were able to hit those three targets because we did a lot of re-settlement work at that time. We did engage prison officers. Prison officers were used quite a lot in giving those pieces of social education and we were given the time to do it. I think they probably still would be given the time to do it at a place like Wakefield. If you look around Feltham and other places you will see that prison officers are pretty thin on the ground, and are probably not the same kind of prison officers that I joined with. I do not know if that is a good thing or a bad thing. I swing around a bit like a pendulum on that whether it is good or bad to have more academic people as prison officers or to have more people who have their feet firmly planted on the ground, who understand the places prisoners come from because that is where they come from. I am always a little bit worried that we tend at times in education and skills to try to overreach the potential of prisoners. I think that what prisoners need more than anything is social skills because that is what they are lacking and getting them social skills and challenging their offending behaviour should be integrated into their education as well and the best people to do that are probably prison officers. If there was enough of them, if there were more of them, if there were less prisoners, if we had more community sentencing, all the things that you will hear. Some people think they are rhetorical particular from my organisation but they are not. We could do more if the resources that we have got were better used or if we had less people in prison.

Q1032 Chairman: Thank you for that, Brian. What you did not mention was in a sense one thing that has been cropping up regularly within our inquiry is if you compare prison officers here with those in Nordic countries or in British Columbia where we visited, we have a very short period of training for our prison officers, and indeed witnesses have said it has been reduced in recent years by one or two weeks down to something like seven weeks for a prison officer, and someone just told us today that 20% of that is restraint training. It just seems to us that there is a potential for a longer period of training or better training or up-skilling of prison officers that perhaps you as the Prison Officers' Association should have been pushing for.

Mr Caton: I believe that the evidence would support that we have. Certainly I would let the Committee have a copy of our first submission to the first Pay Review Body because it does go into quite a lot of our policies and what we have fought for over very many years. I do not believe that seven weeks is adequate for the training of a prison officer. I do not believe that 12 or 16 is; I really do not. What I believe is there are two aspects to a prison officer's job: what you are and what you are taught. People often say that we needed to change the culture away from those entering from the armed forces to one where people entered from all kinds of skills and I would not necessarily disagree with that. However, there was one thing that we made sure of when I joined the Prison Service and that was that we were able to have a disciplined and ordered way of life because without that discipline and ordered way of life in prison you will not get prisoners to respond to education and skills training. The other thing is I certainly would like to see prison officers allowed to expand their potential from day one. I would like to see the training more challenging. I would like to see the training longer. I would like to see five days of compulsory training on mental health which is what the prison officer used to get many years ago. I am a great advocate of tackling mental health in prisons. I think I have been in the forefront of putting my head down and running at the Prison Service on numerous occasions about the huge increase we have experienced in the 1970s, again in the 1980s, and since I have been General Secretary since 1999 pressing them again to make sure that our people, my Association members, are able to deal with what confronts them. Currently they are not. To try and get a young person to consider education and skills, to rehabilitate themselves, and to tackle their offending behaviour, I would suggest that you need to break down a number of barriers. The biggest barrier that we have got currently, whether it be alcohol or drug induced, is personality disorders and mental health problems. We can only tackle those firstly by identifying what we consider is wrong with the individual and then seeking to put that right. Otherwise, we are never going to jump that hurdle and get to their offending behaviour. Despite people saying drugs and drink cause these people to commit offences, I do not think we ever really find out with all individuals whether that is the case.

Q1033 Chairman: You are the POA and I know of your very powerful position in that organisation over a number of years, yet here we have very short training and there is something wrong, is there not, both in terms of what we are doing if in recent years 60% of your recruits have left within two years? There is something radically wrong. If you took any other profession, government department, or anything, if you look at the 60% of people leaving within two years, either the recruitment was wrong or the training or induction. Something must be wrong.

Mr Caton: I think there are a number of things wrong. I would say that to the Committee. Whether people will accept this from me or not is a matter for the Committee. We were a demonised trade union. We were a trade union that was anecdotally believed to be permanently on industrial action. We were seen as all powerful and dominating. We are seen as a barrier to change. We were all these things that we have seen in the press. "20 reasons why the POA should be attacked by Government." In reality, the

reason that we are seen as a strong and powerful union—and I do not think we are powerful, I think we are a fairly united trade union, we have our moments of course at the top of it—the reason we are fairly united in that way is that we do a job where we are very much dependent on each other and we wear and uniform and that unites us. What always baffles me really being ex-Forces and having worked in a colliery where you depend on people (and I have only ever done those kinds of jobs where I depend on my friends and my work colleagues) why the Prison Service never grasps that and tries to unite us in the way that many chief constables do in the police, where they stick up for their staff and they become "their" staff. They have never managed to quite capture that. We capture it and I think the reasons why we have not been able to improve things like our training is that mandatory training for prison officers was totally axed by the Prison Service so there is no training from the centre that prison officers must do year-on-year to make sure that their skills are up to meeting the challenges against them. There is none of that because the Prison Service decided to scrap it. The reason they scrapped it is that we went to the Prison Service and said you have got too much mandatory training. You cannot have this amount of mandatory training otherwise we are never going to see a prisoner, we are going to be training all the time. Will you please compact it into what we really need to tackle what we have against us in reaching the potential and getting people trained et cetera and tackling the various aspects of the prisoner population from time to time. Will you please look at what we really need to be trained on year-on-year and we did say to them—it is right Barry—that we want to look at the basic training for a prison officer because that needs to be somewhat different than it has been in the past. Their answer to that was to remove all mandatory training from prison officers. We have no mandatory training now whatsoever. It is left now to governors to decide at their establishment what is the priority. If somebody stands up and makes an excellent speech in the House of Commons and it becomes big headlines, then a governor will look at it and decide I will do something about that in advance because it will help my career because this is the popular and fashionable thing to start putting in, and he will train his staff in that, I would say at the expense of things we really ought to know about. So I think that the training and skills that we are able to pass down to prisoners is very much dependent on what we are taught ourselves and I do not think in my time in the Prison Service or representing prison officers, indeed people in high security psychiatric units, that we in any of those areas are actually getting the skills right. We do not seem to review the initial training and the on-going training, the in-service training as we used to call it, often enough and if we did I think that prison officers, provided there are enough of them and provided we had less prisoners, would be able to mirror those issues that you found in Norway and Scandinavia. We have great links with Scandinavian prisons. We understand what prison officers are doing there and in Canada and elsewhere. To be honest, I think it would be a more exciting and a better and probably a more rewarding job as a prison officer if we were able to capture those kinds of issues.

Chairman: Brian, we are going to move into quick fire questions right round the Committee if you do not mind that format. I am going to start with Paul because he waited a long time in the last session.

Q1034 Paul Holmes: At the start the Chairman said Norway which we visited had one year's training for prison officers, there is only seven weeks here, and you seem to have agreed that is not enough for the initial training. Then you have talked about the failings of on-going training. What would you put into those initial and on-going training programmes that is not there? You have mentioned mental health; what else?

Mr Caton: The reason I say mental health so strongly is that the Prison Service tells us that 90% of our prisoner population are suffering from some kind of mental health problem, whether it be drug induced or alcohol induced. That would have to go to the top of my agenda. I am not saying that we should be training them as registered mental nurses because I think that would be a little bit rich, but what I do think is that is high up. I also think that we have got to be able to ensure constantly that where we are using force we also are able to back that up with interpersonal skills with prisoners, being able to de-escalate things. I do not think there is enough of that in the Prison Service hence we get accused all the time of over-use of force. I think the other thing that needs to be recognised is that we are capable of affecting the lives of those who are put in our care. Simple things. I do not think prison officers are great at writing reports any more. In fact, I think they are rubbish at writing reports. I had to write reports for a living when I was in the Army. I had to write reports when I came in the Prison Service. I thought I was pretty good and I was not because we had people who demanded that you were able to express your views about an individual in writing. I do not think they are very good at that at all. I also do not believe that the core essential things like how you treat prisoners, how you talk to prisoners, how you engage in conversation with prisoners, how you keep that distance are covered. I was told when I joined the Prison Service, "you have got to firm, you have got to be fair, and you have got to be friendly." You are never going to find anything out from them—and you need that as well for security reasons—unless you can use those skills. I think those skills, with the greatest respect to those who have spent years in our universities and colleges—are not learned there. They are people skills and you learn them in the "university of hard knocks". The vast majority of people that we have in prison are not the kind of people who you would sit around years ago listening to Deep Purple with on the floor of a campus in a university. They are not those kind of people; they are "hard knock" people.

Q1035 Paul Holmes: So mental health, interpersonal skills, and report writing?
Mr Caton: Yes.

Q1036 Jeff Ennis: On The NOMS situation, your trade union proposed a resolution at the TUC conference last year to oppose the setting up of NOMS which is to provide an extra element of after care for the prisoner. That is what the whole ethos of that is anyway. I am just wondering what the current situation is and why the Prison Officers' Association is so opposed to NOMS. I suppose it is a privatisation issue to some extent?
Mr Caton: It is a layer of bureacracy too far. We have always said that we wanted to work closer with our colleagues in the Probation Service and in the Health Service and in social services to make sure that we joined up the system. If you go back two and three TUCs you will see that both ourselves and NAPO, the representative body for probation officers, called upon having a justice ministry. We called upon there being attendance centres, not the old attendance centres where you went on a Saturday afternoon and scrubbed floors but where we could go, reach out and prevent people having to be held in prison to teach them and to put forward the challenging offending behaviour programmes that when we can do them we do in prison so that we use the complete skills. So I think there is a misguided view, probably because the press seem to pick up on some of the things we say and not others. The output that is being sought by Government through NOMS we are 110% behind. The bureaucracy and the way in which it is being dealt with through NOMS we are absolutely opposed to because we do not think we will ever get there. I know a previous Home Secretary said to me he did not know why the POA were putting forward we should have a justice system because the only organisations that were saying that were Liberty and JUSTICE and he was sure we did not want the POA linked with those organisations. We do and we get on very well. This is another myth that we do not get on well with voluntary agencies; we do and we continue to work very carefully with them. We believe it is a layer of bureaucracy too far and we believe there are better ways of doing it than building an empire in order to deliver something that could be quite easily done with little cost and by people being trusted to go on and do those kinds of things.

Q1037 Jeff Ennis: So your alternative model then is to use the existing structure with some fine-tuning, shall we say?
Mr Caton: Again I reach back into history. We used to have a considerable amount of prison officers working alongside probation officers inside prison. We used to have detachments from the prison to the probation service where we worked sometimes for four to six weeks seeing what probation officers did and they did the same. We do not think that there is a huge gap between what we want to do together with NAPO and its membership to that that is being proposed by NOMS. I have to say that NOMS in the eyes of my membership is purely about two things: Market testing and privatisation, full stop. It is not about anything else. It is about privatising even more and we resist and will continue to resist, at times very rigorously indeed, the privatisation of the justice system. We think it is wrong. We think it is morally repugnant, to use Jack Straw's expression.
Chairman: I do not want to get too far down that track but thank you very much for that. John?

Q1038 Mr Greenway: A couple of things. Can we deliver education and the life skills for work with short-term prisoners or prisoners being moved all over the estate all of the time? Do you have a view on the effectiveness of detention and training orders and what happens to those prisoners who have had them post release?
Mr Caton: If I can deal with the issue of prisoners. We used to transfer prisoners to give them skills. We now transfer them so that denies them skills and learning. That is not the fault of the Prison Service. I am sure that Phil Wheatley, whom we get on very well with, and Martin Narey and all the people who are helping to run the Prison Service do not want to shift people up and down the country. We shift them up and down the country for no good reason really, apart from we have no spaces, yet by the same token we are actually mothballing some places in the Prison Service. I find that very strange indeed. Perhaps somebody would explain it to prison officers eventually. In that first instance I do not think that we can deliver the continuity that is necessary for people to learn, bearing in mind our clientele. One thing we need is continuity with them. In regard to short-term prisoners it is a waste of time. I cannot understand why we bring them into prison, only to tap them on the head, put them in a cell, make sure they get bathed and shaved, which is a fairly good thing, make sure they clean their cells, and then send them back onto the streets. It seems to me a total waste of taxpayers' money and it is a waste of our members' time. We cannot get our teeth into the issues of their offending behaviour if they are only there for a short period of time. I think I would beef up the detention and training orders.

Q1039 Mr Greenway: You think they are too soft?
Mr Caton: I think they are too soft, yes. I think actually—it is a big debate and I do not know whether I want to enter into it—the act of imprisonment is about causing people to change. I do not think that there has been a sufficient debate on whether prison is actually punishing at all when people who come into prison, when you look at their outside life, better off through that act of imprisonment than they would be outside. Some of them are given (in part) more freedom inside than they would on the outside because of their dependence on drugs, alcohol, the fact they are under threat, the fact they are severe debt most of the time. They come into prison and it is—

Q1040 Mr Greenway:—It is an oasis.
Mr Caton: Yes, it is an oasis away from it and it is seen that way. I just wish we could make them drink the water and eat the fruit while they are in the oasis and we cannot do that if they are only stopping for a couple of weeks.

Q1041 Mr Chaytor: You talked about the changes you would like to see in the training of prison officers and you mentioned improved understanding of mental health and improved inter-personal skills for dealing with conflict and improved report writing. Are these not exactly the sort of skills that those who spent their early 20s sitting around listening to Deep Purple public are more likely to have? Is there not a contradiction, on the one hand you are praising the school of hard knocks but on the other hand you are saying your lads need some of the more sophisticated language skills that will defuse conflict?
Mr Caton: I do not think because someone has been to a university they are incapable of being a prison officer. I do not believe that. I have plenty of friends who have got university degrees and who are prison officers and very good at it.

Q1042 Chairman: And are quite sensible?
Mr Caton: And are sensible. They might not sit around smoking pot and listening to Deep Purple. Some of them are not sensible. Yes, I think that the skills that are needed may well come from all walks of life. What I am trying to say is that I do not think that we are necessarily selecting or attracting people who at the end of the day have got the ability to stand nose to nose with a multiple murderer to say, "Get in your cell," but by the same token they can probably sit and talk very reasonably to reasonable people when they are behaving reasonably. At the end of the day, as I have said on many occasions, I spent 28 days at the Strangeways riot and t people told me that was caused by there not being enough activity in Strangeways. It was not. It was caused by a lack of staff. They tell me that it was caused because they were not able to challenge the prisoner by giving them courses testing their skills and testing their learning ability. When the roof came off that place I could have called up there, "Come down for your GCE now," and they would not have come down. That is a fact. What we have got to have in the Prison Service is order and discipline because if you lose order and discipline you can have as many good educational courses as you like you are not going to get them to do it. If I can exemplify that here. I know here this is a good education. I have got loads of paper telling me it is a good education. I have not been to Feltham for a number of years. The last time I came here I told them there was a ligature point in one of the cells and they ignored it and then a young chap hung himself on it. Fact. I am not suggesting they are whitewashing the coal either here but I do know there are people on education here that stand and look out the windows all the time they are in those classes. What I would say even now is, "Get away from the window, sit there, you are here to learn," because sometimes, as has been said by the current Government and the current Secretary of State for Education, there is a need to have a little bit more robust discipline in the classroom. When you consider that most of the people that we get in here are those who have failed in the classroom, failed in health, failed at home; we get them and we have got to try and turn them into a success. You cannot do that by sitting and talking nicely to them in the first instance. They have got to understand they are in a disciplined environment. If they do not understand that you may as well pack in and go home.

Q1043 Mr Chaytor: Do you think it is right that there is no minimum educational qualification for a prison officer? Is that an advantage to the profession and the status of prison officers, quite apart from the quality of work in the prisons?
Mr Caton: We tried it and it did not do much at all.

Q1044 Chairman: Tried what?
Mr Caton: We tried having a minimum standard of education, five O levels. We then had to collapse it in the South because we could not get those kind of people to apply so you got people with the equivalent of five O levels in the North but in the South you would accept two arms, two legs and if you could nod your head twice, come in. I mean that genuinely. We were that short of prison officers that we had to collapse it in one part of the country. Those who came in with two arms, two legs and who could nod their head twice were not necessarily bad prison officers because I do not think it is really about the educational skills that you possess, although there should be a level by which you can come in. I have seen people come into the Prison Service as prison officers who have got degrees. Put them on a landing and tell them to count counts 52 cells, it will take them hours. Ask them to engage in a prisoner that is barricaded in his own cell and say, "I want you to talk to that person, find out what their problems are and get him out of there because we cannot disrupt a prison in that way, "you could put them there for the next 72 years, if they live that long, and they would not get the person out. It is a very special kind of person you are picking. The biggest problem—and I have said it on numerous occasions and on radio and television as well, Barry—is if you do not sit people down and interview them and challenge what they are saying. We are not interviewing prison officers currently. They come through a JSAC (?) where if you have got an equity card you will get in as a prison officer, if you are doing amateur dramatics and play the part correctly you will get in because that is what the JSAC is, it is about testing whether you can react in a playette kind of situation. What they do not do is sit them down one side of the table or the other and ask them questions. That is how I was interviewed.

Q1045 Mr Chaytor: We have got a situation now in the United Kingdom where school leavers' qualifications are increasing year-on-year, where the number of jobs that do not require qualifications is shrinking, where the CBI is saying in ten years' time there will be no jobs for anybody without formal

qualifications. There will come a point where one of the only jobs that requires no formal qualifications for entering is a prison officer. How can that be in the interests of your Association?
Mr Caton: I do not believe that formal qualifications and pieces of paper mean a great deal.

Q1046 Mr Chaytor: If to be a cleaner you need an NVQ1 industrial cleaners' certificate, if to work in a kitchen you need an NVQ1 in dishwashing and cooking, you see what I am saying.
Mr Caton: I understand that.

Q1047 Mr Chaytor: In five years, less perhaps, this could be the only significant occupational group that does not have a basic minimum entry requirement. What are the implications of that to the status of the profession?
Mr Caton: I understand the drift. What I would say about this is give us our own. It is very much like delivering health care which has just been handed over to the NHS. It will not work. It will fail in the Prison Service because the Prison Service is a very unique environment. Give us a qualification that prison officers have to aspire to, and make sure that you test them correctly on everything. Do not let them go away and play a game in a wing office on whether they can deal with a violent prisoner when they are not even in the job. Test them and give them a qualification that is unique to that particular role. Being a prison officer is a unique job. Is not something that is easily learnt and I do not think it necessarily follows that if you can get through a Masters degree or get an honorary doctorate in the study of mental health and crime like me that you necessarily would make a good prison officer. I know what made me a good prison officer. I was bought up in a mining community, I joined the army, I came out of the army, I studied very hard to get in the Prison Service. I was not a brilliant academic but I knew how to talk to people, I knew how to read people, and I knew how to motivate people. I know car salesmen who would be as good if not better prison officers than me. It is the type of person. They are patient. What I would advise, if the Prison Service wants to do it, is that they look at Alison Liebling's book *The Prisoner Officer* and see what she says prison officers do in their working life and that is deescalating disputes between prisoners, understanding human beings, understanding human behaviour, not necessarily from an academic perspective but certainly from that kind of street level.

Q1048 Mr Chaytor: Just a final point; is it part of your Association's policy to call for such a unique entry qualification?
Mr Caton: We have called for it for many years. We called for it in the specialisms. We wanted a diploma in prison nursing. We wanted a diploma, which eventually we got, for medical officers in prison. We wanted a diploma that said that people can manage in prisons. We have been able to do that in a lot of cases but the foot soldiers on the landings, in the house blocks and working in the units here are most of the time overlooked. Their skills and their professionalism is overlooked. We do not get recognition. For Christ's sake, we never got the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal when everybody else did. We are seen as the forgotten army in more ways than one. People talk to me about why do prison officers leave. Paul Boateng said I could have the money tomorrow. I just had to convince Tessa Jowell to give us the Queen's Golden Jubilee medal. We never got it. People keep telling me at the Treasury and Cabinet Office, "What we want, Brian, is to reward you people in non-financial ways as well as financial ways." We gave them a perfect opportunity. Pin a medal on everybody who has done over five years in the Prison Service to commemorate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. It would have lifted the morale of the Prison Service no end. No. No excuse, no reason, nothing given to us. When I try and push it it becomes no because somebody said apparently very early on in the consideration "I am not giving it to those people", because that is how we are seen a lot of the time—"those people".

Q1049 Helen Jones: Two quick questions, Brian. You talked about the workforce becoming more academic. Can you just explain to us exactly what you mean by that. What is the current qualification make-up of the workforce? Given that you do not have to have any qualifications to come in how is it becoming more academic. The second question to save a bit of time, if you do not have to have any basic qualifications to become a prison officer, not even measuring fairly basic literacy and numeracy skills, how can we then rely on prison officers to encourage education in prisons? If we want them to play a part in encouraging that themselves—and I certainly do—and we are recruiting people without any basic qualifications how can those two marry up?
Mr Caton: I am not saying that people should not have basic qualifications. I think they should. My daughter who is currently finishing off a doctorate in dietary psychology said to me the other day, "What year was the First World War then?" So when people talk to me about basic education I find it a little bit difficult that she has gone through all the years of academia and then has to ask her father when the First World War ended because she was reading a book.

Q1050 Helen Jones: History courses tend to run from the rise of Hitler onwards.
Mr Caton: I did know, by the way, I could answer that and you would expect me to because I had an old-fashioned education. I think that what prisoners rely on when they are looking at it is people whom they can respect. The respect that they show for professionals is short-lived. The reason I can say that is professionals that visit prisons and work in prisons start at nine (ten), leave at five (four). I did not. I was there on night duty, I was there when I was working away from prison because we were paid overtime at the time, from 6.40 in the morning until 9.15 at night on most days. I earned a fortune in overtime but I

was there all the time. When people talk about what influences prisoners most it is probably prison officers. Educationally, yes, I believe there should be a solid standard of educational qualifications to be a prison officer but currently my view is that those who are entering the Prison Service are seeing the Prison Service as a very, very quick route to manage. A policeman once said to me when we had a multiple murderer we were taking to court at Sheffield: "I have not joined the police to be a policeman. I have joined it to manage policemen." I think we have got too many people joining the Prison Service to manage prison officers. Not enough of them want to come in and be prison officers.

Q1051 Helen Jones: What are the figures on the entry?
Mr Caton: I do not know. I would be guessing and I would not want to mislead the Committee at all.

Q1052 Helen Jones: If you have that information later on and can give it to us that would be very useful
Mr Caton: Sure.

Q1053 Chairman: Brian, one of the witnesses we had earlier said because of this dilemma that you very honestly put to the Committee, that in a sense the prison officer becomes isolated, here he is, as you have just described, working long hours making sure there is security in the place, which is essential, the backbone of the whole thing and people come in and come out and in a sense the missing dimension is that when you come into a prison perhaps the prison officer is not included in the full team. I think what David and Helen's question was asking is without the training and up-skilling they are denied being part of the team. One of the wonderful things we have seen is the Toe by Toe.
Mr Caton: We support that.

Q1054 Chairman: Numerous prison officers are involved and you were involved in it. That seems to some of us the best kind of relationship.
Mr Caton: I think, Chairman, if I can explain it like this: there are those who come into prison because there is strange shroud of darkness over prisons and they want to come in and try and play with it. Prison officers in the main come to work to look after prisoners, to make sure prisoners are looked after, to make sure the security of the establishment happens, and it is very difficult for a prison officer whose feet are firmly planted on the ground to deal with this floating academia that drifts in and drifts out and when it settles it grows. The psychology departments in our prisons have grown beyond all recognition. There is a comment in one of the Chief Inspector's reports into Wakefield Prison on how come it has grown that big. If you leave it without challenging it as a prison governor, which some prison governors have in Wakefield, then it will grow. When I worked at Wakefield when principal officers were in charge of wings and we had an old-fashioned 30 years serving principal officer on a wing, he would make sure that you did discuss things with the psychology department, that you did discuss things with the wing probation officers, and that we met together and we did have teams. I do not know how often people have given evidence to this Committee and said that it is a team effort. It is a team effort and we should try whenever possible to work as teams. We used to work very well as teams even down to the socialising. If we had a Christmas do we did not just go out as a group of prison officers, which seems to be the model now. We went out and we had a meal or a function at Christmas and one in the summer and we had probation officers with us and we had psychologists with us because we worked together as a team. In some places that works well. In some I think it fails badly. I am a bit worried that I might not have expressed myself well enough in regard to academics working in prison. I declare a position that I have seen academics mess things up so much in prisons that I am probably a little bit anti-academia, but I know their worth—

Q1055 Helen Jones: One would not have guessed that!
Mr Caton: But I know their worth and they are fine but they are not fine giving prisoners false expectations and giving prisoners the wrong words because at the end of the day—and I say this quite often—they might want to dash in and grip a prisoner's hand and say, "Well done, you have got parole" but what happens when the parole board says, "No, we are not releasing him"? I will tell you what happens then—you cannot find him at all. It is left to a prison officer to say, "Sorry kid, you have not got parole," because they do not want the hard knock and that is the hard knock that is the hard end of being a prison officer. It is saying "Sorry kid, you have not got parole" and then knowing that the guy might hang himself, he might attack you, he might attack another prisoner, he might attack his wife, he might beat his kids on their visits, he might try to escape, and one thing that is certainly true in those circumstance is that when you look over your shoulder it is a very empty room that you are in; you are left on your own. So please accept the reason that I am little bit suspicious about other professionals in prison. Yes, we can work well together but we need to work together, not leaving the bad parts of working in a prison and working with prisoners just to prison officers. I am a great believer in team work.

Q1056 Chairman: So that would be your strongest message to the Committee, that this is a team effort?
Mr Caton: Absolutely and it is a team effort, if I can say, that goes wider than just those who are working in prison. It is a team effort that should be about voluntary agencies, it should be all the things that NOMS says it wants it to be about. If you go into a private prison—and I have no doubt the Committee will want to go and look at private prisons—you will find less involvement from the voluntary sector than there is in state sector prisons yet we are expected to accept that NOMs is about engaging the voluntary sector. We engage with them regularly. We sit on committees with them. We work very well with the Prison Reform Trust and the Howard League, all

the major groups that are seen as pressure groups at times but are voluntary agencies. I sit on the Royal London Society which seeks in this area particularly to provide money for people and I allocate the money on that organisation to make sure that prisoners get that start by providing them with work clothes, tools, whatever, providing them with courses and training. We support very strongly the work that is going on with Transco where you have got a massive shortage of pipe fitters. We have said that and sat on the same fringe meetings at political conferences and at the TUC. So we want to be actively involved in making sure that those three key things that people need are delivered. It is not going to help them if they leave prison having got a degree in Russian but it is going to help them if they can go out and they can fit a pipe and it gives them a job. The other thing is the stability they need not to go back on drugs, not to get involved in alcohol, and also to try and tackle the mental health problems. I think those are the big things.

Q1057 Chairman: Brian, this has been an excellent session. Can we remain in contact as we begin to write up the report?
Mr Caton: Yes indeed and thank you very much for inviting me.

Memorandum submitted by the National Grid Transco Young Offenders' Training Programme

1. Introduction

1.1 National Grid Transco was formed in October 2002 by the merger of the Lattice Group and National Grid. National Grid Transco is an international energy delivery business whose principal activities are in the regulated electricity and gas industries. It is the largest utility in the UK.

1.2 National Grid Transco has pioneered business involvement in prison education through its Young Offender Training and Employment Programme.

1.3 This memorandum seeks to:

- provide an explanation of National Grid Transco's training model, course details and reasons for the success of the programme to date;
- to provide an up-to-date picture of the current status of the Government-backed roll-out [as announced by the Chancellor in his Budget Statement of 2003] of National Grid Transco's Young Offender Training Programme;
- to illustrate, in practical terms, how pilot projects can be replicated and rolled out to further industry sectors and locations;
- to illustrate the nature of the partnerships involved and the project's evolving relationship with Government; and
- to explore some of the difficulties encountered and to propose [where possible] some form of solution.

2. Summary of Key Facts

2.1 National Grid Transco has trained over 130 offenders. A further 100 will have completed training and be in jobs by the end of 2005.

2.2 Following the announcement, in the 2003 Budget statement, that the Government wished to look at the possibility of rolling out National Grid Transco's Skills Training of Young Offenders pilot projects, under the leadership of Sir John Parker, work towards achieving this aim was rapidly put in progress.

2.2.1 A series of briefing events [sector dinners] was held in 2003/early 2004, hosted by Sir John Parker and Dr Mary Harris, the aim of which was to inform and engage companies with large supply chains in the Young Offender Skills Training programme. To date over 50 companies have attended these events and firm commitments have been obtained from the following industry sectors:

- engineering;
- logistics/transport/construction;
- utility contractors;
- electricity and gas; and
- water.

2.2.2 In February 2004, a Steering Committee was established, chaired by Sir John Parker comprising sector champions. Membership is as follows:

- Mary Harris, Programme Director;
- James Ross, Deputy Chairman, National Grid Transco—sector champion: electricity and gas;

— Charles Morrison, Managing Director—AWG/Morrison Utility Services—sector champion: utility sector;

— Roger Putnam, Chairman, Ford Motor Company—sector champion: engineering;

— Colin Skellet, Executive Chairman, Wessex Water—sector champion: water industry; and

— Mike Foster, Executive Director RMC—sector champion: construction/transport/logistics.

2.2.3 It was decided that the best way forward was to set up a series of hub and feeder prisons. Hub prisons would be the "host" prisons for gas training. Hub prisons would identify a selected number of their own inmates and regional resettlement teams would assist the hub prisons' co-ordinators to work with feeder prison co-ordinators to identify candidates from their own prisons to be transferred to the hub for training.

2.3.4 Some of the feeder prisons (open and closed) could also provide non-gas training eg CAD training, forklift truck driving and LGV.

2.4 Roll out of the programme is currently underway in 15 prisons. Further expansion is planned by the end of 2005. Discussions are continuing with a number of additional prisons to this end.

There are currently four hub prisons:

— HM YOI Reading, Berkshire—three gas courses being held in 2004. Non-gas training (a) as CAD operators for Scott Wilson; (b) as warehouse pickers for Exel and (c) as forklift truck drivers for RMC.

— HM Glen Parva, Leicester—two gas courses being held in 2004.

— HMP Wymott, Preston—three gas courses being held in 2004, in conjunction with HM YOI Thorn Cross.

— HMP Polmont, Falkirk, Scotland—two gas courses being held in 2004.

Feeder prisons are as follows:

— HM YOI Guys Marsh, Dorset—Feeder prison into HM YOI Reading for gas training and possible non-gas training.

— HM YOI Portland, Dorset—Feeder prison into HM YOI Reading for gas training and possible non-gas training.

— HM YOI Onley, Warwickshire—Feeder prison for gas training and possible non-gas training.

— HMP Risley, Cheshire—Potential feeder prison into HMP Wymott for gas training and possible non-gas training.

— HM YOI Thorn Cross, Cheshire—three gas courses being held in 2004, in conjunction with HMP Wymott.

— HM YOI Deerbolt, Co Durham—Potential gas training course and non gas training.

— HM YOI Prescoed, Gwent—Potential gas training course and non gas training.

— HM YOI Rochester, Kent—Feeder prison into HM YOI Reading for both gas and non-gas (forklift truck drivers for RMC) training. Inmates transferred to HM YOI Reading to undertake the training.

— HMP Latchmere House, Richmond—Feeder prison for gas courses at HM YOI Reading and possible non-gas training.

— HM YOI Swinfen Hall, Litchfield.

— HMP Leyhill, Gloucestershire—Non-gas training. Inmates identified for training as HGV drivers for RMC site in Wick, Avon.

2.6 The numbers of offenders to be trained and employed in the gas industry are 250 per annum from 2006.

2.7 Each of the five industry sectors identified in Section 5.1 will be training and employing at least 250 offenders for their own industries each year from 2006.

2.8 The total number of offenders trained and employed by industry is expected to reach 1,250 per annum from 2006.

3. Background

3.1 *The original pilot project—training young offenders as forklift truck drivers*

3.1.1 The National Grid Transco's involvement with the resettlement of young offenders began with a "Seeing is Believing" visit, organised by Business in the Community, to Reading Prison in 1998.

3.1.2 This led the Company to initiate, in partnership with the Kennet young offenders' resettlement wing of Reading Prison and the Reading Probation Service, a scheme to train, initially up to 50, young offenders from Reading for jobs as forklift truck drivers.

3.1.3 The aim of this project was twofold:

— to cut re-offending rates; and

— to meet an identified high skills shortage of forklift truck drivers around the M4 corridor caused by the sudden growth of warehousing and the distribution sector largely created by the sudden growth in Internet shopping.

3.1.4 To date, over 100 inmates have been trained as forklift truck drivers—over 70% of the participants found employment and only five young men have been reported as re-offending.

3.2 *The second pilot project—utility training*

3.2.1 Building on the success of its initial pilot scheme, in 2002, the Foundation established a second project in partnership with Reading Prison, Advantica, Transco and Transco's major contractors, to train and employ up to 50 selected young offenders in the initial competencies for work as gas distribution technicians.

3.2.2 Like its predecessor, this project had a dual purpose:

— to cut re-offending rates; and

— to plug an identified skills gap in an industry short of skilled and semi-skilled labour and with a high number of current employees nearing retirement age.

3.2.3 Why target young offenders? High employment, particularly in London and the South East, means that many young people are more inclined to seek well-paid jobs in sectors such as IT and Finance, rather than in the gas industry—which they view as having a rather low-tech image. With this in mind, National Grid Transco piloted the above schemes in order to look at possibilities outside traditional labour markets for its future workforce. Young offenders—and also, incidentally, the long-term unemployed—who often suffer discrimination in the jobs market—were seen as a possible source of a potentially well-motivated workforce.

4. Benefits of the Scheme

4.1 Employment: The course is unique in prisoner education schemes in that successful completion of the course guarantees well-paid sustainable employment.

4.2 Re-offending rates: Home Office statistics state that over 70% of Britain's rapidly growing body of 11,400 young offenders re-offend shortly after leaving prison. Largely due to the guarantee of well-paid sustainable employment, the re-offending rates for those inmates successfully completing this scheme (and its forklift truck predecessor) is c7%.

5. How Does it Work? The Training Model

5.1 In summary, the duration of the course is 13 weeks; prisoners are selected for training in the final stages of their rehabilitation and are trained within the prison for the theoretical parts of the course; a secure location is provided by Transco for the practical elements of the programme; during the training programme, all trainees are given a half day course on driving theory plus five days intensive practical tuition followed by a driving test.

5.2 Details of the content and duration of the course are as follows:

— Candidates receive off the job training to achieve minimum gas industry standards of Gas Network Operations (GNO) S/NVQ level 1 and Streetworks certification to cover units 1 to 6 + 9.

— The aims and objectives of the course are focused around safe working practices and associated knowledge of policy legislation, gas service laying and related New Roads and Streetworks Act unit qualifications.

— Candidates complete a five-week "off the job" training programme at a Training Centre and are then in a position to work under the supervision of Transco or their representatives, to gain the full GNO S/NVQ Level 1 accreditation. During a seven-week period "on-site", candidates will gain relevant work experience and collect evidence to support the training and ongoing portfolio building. Each delegate will be assessed by Transco or representatives and verified by the training provider.

— On completion each delegate will be accredited to GNO S/NVQ Level 1 & NRSWA 1–6 and 9. Course content as follows:

Week One *Induction and basic safety*
Introduction to the Gas Industry, Into Work Skills

Week Two *Gas safety and workplace preparation*

Weeks Three–Four *Experiential Learning & Assessment*
Completion of Gas Network Operations Assessment Units

Week Five *New Roads and Streetworks Act Units 1–6 and 9 Training*

Weeks Six–Eight *Experiential Learning and Assessment*
Completion of Gas Network Operations Assessment Units

Week Nine *Distribution Engineering techniques*
Observed assessment of Gas Network Operations Units

Weeks Ten–Twelve *Experiential Learning and Assessment*
Completion of Gas Network Operations Assessment Units

Week 13 *Assessment*
Includes written examination

The theory and examinations will take place at the Training Centre, with candidates having access to computers within the prison to assist portfolio building. The Experiential Learning and Assessment will be at work placements within travelling distance of the prison.

Total duration: 25 days Training "off the job" and 35 days "on the job" training and portfolio building.

6. The Process

6.1 The Gas Network Operative (GNO) GNVQ courses are advertised in both hub and feeder prisons.

6.2 Prospective candidates attend taster days, where the nature of the training and is explained to interested candidates.

6.3 Selection and interview at the "home" prison then follows. Candidates need to meet certain criteria [Appendix 1]. Interviews are attended by the co-ordinator from the area hub prison, National Grid Transco and its contractors.

6.4 Successful candidates from the interview process are assessed for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL). Those passing this assessment are transferred to the hub prison approximately one month before the commencement of the course start date.

6.5 The transferred inmates remain at the hub prison for the duration of the training. On completion of the course, the candidates are returned to their "home" prison to undertake a work placement with a contractor in their home area before release. On release they continue with that contractor as a full employee.

7. Training—Progress to Date

7.1 *Training Progress in 2003*

7.1.1 Gas Network Operative Training

By the end of 2003, 27 offenders (21 young offenders and six adult offenders) had completed NVQs to qualify as Gas Network Operatives Level 1 with a recognised Streetworks qualification (NRSWA).

The first six adult offenders to be trained as gas network operatives were all from Wymott Prison in Preston. The course was carried out by National Grid Transco contractor, Balfour Beatty who, together with Alfred McAlpine (AMUS), arranged employment in the trainees' home areas on successful completion of the course. Four are now in employment with these companies in the North West of England, one is completing his sentence and goes out to work each day. One has been reported as re-offending.

Five young men graduated from the most recent course at Reading Prison on 19 December 2003. The men were from Reading, Rochester and Glen Parva Prisons. All have now been released and began work on 5 January 2004 for Morrison Utility Services, AMEC and Murphy Pipelines.

7.1.2 Forklift Truck Training Scheme

In addition, over 100 young offenders were trained as forklift truck drivers.

7.2 *Training in 2004*

7.2.1 Gas Network Operative Training

In 2004, the Gas Network Operative training courses is again being managed by National Grid Transco and the training delivered by National Grid Transco contractors and external training providers. The expansion of this scheme to further prisons will obviously benefit a wider prison population and will, for the first time, include Scotland. Successful completion of the course guarantees employment within National Grid Transco's supply chain. So far, eight offenders have successfully completed the first 2004 course in HMP Reading and are currently working for Transco's contractors under the ROTL scheme.

Courses currently in progress/planned are as follows:

(a) HMP Wymott and HMP Thorn Cross in North West England: 1st Course: 5 April–2 July: 2nd and 3rd Course dates being finalised. These courses will be the first where young and adult offenders train together.

(b) at HMP Reading in Southern England on: 8 March–4 June [eight graduates]; 14 June–10 September; 20 September–17 December. These courses will be attended by inmates transferred from HMP Rochester, HMP Portland and HM YOI Guys Marsh.

(c) at HMP Glen Parva in the Midlands for inmates both from Glen Parva and other Midlands prisons. (a) 3 May–30 July; (b) 9 August–5 November.

(d) at HMP Polmont, Scotland. Course dates to be confirmed.

7.2.2 Non-Gas Training

Further prisons (eg HMP Leyhill and HMP Guys Marsh) have been identified by the National Grid Transco as suitable to host training provision for non-gas training ie LGV and forklift truck driving, CAD operators and water utility training. Some of the prisons currently involved in gas training will also host non-gas training at the establishment.

8. Critical Success Factors

8.1 In brief, National Grid Transco believes the critical success factors to be:

— Identification of a skills shortage in a local area.

— Establishment of a public/private partnership between the company and the YOIs.

— Strong business leadership and effective utilisation of the supply chain ie the identification of how each component of our supply chain could most effectively contribute to this initiative, either through the provision of training, work placement or, most importantly, the offering of employment.

8.2 The reasons why these factors are critical to the success of the project are outlined below.

8.2.1 Strong business leadership

National Grid Transco has been the driving force behind the forklift truck driving training and the gas engineers' training and has:

— Brought together the scheme partners.

— Provided funding for the actual training and co-ordinated the training provision.

— Co-ordinated the training provision.

— Identified and tackled day to day with issues with the partners and the young offenders.

— Liaised with the relevant Government Departments and Government agencies.

— Ensured the quality of the training and initiated monitoring and evaluation of the scheme.

— Identified other channels of support and shared best practice.

8.2.2 The importance of the lead Company's contractors

Whilst National Grid Transco is responsible overall for maintenance of the gas network, most of the work is contracted out to 10 main contractors operating through the country. Hence, most of the gas engineers are employed by them on their teams. The Company's contractors are, therefore, an essential partner in the successful implementation of this initiative, particularly in providing the initial work placements. The importance of their support cannot be overestimated. Eleven Transco contractors have agreed to support the training and employment of up to 300 young men from four prisons in 2003.

8.2.3 The importance of the lead Company's employees

Similarly, while the Foundation is the main focus for National Grid Transco's community investment in Great Britain, leading and co-ordinating this activity, most of the work on the ground is carried out locally by employees. Their engagement and commitment is therefore equally important.

8.2.4 Work with training providers and external partners

8.2.4.1 Any initiative that aims to address social exclusion and disadvantaged groups inevitably involves a wide range of external partners. This is no exception. The key partners here are the Prison and Probation Services, locally and nationally, and central Government.

8.2.4.2 Non-governmental support agencies—essentially voluntary organisations—also play crucial roles in providing personal and social support structures for young offenders.

8.2.4.3 Finally, the quality of training is a vital part of this initiative. The key partners need an effective formal structure of communications and dialogue with the training provider chosen so that the training—on and off the job—meets the needs of employers and potential young offender employees.

8.2.4.4 The rules of engagement with all these partners, understanding and defining the contribution each makes and how we work effectively together is a key element of the strategy.

9. Points to be Considered/Difficulties Encountered—and Some Possible Solutions

9.1 GNO trainees whose prison release dates occur before the end of the 13-week training course are unable to claim any benefit. Job Seekers' Allowance permits training up to a maximum of 16 hours per week—as GNO training is full time they do not qualify as they are unavailable for work. Candidates are selected so that their release dates match course dates, however, it is not always possible to be exact and potentially good candidates may be excluded on the grounds that they would not have any income.

9.2 It is important that schemes of this nature can be proved capable of replication. RMC have successfully replicated the NGT model by recruiting offenders as HGV and forklift truck drivers.

9.3 Skills training [particularly when leading, as the National Grid Transco scheme uniquely does, to guaranteed employment] is a vital step towards the rehabilitation of offenders. However, it does not, in itself, guarantee the achievement of this aim. Other support must be given. National Grid Transco provides both pre- and post-release mentoring, help with finding accommodation, help with setting up bank accounts and driving tuition. Support of this nature is essential if offenders are to achieve a successful transition from the custodial regime to the world of work. Lack of this kind of pre- and post- release support would have a detrimental effect on the effectiveness and success rates of any form of prison education and training schemes.

9.4 Careful selection of candidates for the scheme is vital. It is essential that prisons correctly ascertain the suitability of inmates for selection. Prisons must identify and supply prisoners who have addressed their offending behaviour, are keen to be trained and motivated to work rather than return to crime.

9.5 Candidates must also have a certain level of numeracy and literacy. Selection criteria are given in Appendix 2.

9.6 Inmates are often transferred to other prisons for training, which can be unsettling. It is important to start the transfer process as early as possible to allow prisoners to settle in their new surroundings and to form good working relationships with other trainees and new prison staff.

9.7 Contractors [the ex-offenders' employers] need to understand the rules and restrictions of "Released on Temporary Licence" (ROTL) and the implications of ROTL for them.

9.8 Work experience placements need to be provided in locations near to the prison. However, geographic location prevents some prisons from being able to provide work experience placements within easy travelling distance. If the prison is of sufficient size, it may be possible for training such as forklift truck driving to be provided within the prison itself.

APPENDIX 1

SELECTION CRITERIA

— Release date within six weeks of the course completion date. Consideration may be given to candidates due for release in the final month of the course.

— Place of residence. On completion of sentence candidates to return to place of residence within the advised catchment area of local contractor or Transco depot.

— Able to read and write, with basic numeracy skills. Candidates will need literacy skills at a level to complete an NVQ portfolio and follow Health and Safety instructions. They will be required to pass a basic numeracy test, which will be given at interview.

— Practical. An experience of manual work is preferred.

— Physically fit. The work is manual and candidates will need to pass an Occupational Health Test.

— Willing to travel to differing work locations. The work is not static and candidates will be required to travel within the contractors' area of operation.

— Driving licence. Candidates will be given theory and practical driving tuition and will need to be eligible to apply for a provisional driving licence. Any disqualifications/bans to be reported at application stage.

— Release on Temporary Licence. Be assessed and passed for ROTL, including Risk Assessment, by candidates' prison.

June 2004

Memorandum submitted by HMP Stafford

1. HMP Stafford welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee.

2. The evidence is submitted by Alan Shepherd, Head of Learning and Skills at the prison, and has been approved by Mrs Louise Taylor, Governing Governor of HMP Stafford.

3. The evidence covers issues of staffing, budgets, capital expenditure, curriculum and external links.

4. Staffing for the Effective Delivery of High Quality Education and Training in Prisons

4.1 As part of the construction of appropriate systems aimed at providing rigorous and robust self assessment at Stafford it has become apparent that, to deliver high quality education and training in the prison, particularly related to Key Question 3 in the Common Inspection Framework: "How are achievement and learning affected by resources", the qualifications of staff need to be updated. There are several points to raise here:

— There needs to be some guidance given in respect of the appropriate teaching or training qualifications that should be held by Instructional Officers, Physical Education Instructors and Officer Instructors. The Adult Learning Inspectorate will require our staff to be appropriately qualified, and we also need appropriately qualified staff to both deliver our learning programmes and to support the observation scheme we are currently introducing. The clarification of what is deemed "appropriate" in a prison setting is therefore of significant importance .

— There will need to be more training of staff involved in the learning process in future. There are two aspects to this. Firstly we need to provide training to achieve the "appropriate" qualifications discussed above. Secondly, it is important to ensure the continuing professional development of prison staff involved in the learning process. There are arrangements in place to support staff training already. However, budgets are not adequate to meet the need to underpin quality for successful inspections.

— Job descriptions for the staff outlined under the first bullet point, above, and any other staff involved in the learning process need to be written to ensure their involvement in the learning process is emphasised.

— Prisons do not have posts for Information and Learning Technology (ILT) Technicians. At Stafford we have an Instructional Officer who effectively helps in the maintenance and development of our ILT. In addition, IT teachers provide some support. If ILT is to play an increasing part in education and training in prisons, a technicians post would support these developments.

— Finally for this section we would like to make a point which addresses other questions in the Common Inspection Framework, but which is also one of resources. Management Information Systems (MIS) are currently being developed in the prison service. The development of the Offender Assessment System (OASys) is the main example of these developments. However, there needs to be consideration given to the establishment of appropriate MIS systems to support Self Assessment and Inspection. Currently at HMP Stafford a member of our contractor's staff gathers data on achievement. We are introducing additional systems which provide data on retention. There will be a need to capture data on progression, either between courses within a prison, between prisons, or as part of resettlement if we are to be able to analyse the quality of our provision effectively. Therefore, the need to organise MIS in an appropriate way, and provide adequately trained staff to input to systems, are important issues.

5. Curriculum Development Issues

5.1 At HMP Stafford we are looking at developing our vocational curriculum to provide construction crafts. We currently have a painting and decorating workshop which successfully provides prisoners with qualifications which will enable them to gain employment or self employment on release. We would like to consider introducing Brickwork and Carpentry & Joinery provision. Other prisons may want to develop their curriculum in similar ways. However, there are significant budgetary implications in respect of both capital expenditure and staffing for these sorts of developments. If we are to develop our training facilities along these lines, additional budgetary provisions for such purposes would be welcomed.

5.2 We feel that the development of diversity and cultural awareness should be emphasised more in arrangements for delivering the core curriculum. We feel these important aspects of Social and Life Skills tend to be overshadowed by other aspects of the Core Curriculum.

5.3 We feel that Dyslexia screening should become part of the normal induction programme in prisons. At HMP Stafford we are currently working with a local group to screen some of our inmates (ie those on our Project Chrysalis programme). There are budgetary implications here if a prison does not have its own personnel who are able to carry out screening or the follow up treatment programmes.

5.4 At HMP Stafford we are trying to develop programmes for those inmates who have significant difficulty reaching even the lowest level of achievement (ie entry level 3). There are no Key Performance Targets (KPT) for this group of prisoners and consequently resources tend to be pulled in the direction of prisoners who enter programmes that do have a KPT attached. The Committee might like to consider this issue.

5.5 We feel that "raw" KPT figures may also understate the impact of Education in Prisons. Although we recognise the importance of level 2 accreditation, we believe that a fairer way to judge the success of education is the added value provided. To provide one example there is considerably less effort involved in a learner achieving level 2 who is already above that level, than for one who is considerably below that level achieving, for example, a level 1 accreditation.

6 External Links

6.1 At HMP Stafford we believe that involvement in education and training on release, and continued involvement if prisoners have undertaken education and / or training whilst inside, is a very important aspect of resettlement. Colleges of Further Education, other training providers, and of course employers, provide a positive and supportive environment for released prisoners which provide every opportunity to avoid re-offending. We feel that the development of stronger links with these groups, perhaps through a national network of Regional or Area Councils or Committees would bring a unity of resources and purpose and support effective resettlement.

7 Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 We offer the above evidence to the Education and Skills Committee. We recommend consideration of the points that we raise, and we confirm that HMP Stafford would be very happy to support the work of the Committee in any way that it might think appropriate.

June 2004

Memorandum submitted by the Basic Skills Agency

The Basic Skills Agency is the national development agency for basic skills in England and Wales. We are an independent organisation working at "arms length" from our funders: the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Welsh Assembly Government. Our Patron is Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, our Chairman is Garry Hawkes CBE and our Director is Alan Wells OBE.

The Basic Skills Agency supports the Government's Strategies to make sure that:

1. every young child will be prepared for learning on starting school;
2. every child will leave primary school with literacy and numeracy skills that equip them to deal with the secondary curriculum;
3. every young person will leave school with literacy and numeracy skills that equip them for adult life; and
4. every adult will have the ability to read, write, and speak in English [and in Wales, in English or Welsh] and use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general.

We play a particularly important role in Wales where we're responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Welsh Assembly Government's National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales.

Basic Skills Agency's Work with the Probation and Prison Services

The Basic Skills Agency has undertaken a range of work with the Prison and Probation Services for many years, looking at how to improve the quality of basic skills provision within prisons and address effectively the basic skills needs of both offenders and prison staff. Some of this work is outlined below.

National Support Project for Prisons [1995–97]

This project aimed to develop basic skills support for offenders working within prison workplaces and undertaking vocational training. A Development Officer employed by the Agency provided advice on and support for basic skills developments across the prison. This included supporting Learndirect projects by providing basic skills training for prison staff; initiating workplace basic skills training in catering areas and supporting the roll out of peer tutoring and family learning programmes in prisons.

Post-16 Quality Mark

The Basic Skills Agency Post-Sixteen Quality Mark was awarded to institutions that could demonstrate that they were reaching effective standards of basic skills provision through meeting 10 specific requirements, including having a strategy to raise standards, learning plans, training for staff, etc. The Prison Service made attainment of the Basic Skills Quality Mark a requirement for all prisons and support was provided to help individual prisons to achieve it. By the time the Quality Mark was withdrawn by the DfES in 2002, 77 prisons had received the award.

National Support Project for Prison Employees

This project aimed to:

- identify and monitor the basic skills levels of staff in order to target learning and training resources effectively;
- provide basic skills assessment and learning support for individual staff;
- raise awareness of basic skills across the Prison Service; and
- embed basic skills in course design.

Several models of basic skills support were identified at establishment level. The involvement of the new Heads of Learning and Skills in each prison were seen to be key in developing a synergy between education for prisoners and staff development, and generally supporting the development of a learning culture in prisons.

National Support Project for the National Probation Service (NPS)

There were two key areas of work in the first stage of this programme:

- assessing the literacy demands of the general offending behaviour programmes and the extent to which (if at all) there was a mismatch between the literacy skills of offenders and the literacy demands of the programmes;
- providing support for the implementation of basic skills in the NPS.

The second phase of the project, which will run for two years from July 2004, will include:

- developing and disseminating a directory of good practice initiatives running in NPS areas;
- liaising with NPS area basic skills providers to ensure that courses for probation clients are appropriate and there are opportunities for clients to progress further in basic skills as well into work-skills supported courses and other useful courses; and
- identifying training needs within the National Probation Service and organising the delivery of suitable support programmes.

Link Up

Link Up has recruited over 6,400 volunteers to support adult learners in 18 locations throughout England, and in the Army and Prison Service. Since January 2003 over 744 inmates, prison officers, staff and volunteers from the local community have been trained in the Level 2 certificate in Adult Learner Support to become Link Up Supporters in the six prisons involved in the pilot:

North West—HMYOI Hindley, HMP Liverpool and HMP Manchester

North East—HMYOI Deerbolt, HMP Holme House and HMP YOI Low Newton

Involvement of prison staff

Link Up has trained a variety of prison staff members: governors, prison officers, library staff, probation officers and workshop and maintenance staff. One of the aims of the training has been to ensure that understanding about the skills needs of inmates is taken into consideration from arrival at the institution and throughout their sentence. Through joint training sessions for inmates and staff, relations have been greatly improved and the sense of a prison community has been enhanced. Many prison staff are also beginning to address their own skills needs and have sought advice on gaining their Level 2 National Qualifications in Literacy and Numeracy.

Involvement of Probation Service staff

Regional Link Up projects have trained staff from the Probation Service, contextualising the Unit 1 training materials to make them more relevant to their profession. Link Up Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough worked in partnership with HMP Holme House to deliver training to over 80 probation staff in the local area.

June 2004

Memorandum submitted by Michael Rice

BACKGROUND

Is there a relationship between reading attainment, employment, and crime?

1. Since the Sheriff of London conducted a straw poll of prisoner literacy at Newgate in 1808, it has been a commonplace that low educational attainment initiates criminal careers and that educational interventions can accelerate criminal career termination. For a time, reformers believed that for every school that was built, a prison could be demolished. Long after this hope proved to be unjustified, basic skills tutors in prisons have continued to believe that the value of their work is not only instructional but also rehabilitative. If their belief has any support, it may derive from that fact that teaching involves both an instructional and a mentoring role and that, even if instruction cannot achieve very much in the limited time that is available, mentoring might be effective.

2. Many offenders, even if they are functionally literate, have poor alphabetic skills. However, this is because low reading attainment is associated with personal causal risk factors such as low intellectual ability and early-onset behavioural problems associated with the diagnoses of ADHD or hyperactivity-impulsivity-inattention. Low reading attainment is also associated with environmental causal risk factors such as low levels of language and literacy in the childhood home and poor teaching in the infant and junior school.

3. The best test of the relationship between reading attainment and offending involves longitudinal follow-up of children from the general population with reading attainment assessed in the early school years and later delinquency assessed by several different measures. Tests of this kind undertaken by the National Survey of Health and Development and the Institute of Psychiatry's inner London borough study in the United Kingdom, the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study and the Christchurch Health and Development Study in New Zealand, the Seattle Social Development Project in the United States, the Concordia High Risk Project in Canada, and the Australian Temperament Project all find that the association between reading attainment and offending (or related constructs) is spurious.

4. Although those findings may seem counter-intuitional, they converge with findings from cross-sectional studies of prison populations. In their turn, the prison studies indicate that the relationship between low reading attainment and offending is spurious when socio-economic status and the social disadvantage for which it stands proxy are taken into account. These findings are predicted by the predominantly blue-collar nature of the prison population and by the finding that while most people in the white-collar population are functionally literate, most people in the blue-collar population are not. (See Figure.) Thus, it appears to be a robust finding that while low attainment is a risk indicator for offending it is not a risk mechanism.

5. However, this finding may not bear on the question of what brings about desistance from offending. There are two reasons for this conjecture. First, the way out of a criminal career is not necessarily the reverse of the way in. Second, the question of what brings about desistance can be distinguished from the question of what brings about social inclusion. While the importance of basic skills interventions in equipping people for civilian life is axiomatic in an advanced society, the importance of basic skills interventions in preventing re-offending needs empirical confirmation.

6. We do not have that empirical confirmation. A major review of the "what works" research [11] has concluded that whereas adult basic education is a promising method for reducing recidivism, there is not enough evidence to conclude that it is effective [2]. For the time being, reading instruction in prisons can be

justified not by its potential for reducing reoffending but by its potential for restoring to society those people who are excluded from full citizenship because they have yet to attain functional literacy. In short, reading interventions for offenders are justified not by reference to human wrongs but by reference to human rights.

7. How does that affect prospects of employment? The current prioritisation of basic skills interventions for offenders is driven by a belief that raised attainments will also enhance employment opportunities, and that stable employment will reduce the risk of reoffending. However, as the probation inspectorate has acknowledged in a recent thematic review [1], the relationship between employment and offending is not completely straightforward. Given, among other things, the inconclusive nature of the evidence for a causal relationship between unemployment and crime, a finding that desistance is associated with the quality of employment rather than employment *per se* [12], a finding that first-time criminal conviction actually has a positive effect on the legitimate income of young offenders [5], and a possibility that work provides a turning-point for older but not younger offenders [13], it may be simplistic to expect that any improvement in basic skills will lead to employment, and that employment in turn will make the offender less likely to reoffend. Whether or not people turn their backs on offending is likely to depend upon many personal attributes, among which functional literacy may be neither necessary nor sufficient. Further insight into the complexity of the relationship between employment and reoffending is given by an impressive review for the Department of Work and Pensions [4].

In brief

- Many offenders, even if they are functionally literate, have poor alphabetic skills.
- However, the association between reading attainment and offending is spurious.
- So that, while low attainment is a risk indicator for offending, it is not a risk mechanism.
- The relationship between employment and offending is neither straightforward nor yet fully understood.
- And so, for the time being, reading interventions for offenders are better justified by reference to human rights than by reference to human wrongs.

Foreground

What are the purposes of reading skills assessment?

8. A brief initial screening assessment may help to determine whether a prisoner can cope with the reading demands of a particular rehabilitative programme, with respect to two key dimensions of reading skill: accuracy and fluency. (It needs to be asked whether the current initial assessment is sufficiently informative in either respect.) By contrast, a supplementary diagnostic assessment may establish the nature and extent of a prisoner's reading skills deficits, permitting the tutor to devise a curriculum for remedial teaching and setting a baseline from which future progress can be measured. These are separate purposes, and in current practice they are distinct.

9. There are two important issues to be resolved. The first issue concerns the timing and location of assessments. The second issue concerns their scope. In prisons, both issues have to be determined by pragmatic as well as by theoretical considerations. The best achievable course may simply be the least unsatisfactory.

10. Currently, prison staff conduct the initial assessment of all prisoners by means of a written group test during the induction period. This initial assessment procedure is likely to under-identify functionally literate prisoners, while generating very little useful information about prisoners who are less than functionally literate. It is also unsatisfactory, in that it confounds reading and writing ability. For the purpose of aggregate year-on-year comparisons this may not matter very much, assuming that the sources of error remain constant. However, data of such poor quality are unfit for comparisons with data obtained individualised assessments of members of the general population.

When and where should reading skills be assessed?

11. Assessments need to be conducted at a time and under conditions that permit prisoners to do their best. Although some people might propose that since real life subjects people to all kinds of stressors a realistic assessment would also subject people to stress, it would be both counter-productive and unethical to demoralise so many prisoners who have already been alienated by their childhood experience of education. Accordingly, it is preferable to delay diagnostic assessment until prisoners have adjusted to the experience of being sentenced and also, perhaps, to the experience of being transferred.

12. It may be a counsel of perfection to suggest in addition that assessment should take place in a quiet room where no other people are present, since current staffing levels are unlikely to make such an arrangement feasible. Nevertheless, something of the kind is necessary if reliable baseline data are to be obtained at the start of an intervention programme. If reliable data are not obtained, then it is likely that regression to the mean on re-test will exaggerate the effectiveness of the intervention; it might even indicate a positive effect when the effect has actually been nil or negative.

What should be the scope of reading skills assessment?

13. With respect to scope, there are two sets of considerations. The first consideration is the learning agenda, which is identified by exploratory assessment of the learner's current knowledge of the alphabetic writing system and the way in which it is used to transcribe language. This assessment needs to take place at the start of the intervention.

14. The second consideration concerns intellectual and motivational impediments to learning. If the learner appears to make satisfactory progress after a few weeks, no further exploratory assessments are needed. If progress appears to be unusually slow, then further exploratory assessments may be indicated. In the prison population, especially, there is a wide repertoire of intellectual and motivational impediments to learning. It encompasses child abuse and neglect, linguistic impoverishment in the childhood home, low verbal ability, uncorrected visual and hearing impairments in childhood, unskilled teaching in the junior school and mistaken conjectures about literacy practice, closed-head injury and substance misuse, low non-verbal ability, childhood hyperactivity-impulsivity and inattention, impairments in empathy and social cognition, current anxiety and depression, and-often as a default and catch-all explanation-developmental dyslexia.

15. Some of these obstacles can be identified by "taking a history". There is something to be said for standardising the form of a structured or semi-structured interview, with both closed and open questions. Because of the great sensitivity of some of the problems that might arise, these interviews should be conducted only by trained staff in private. With the exception of some speakers of English as a second language, the slowest learners are likely to be people with multiple and often devastating experience of disadvantage.

16. Other obstacles can be identified through the use of psychometric tests such as tests of non-verbal ability, auditory-verbal working memory, ability to sustain attention, and tests of insight into other people's feelings and intentions. Some tests of this kind are short and highly engaging for the test-taker, and can be used by the tutor without arduous training.

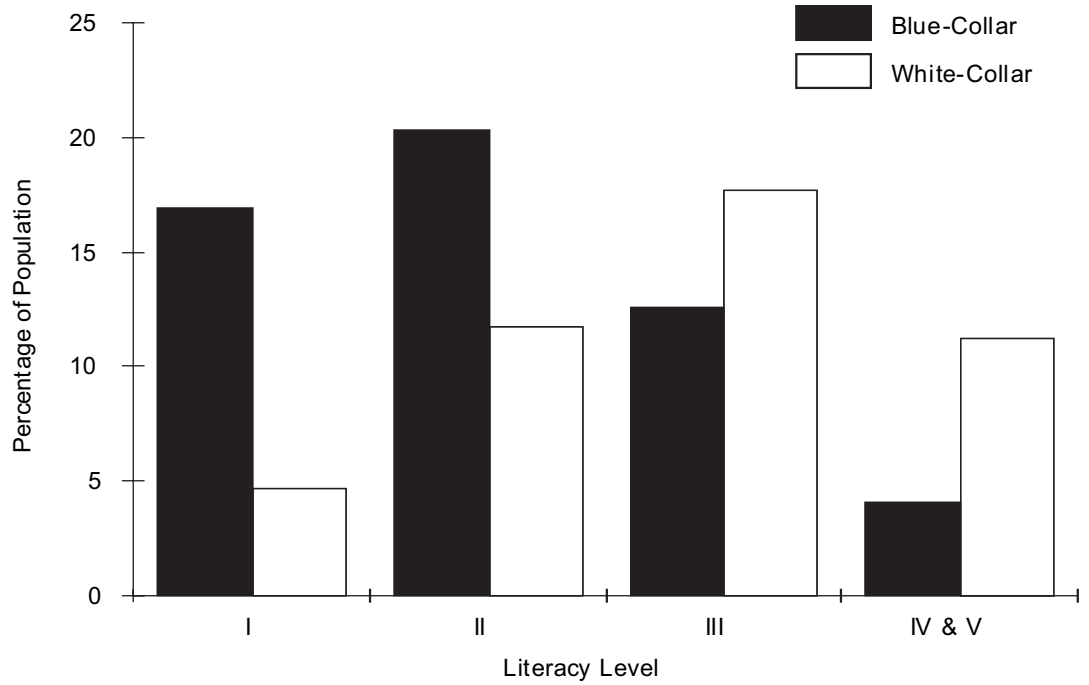
17. Psychometric tests of these kinds may be more encouraging when they indicate what learners can do than when they reveal—to the tutor if not to the learner—impairments so severe that little progress can be expected. If they are used at all, they should be interpreted as identifying the difficulty, not as pigeonholing the learner. A thorough investigation might explore the functional domains served by all five large-scale neurocognitive networks: spatial awareness, language, memory and emotion, working memory and executive function, and face and object identification [3].

In brief

- Initial basic skills screening can help to determine whether someone can cope with the reading demands of a rehabilitation programme; however, test results obtained during the induction period are often misleading.
- Diagnostic assessment after the induction period can establish the nature and extent of a learner's reading skills deficits.
- If reliable data is to be obtained on induction or later, the timing and location of assessment need to be both standardised and optimised.
- If the learner appears to be making little or no progress after six weeks or so, the assessment of reading skills deficits might need to be followed by an investigation into impediments to learning.
- Such an investigation might entail "taking a history" and administering psychometric tests.
- Because "taking a history" might lead to the disclosure of matters of great sensitivity, it should follow a standard protocol designed to minimise distress and be conducted only by trained staff.
- A thorough psychometric investigation might assess functionality in five domains.

Figure

PROSE LITERACY AND SOCIAL CLASS IN GREAT BRITAIN, FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ADULT LITERACY SURVEY (1997)



Note 1: In IALS, literacy levels III, IV and V are considered functional.

Note 2: The original data were expressed as percentages of the blue-collar and white-collar populations respectively. They have been re-calculated as percentages of the total population, using the ratio of blue-collar to white-collar participants from the 1991 Census.

Source: Table A2.6 "Literacy Level by Social Class", in Carey, S, Low, S, & Hansbro, J (1997). *Adult Literacy in Britain*. London: The Stationery Office, for the Office for National Statistics.

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June 2004

Memorandum submitted by HM Young Offenders' Institute Rochester

Introduction

1. HMYOI Rochester is the convicted Young Offender Institution for the South East and holds up to 392 convicted young male offenders who, in the majority, are serving sentences of less than four years. It also holds prisoners serving up to six years but, with limited parole facility, this is difficult unless prisoners have their sentence underway. Prisoners are usually allocated to Rochester from HMYOI Feltham, HMP Elmley, HMYOI Aylesbury and HMP Chelmsford. The majority are released from Rochester to the London area, Essex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex. This is a small number of foreign nationals.

2. I have been employed by HM Prison Service since 1999, the first three years after my training as Head of Prisoner Management at HMP and YOI Cookham Wood which held female adult and young offenders at the time. In 2003 I transferred to HMYOI Rochester as Head of Activities, then Head of Learning and Skills with responsibility for developing learning and training opportunities throughout the establishment.

Before joining HM Prison Service I worked for three providers of education to prisons as Deputy Education Manager at HMP Elmley and Education Manager at HMP Blantyre House. I started my career in Adult and Community Education with Kent County Council.

3. Assessment of Prisoners' Needs on Conviction

— Basic Skills Agency (BSA) screening test is paper based and time consuming to mark.
— Results are not speedily transmitted to the receiving establishment leading to re-sits whenever there is a move.
— Screening for special educational needs including dyslexia is not available in all establishments.
— Assessment of Special Education Needs is not part of the Education Contract.

4. Effectiveness of Local Contracting Arrangements

— Isolation of prison education teams when their employer is far away.
— Lack of staff and curriculum development.
— Inflexibility of the contract (small groups and one to one affect performance indicators).
— No penalties available to the establishment to improve contractor's performance except default which inevitably is extremely disruptive to the regime.
— Fast turnover of prison service managers of the education contract and often lack of understanding of how to use the contract to get the best for an establishment

5. Provision of Appropriate Training Facilities within Prisons

— Accommodation is sometimes poor with no resources available to improve it.
— Recruitment of instructors in trades such as plumbing is very difficult.
— Instructors frequently work on their own with no colleagues in their own trade to exchange good practice.

6. Role of Prison Staff in Supporting Educational Activities

— Crucial to promote learning and training as a worthwhile activity.
— Difficult when many prison officers' basic skills levels are low.
— Competent and enthusiastic officers often cannot get involved because of staff shortage.s

7. Links with Employers and Employer Led Initiatives

— Extremely useful to provide training and employment during sentence and after release (for instance TRANSCO scheme).
— Difficult to achieve when there is no resettlement unit as prisoners who go out are put under pressure by their fellow prisoners to bring back unauthorised items or drugs into an establishment.

8. Continuing Support and Guidance on Release, including Coordination with Local Providers

— The current education contract does not include support and guidance on release.
— BSA results and education and training achievements are passed on to the supervising probation officer for YOs. Many adult prisoners do not have a supervising probation officer.
— Education staff, Kent Connexions and Job Centre staff offer help to locate adequate training opportunities on release and access to funding.

9. Education, Training and Support for Those on Probation

— I have no knowledge of this.

10. Conclusion

— Present organisation of prison education is cumbersome and inflexible with considerable sums of money locked into inflexible contracts.
— Exciting and engaging activities need to be available to engage reluctant learners.
— Little opportunity to provide the above when there is little money outside the education contract.

— Shortage of good, qualified and up-to-date basic skills teachers.

— Shortage of instructional officers with a practical trade.

— Both education staff and instructors' morale and enthusiasm is affected by the uncertainty caused by REX and forthcoming developments.

— NOMS will provide new opportunities for managing an individual in and out of custody, without constantly repeating the same tests.

— In order to meet the individual needs of prisoners, establishments need to have a menu of education and training options available to them, some inside, some outside the establishment, with the possibility of booking a particular service whenever it is needed and for however many prisoners it is needed.

— Establishments need to become much more part of the local "learning and working community".

June 2004

Memorandum submitted by G Cooper, a prisoner at HMP Bullingdon

I am a 55 year old man (DoB 2 January 1949). I was arrested in 1993 and sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment. I was aware that it would be difficult for me on release due to the crimes I was convicted of, my age, my lack of specific qualifications and the fact that I had been out of circulation for so long.

I am numerate and literate but lack specific qualifications beyond GCSE. I would have liked to obtain an Open University degree or specific job training (computer maintenance). I certainly had the time to do it. However, the Prison Service has an aversion to anyone who wishes to improve their qualifications and training. I believe that everything possible was done to frustrate and hinder my efforts to improve myself.

Most prisons offer basic training up to level 2 key skills. However, not enough is being done for people who wish to study above this level. I accept that some prisons offer education and training above basic levels to some prisoners. However, this is not nearly enough and should be available to all prisoners in all prisons.

Please note that many thousands of prisoners are being denied education and training solely because of the nature of their offences. Sex offenders and VPs are being denied any access to higher education, training or any rehabilative courses (except SOTP). My position is all offenders, irrespective of offences, should be offered the opportunity to receive education and training. Why should sex offenders and VPs be discriminated against?

I also accept that the Prison Service is short of funds and higher education and training is expensive to deliver. A simple answer would be to allow facilities for those who can afford to pay themselves. Those who could not afford could be helped by charities or special funding. In many prisons there are no facilities for those who wish to study and improve themselves. Research facilities and library access are severely restricted.

I am also aware that many companies would be willing to assist in providing training for specific trades. Microsoft, for example, would devote facilities for those studying Microsoft Certificated courses. The Prison Service should be seeking outside funding and assistance in training provision.

I also feel that some people will never be willing or able to read and write properly. The Prison Service wastes vast amounts at trying to train these people. What we need are more practical courses. Men could learn skills that will help them find work and earn a living on release. I suggest motor repairs, motor body repairs, bricklaying, plumbing, plastering and rendering, electrical repairs and carpentry. There are skills that are in some demand in society. Prisoners could be trained to fill jobs vacant in their own areas.

In conclusion, I do not believe that the Prison Service is doing nearly enough to all prisoners to help them be rehabilitated as useful members of society. The answers are easy and not nearly as expensive as we are led to believe. We only need the will of the Prison Service to fulfil the role society demands. That is to train and equip prisoners with the skills they will need on and after release so they do not re-offend.

Memorandum submitted by Demos

1. Headline Message

1. Life skills training engages people in work that is relevant and useful to them to build up their independent living, personal and social skills. The confidence and self-belief that this engenders stimulates aspiration and helps people to make better choices for themselves. In prisons, it has led to better behaviour, less bullying and fewer suicide threats.

2. Introduction

2. Demos, an independent think tank, has been working on a project looking at using life skills to tackle social exclusion[1] since December last year. The work is funded by Crisis, a homelessness charity and has been rooted in their "Skylight" project. Skylight aims to engage its clients in "purposeful activity" from art classes to bicycle maintenance, to build life skills (defined below). Our research provides supporting evidence for the effectiveness of this approach and has revealed four key principles of successful delivery.

3. In addition to the general relevance of this approach, as part of our research, we undertook a series of case studies to assess whether our initial findings from Skylight resonated in different contexts. One of these focussed on Drake Hall prison in Staffordshire—a women's semi-open resettlement prison whose main education programme is increasingly based on a life skills agenda. The prison also outsources an "unlocking life skills" project for young adult offenders to Nacro, a crime reduction charity. This memorandum embeds the findings on prison education from the Drake Hall case study in the outcomes of this broader research.

3. Defining Life Skills

4. Advocates of life skills training typically mean one or both of two things when they talk about life skills.[2] Firstly, they refer to practical skills which facilitate independent living. Typically, these include keeping oneself fed and nourished, as well as dealing with certain sorts of bureaucracy and budgeting. Others refer to "softer" skills; skills which enable people to interact with one another successfully and form good relationships. One organisation, for example, distinguishes between the two by describing practical life skills as "independent living skills" and "soft" life skills as "personal and social skills".[3]

5. The Demos report contends that soft skills are the foundation on which other training must be based, whether it is formal education, or learning to cook. Successfully filling in a benefits form is only useful, for example, if the applicant can control their temper when confronted with a challenge to their claim. Equally, learning to cook for your child is only meaningful if you can get them to come to the table. Our findings at Drake Hall support and extend this: where young women have been successful in the Nacro life skills project, they are more likely to have the confidence and desire to undertake other projects in the education centre or to apply for college courses on their release.

4. Four Principles of Successful Delivery

6. Delivering life skills training is not the same as classroom learning. We often learn, or absorb soft life skills in particular from our family and friends as we grow up. Social skills, self-belief and trust, for example, cannot be imposed—they must be experienced and often grow out of other things that we do. Doing a drama course engages people with their emotions and teaches them to express feeling as well as straightforwardly delivering communication skills. It also enables participants to experience the added value of group working and builds trust between members. When talking about independent living skills, the need for experiential learning is equally clear. Reading a cookbook is not the same as making spaghetti and learning to test when it is ready.

7. Four principles at the root of successful delivery of life skills courses emerged clearly from our in-depth research at Skylight:

- Voluntarism and ownership.
- Purposeful activity.
- Recognition.
- "Safe boundaries".

The meaning of these will be expanded on in the context of the Drake Hall case study.

5. Particular Lessons from Drake Hall

8. Four key factors influence successful delivery of life skills work throughout the prison and with young adult offenders. Many of these overlap with the "general" lessons extracted in other work. The names of project members have been changed.

[1] Lownsbrough, Hannah, with Thomas, Gillian and Gillinson, Sarah; *From Isolation to Integration: Using Life Skills to Tackle Social Exclusion*, Demos (forthcoming).

[2] For example, organisations such as Crisis, Centrepoint, Fairbridge, Prince's Trust and others.

[3] Fairbridge, a national youth charity working with socially excluded young people aged between 13 and 25 makes this distinction in its operational strategy (unpublished).

Experiential Courses

9. The young women on Nacro's young adult offender course have often had negative experiences at school. The value of 'non-classroom' working is as valuable for what it is not as for its intrinsic effectiveness. The setting is consciously casual with girls and project workers sitting in comfortable chairs in groups of no more than 10 people.

10. "Communication" is typical of the courses delivered. It involves participation in group discussion and role play—you do not pass the course until it has been noted that you have contributed. It is a simple and very effective approach. "It gave me confidence" said Rachel, ". . . now I talk more". She added, "I've seen it come out in [the other girls]". This contribution to and participation in other people's success is a rewarding experience in itself. It also reflects back to the young women how much they have achieved, reinforcing their own accomplishments and creating a group bond which has led to improved behaviour in the young adult offender house.

Voluntarism

11. It seems paradoxical to talk about voluntarism in the context of a prison, but it is a vital component of the life skills work undertaken at Drake Hall. Participation in the Nacro project is voluntary; on arrival at the prison, women can choose between a range of activities including gardening, formal education and Nacro. This is important in two ways:

12. Firstly, it means simply that women are choosing something in which they are interested, which is vital for commitment and enthusiasm. It also provides a measure of its success—many of the women that we spoke to picked the Nacro project because of the good things that they had heard about it. There are strong incentives to project workers then to maintain the project's relevance. Similarly, within the project there is extensive choice about which components the women undertake, further tailoring the relevance of the work to the individual.

13. Secondly, the fact that the women are trusted to take this decision for themselves, and are successful when they do so is vital to their confidence—learning to choose is as important as gaining the skills which the course explicitly offers. Extending this idea, the feedback system in both the Nacro project and the prison as a whole, makes listening to the women, and responding to their suggestions for improvement a priority. They come to see their voice as important. Last year for example, Nacro delivered a successful first-aid course within the programme, but re-focussed it on babies and children when participants suggested this might be the most relevant area. The group discussed it together, and compromised over what would best serve them all—an important skill in itself.

Staff and Trust

14. Relationships with staff are central to successful project delivery—the feedback described above, for example, occurred in casual conversation with Nacro staff. Rachel says that the Nacro staff are "not like officers who judge you. We trust Nacro". This contrast is accentuated by avoiding artificial barriers—Nacro staff wear casual clothes, not uniforms. They sit around and chat with the girls, often after they are officially meant to be there. The Head of Education gets her hair cut in the on-site hairdressers which is staffed by Drake Hall inmates. Everyone is on first name terms and greets each other casually whilst walking around the site. It may well be that the image of the officer as judge, and source of discipline helps to facilitate the trust and amiability between project workers and young offenders—the contrast between the two makes the "good cop" seem even better.

15. These relationships really matter: project members go to Nacro staff to talk through worries about their past, present or future; they approach Nacro staff for help with practical difficulties like sorting out compassionate leave and doctors appointments; and they talk to them after they get out for support, and to share successes and worries. A project worker pointed out that letting girls come to them, and not vice versa, is central to making this work—staff are a resource which project members can choose to use if they are comfortable with it.

Recognition

16. Recognition, both traditional (certificates) and non-traditional, is a powerful part of the life skills framework.

17. Members of the Nacro project really value the certificates they gain, regardless of whether they are externally recognised or not. It is worth noting though that the deadlines for assessment are flexible so the young women are not set up for failure. For Rachel who was expelled from school at 14, these were the first qualifications she had ever had. The impact of this should not be underestimated; "it's changed what I want—it makes you feel better in yourself". The prison recognises this, and has begun publishing a list of achievements, and selected creative writing in the prison newsletter—anyone who has a piece published gets their own copy to keep. These loose structures may be as integral to the project as the flexibility which allows courses to be tailored to the individual.

18. Perhaps even more significant is the "non-traditional" recognition that women get where they have developed particular skills or experience. Increased responsibility is used as a marker of and reward for success which is highly valued by inmates—more experienced members of the Nacro project for example are trusted to help deliver courses like Communication.

Moving On

19. "Moving on" is an area that has not yet been fully addressed, as both Nacro and the wider prison acknowledge: demand exists but supply does not. Individual Nacro project workers keep in casual contact with ex-project members who seek out their support on release, but no systematic follow-up exists. For Nacro, this is a question of insufficient resources, and for the prison, an absence of proper links with the probation service. Other projects we looked at dealt with outreach in variously pro-active ways. Kaleidoscope[4] in Surrey has set up a self-sustaining web-design business to employ graduates of their web design course. Fairbridge,[5] a national charity working with young people between 13–25, simply keeps its doors open to ex-clients. Some drop in when they experience a crisis, others come regularly to maintain the relationships that have become important to them. The similar importance of this familiarity and support at Drake Hall is suggested by the fact that many of the women who want to "make a new start" on their release, settle close by.

20. So how do we know that life skills training works? Measuring impact is notoriously and inevitably difficult but indicators do exist. Officers at Drake Hall have reported better behaviour in the young adult offenders' house, girls come and ask Nacro staff for more folders to put their overflowing project work in, project members talk to and support each other and many want to find out about and pursue college courses or job opportunities. In the prison as a whole, bullying is down and they rarely have any "F2052s" (inmates on suicide watch)—this is significant when other women's prisons have between 40 and 50 inmates on F2052s at any one time. Perhaps the most important evaluation of the project comes from participants themselves. As one member of the Nacro project said, "It's good to have the sentence—really excellent, no-one knew what they could do before they did Nacro".

5. Policy Recommendations

21. Lessons on delivering life skills training in prisons were drawn out in the Drake Hall case study and constitute our practical recommendations: courses should be experiential and success relies on voluntary participation, trust and familiarity with staff and recognition of achievement.

22. Three further principles should inform a successful life skills programme in prisons:

Measuring success though trusting professionals and users' judgements

23. The outcomes of life skills training are often incremental, slow to emerge and imperceptible to those not working directly with clients. Traditional "hard" measures of success will frequently be unsuitable for assessment. Evaluation then will require a renewed trust in professionals' judgements of people's progress within a particular programme. Rather than expecting very frequent and highly structured details of individual participants' progress, accountability should focus on creating the capacity amongst professionals to make the day-to-day judgements of progress, with more detailed feeding back taking place much less frequently. Equally important will be the recognition that a long-term involvement with some clients will not represent a failure of the programme to work quickly, but instead a success in engaging with highly vulnerable individuals.

The voluntary sector as the primary instrument of delivery

24. This is important for two main reasons. Firstly, there is a simple point to be made about the majority of expertise in life skills training currently lying in voluntary and community organisations. Secondly, and more importantly, people experiencing social exclusion often have an instinctive mistrust of authority. As the Nacro project at Drake Hall illustrated, part of the young women's trust in project workers was derived from the obvious distinction between them and prison officers; the voluntary sector is best placed to develop the relationships with people that are necessary for life skills development work to be effective.

[4] www.kaleidoscopeproject.org.uk
[5] www.fairbridge.org.uk

Users engaged in the co-production of services

25. Firstly, this refers to the vital involvement of individual clients in developing their own "action plans" or activity programmes. It also concerns the importance of formal and informal feedback systems that collectively allow participants to shape the courses between which they might choose. Finally, ex-clients may become important players in delivering life skills training as they offer both a specialised knowledge of the issues and a degree of empathy, which is hard to find elsewhere.

June 2004

Memorandum submitted by the Royal College of Psychiatrists

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to send written evidence to your committee inquiry into the subject of prison education. As psychiatrists, we have increasing responsibilities for the mental health care of prisoners.

Mental health care is not necessarily about education and skills, but education and skills are very much part of the psychological life of all of us, including prisoners. We feel strongly therefore that there is a very important need for mental health teams and prison educationalists to work closely together. We accept that variations will occur between prisons, and that individualisation of programmes for prisoners is the best way of making good use of scarce resources. Nevertheless, we would like to make a few general points for your consideration:

- Education plans should be incorporated into a patient's Mental Health Act care plan as educational sessions could form part of a patient's treatment.
- Patients with active mental health treatment in the prison should have the same access to educational activities as other prisoners.
- Patients in health care centres should have full access to education within prisons.
- Education plans should include provision for those with special needs, for example those with enduring mental illness, those with mild learning disability and prisoners with severe personality disorder.
- Educational activities might include education on drugs/alcohol and health promotion (ie use of exercise, diet, creative activity and self help systems).
- Educational modules could help people to develop skills to use community recourses such as drug and alcohol teams, mental health teams, psychotherapy or the voluntary sector.
- In some cases programmes could be developed to provide education about the effects of sexual abuse.

To reiterate the most important point we have to make, we believe that educational and treatment programmes for people with mental disorders of all kinds should be integrated after discussion between teachers, psychologists, and psychiatrists about individual prisoners' particular needs.

June 2004

Memorandum submitted by the Independent Monitoring Boards

Independent Monitoring Boards (IMBs) are statutory bodies attached to each of the 140 prison or young offenders institutions in England and Wales. Their main role is to take an independent view of the standards of fairness and humanity with which those in custody are treated, and the range and effectiveness of the programmes, including of course education, the prison provides. Board members are lay volunteers, appointed by the Home Secretary and drawn from all walks of life.

The Select Committee will have been fully briefed on what those responsible for prison education are trying to achieve and will be aware of the excellent and dedicated work being done in many educational departments. We believe therefore that we can be most helpful to the Committee's enquiries if we stick firmly to our monitoring role and record some of the most frequent shortcomings which Boards have identified. The following observations are a distillation of the accumulated experience of members of the National Council (IMBs' elected representatives), IMB tutors and some individual Board members.

INITIAL ASSESSMENTS AND LEARNING PLANS

As the educational attainments and aptitudes of prisoners vary considerably, it is essential to identify each prisoner's educational and training needs before a comprehensive sentence plan can be agreed and the prisoner can make the most constructive use of his time in prison. The first stage of the process where education is concerned is the initial assessment required of all prisoners during their induction on their arrival in prison immediately after sentence. The results of the assessment are then used to draw up an individual learning plan which forms part of the overall sentence plan. We have a number of concerns about how this process operates in practice:

— Initial assessments are usually made at reception which can be too soon for prisoners who may be nervous, anxious or under the influence of drugs.

— If assessments are carried out (and this is not always the case) they can also be superficial and focus only on the core skills of literacy and numeracy (see "Key Performance Targets").

— Resultant learning plans may also be influenced by what the prison has available in terms of education and training and not by what the prisoner's education needs might be (see "Key Performance Targets" below).

— Even if an individual is correctly assessed as needing basic skills training, or indeed any other educational programme, this does not necessarily mean that he or she will end up in a suitable class or in any class at all (as explained in "Key Performance Targets" and "Barriers to Learning").

— Learning plans do not always follow the prisoner from establishment to establishment and, if they do, they are not necessarily acted upon.

Key Performance Targets and the Focus on Basic Skills

The key performance targets (KPTs) set for prison education focus exclusively on the attainment of basic skills, which the prison service rightly regards as fundamental to improving employability and reducing re offending. Because an establishment's performance is measured against its KPTs, which predominantly measure quantity rather than quality, educational assessments and the core curriculum are orientated towards basic skills and not prisoners' wider educational needs and potential. This is not suitable for all: many prisoners come into prison above the basic skills level or exceed that level during their sentence. However, provision of education and training which extend beyond basic skills is not assured because these activities do not contribute towards the KPTs. Moreover, because these activities are so wide-ranging they are not so easy to provide. Where provision is made, it can often become a casualty of financial or staffing pressures.

While basic skills are essential for employment, they are not sufficient to guarantee a job because prisoners are released without the additional skills and qualifications that are now needed in the job market. Some prisoners do have an opportunity to acquire the extra skills and qualifications for which there is a demand in the areas they will be returning to on release, for example HMP Reading is working with Transco which carries out gas pipe distribution throughout the UK. Young prisoners are given day release to train in this work and, if they qualify, receive an offer of employment on release. For those who successfully complete the programme re-offending is reported to have dropped from 70% to 19%. Another example employment opportunities on release is Call-Centre training at HMP Altcourse. However, not much is being done in most prisons to identify the vocational areas where there are good employment prospects and to develop links with employers and training providers in the home community.

Short-term Prisoners

Developing links with external employers and training providers is especially important for short-term prisoners, who represent nearly a third of the prison population. In 2000 the average time spent in prison, including time on remand, was just under nine months for male adult prisoners (the figures for women and young offenders are lower). These prisoners are often excluded from education because they will not be in custody long enough to complete a course and there is no provision to start a course and finish it on release. They therefore derive no benefit from their time in prison. Nor are they overseen by probation on release and so are particularly likely to find themselves unemployed and homeless. Effective co-operation between the Prison service and external agencies essential if prisoners' are to reintegrate seamlessly into their home communities is the exception not the rule.

The Prison Population and Turnover of Prisoners

A rising prison population and the high turnover of prisoners have other implications for education and training. The prison service has, in the past, made reasonable assumptions about the differing educational needs of prisoners in each category of establishment but the rise in the prison population and resulting warehousing of prisoners means that these assumptions frequently do not apply any more.

Pressure on prison capacity thus makes it more difficult to transfer a prisoner to a prison which provides for his particular educational need.

What is more, this pressure also means that if a prisoner has been able to start a suitable course he may well be moved before he has completed it to a prison where he cannot continue the course—either because it is not provided or the course is full up.

Distance Learning

Education is delivered mainly through formal classes, workshop facilities and supported learning. Little use is made of distance learning and, where it is available, prisoners are not always able to find a quiet environment in which to work. Indeed distance learning is the only practicable means by which well-motivated prisoners can pursue more advanced learning as most prisons will never have the resources to teach as opposed to facilitate and supervise more than a fraction of the courses required at this level.

Information Technology

While IT is already part of the core curriculum, the security risks associated with the use of the Internet prevent its full potential as a tool for learning being realised. Little effort has been made to overcome these risks and improve prisoners' access to educational resources.

Barriers to Learning

Even if the full range of prisoners' educational needs have been identified and the courses provided extend beyond the core curriculum there are numerous barriers to learning:

- Not enough places for everyone who might benefit means that there are often waiting lists for good courses and prisoners have been transferred to another establishment before a vacancy arises.
- Work-related activities attract higher rates of pay which act as a major disincentive to attending education classes.
- Prisoners who failed in the school environment are unlikely to be receptive when prison education is delivered in the same way. Some prisons have overcome this problem by moving away from the classroom environment and linking basic education to vocational activities or by using peer-led education, for example the Toe-to-Toe literacy scheme run by the Shannon Trust.
- Education is accorded a low priority when decisions are made about allocating staff for escort duties. This means that during periods of staff shortage there is a greater likelihood that prisoners will not get to their classes because there are no officers free to escort them.
- Prison libraries have an important role to play in providing resources to meet the educational needs of prisoners. Unfortunately access hours are a minimum of only 20 minutes per week (or 30 minutes in young offender establishments) and the potential to serve as learning resource centres has not been fully explored. Again availability of escort staff is a major factor.
- Space provided for education is sometimes inadequate or unsuitable.
- Education is often central to a prisoner's sentence plan compact, which they have agreed to progress their sentence. However, if not motivated when attending education, can prove disruptive and adversely influence other prisoners. Teaching staff are often reluctant to take sanctions against these prisoners.

The National Council hopes that the Committee has found this brief overview helpful. It will be pleased to elaborate further should the Committee require.

August 2004

Memorandum from the Disability Rights Commission

Disability Rights Commission would like to make a couple of points regarding education in prisons. The DRC represents all disabled people and we see education as a vital way of enhancing people's life chances. It is therefore essential that disabled people in prisons are able to access educational opportunities to the same level as all others.

Three quarters of men in prison are affected by two or more mental health problems (Mind/Prison Reform Trust) and it is believed that between 20% and 50% of the prison population has been identified as having a specific learning disability. People with ADHD and behavioural difficulties are over-represented. Whether these are factors in offending and re-offending or just attributes of the population, it is clear that people with learning disabilities and mental health issues are disproportionately represented in the prison population.

The DRC would like to ensure that the delivery of prison education takes account of the requirements of people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. We would like the Committee to consider positive approaches to delivering skills for sustainable employment to people with learning disabilities and mental health issues. We would also like to see the anticipatory provision of support for learning in prison education.

Of course, outside the prison environment it is equally important for employers and society more widely not to discriminate against people with mental health problems and/or learning disabilities, but it is just as vital that people in the process of education in prisons are given equal chance to gain qualifications.

If you would like to discuss this further, or have any queries relating to disabled people and education (in or out of prison), then please do not hesitate to let me know.

October 2004

Memorandum submitted by learndirect

BACKGROUND

The draw of modern technology, in the form of learndirect, will give prisoners the opportunity to achieve a qualification and improve their employability through secure on-line learning.—David Blunkett at HMP Leeds, August 2001

A learndirect project was launched in August 2001 by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Prisoner Learning and Skills Unit (now the Offender Learning and Skills Unit or OLSU) to investigate the value of using learndirect to prepare prisoners for the world of work.

The original project involved supporting learndirect provision in five prisons, three of which were adult male and two Young Offenders' Institutes (YOIs). The pilot engaged around one thousand learners over a six month period, the biggest impact coming where prison officers were also engaged with learndirect. Since then, learndirect has been rolled out to fifteen prisons (see Appendix 1). There are plans to roll out to a further five prisons (see Appendix 2), bringing the total to twenty. These prisons include YOIs and women's prisons as well as those from the original pilot. The learndirect course offer available in this extended roll out is of a better quality and also a more diverse portfolio than previously. It is too early to give any figures for engagement, but we expect a similar level of involvement as in the original pilot.

The most significant impact of learndirect in prisons has been in widening participation in learning among the prison community, through its ability to attract into learning those who would not otherwise have engaged in formal education activities. Most commonly this group would have low levels of educational attainment, including poor basic skills, and lack the confidence and self esteem to take up learning. For some prisoners, learndirect was their first experience of learning since leaving school.

A wide range of benefits have been observed:

(a) Improved motivation to learn amongst prisoners using learndirect.

(b) Access to educational facilities outside of the traditional education provision available within the prison.

(c) Improvements in prisoners' self confidence and self esteem, often a precondition of success in learning.

(d) Improved relationships between prisoners and between prisoners and prison officers.

(e) Access to the national tests in maths and English in online format.

Appendix three gives examples of work carried out by learndirect in prisons and with the Probation Service.

NEXT STEPS

learndirect is involved in the new national prison "development regions" launched this autumn, which will pilot new education delivery and funding models in three regions. The regions are the North West, the South West and the North East. Each learndirect region is engaging with the regional Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to agree the extent of learndirect's involvement. Following evaluation of these projects, the Home Office with the OLSU and the LSC, plan to roll out new models for the delivery of education, from September 2005.

OLSU is currently developing a new Information Technology and learning strategy, on which learndirect intends to comment.

learndirect have recently been notified of its success in a European Social Fund bid to increase the employability of offenders serving a sentence of less than two years. learndirect will be working predominantly in the North East, South West, London and the East regions. The aim is not only to engage prisoners with learndirect whilst serving their sentence and progress them to the Level 2 employability benchmark, but also, through the use of mentors, to provide opportunities for the offender to continue to engage with learning at the end of their sentence.

learndirect in the Probation Service

It is relevant to explain what involvement learndirect has with the Probation Service because of the Government's plans to unite the two services. There are currently around 200,000 offenders per annum, 50% of whom have a basic skills requirement. Approximately half of these number are at pre-entry level. The majority of offenders are males between 18 and 21 years of age. Significant additional money has been made available through the LSC to increase the number of offenders receiving training. Tenders for utilising these funds are currently with regional LSCs and there is an excellent opportunity for learndirect to become embedded in solutions utilising this new funding pot. In preparation for learndirect engaging formally through this route, and in order to contribute towards the Probation Service's targets for Basic Skills course uptakes and Certificates in Adult Literacy and Numeracy, learndirect ran a pilot project (4 January–31 March 2004) to assess the feasibility of delivering an appropriate portfolio of learndirect courses within the Probation Service.

The probation pilot project operated in four areas: Telford, Shrewsbury, Wales and Leeds and was very successful. For example, in Leeds the pilot was in a probation hostel which enabled residents to access dedicated learndirect provision one day a week. The main focus of this learning was Skills for Life although many learners progressed to IT and Business and Management courses once they had the necessary literacy and numeracy skills. The hostel delivery has been carried out by the A4e Leeds learndirect Centre. The advantages of working with this provider have been their past experience of working with this client group and the benefits of linking their hostel based learndirect delivery into Jobcentre Plus provision. This has enabled residents to progress onto programmes which offer them work experience opportunities. The success of this pilot has led to learndirect working with West Yorkshire Probation service to roll-out delivery to three other hostels in the area.

Additionally, when opening new premises at a pilot project in Shrewsbury in March 2004, Martin Neary, Director General of National Offender Management Service (NOMS), commended the Chief Officer of West Mercia Probation Areas for the excellent work being undertaken with learndirect and suggested that the model should be replicated nationally.

learndirect is now working with local probation service offices in all nine English regions. Different delivery models have been adopted to suit the client and probation service. For instance learndirect is now trying to replicate good practice in South Yorkshire, with the Probation Service encouraging one of their existing providers (SOVA) to become a learndirect provider. Delivery will start in this hostel in January, and the newly refurbished learndirect room will also cater for offenders on Community Punishment orders who wish to spend time learning at weekends.

Success stories come from those who feel their confidence, and opportunities open to them, have improved; from those who achieved a Level 1 and/or 2 in the Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy; and from individuals who have found employment as a result of learndirect.

Vision for the Future

learndirect, like many organisations involved with offenders, believe that wherever they serve their sentence, offenders should have access to innovative learning such as that delivered by learndirect through e-learning, within the constraints of the protection of the public. Effective use of information technology should be made to allow the transfer of prisoner education records from prison to prison, and a secure link to a probation education network, so that offenders leaving prison can continue with their learning in the context of their rehabilitation orders.

APPENDIX 1

PRISONS WITH LEARNDIRECT SYSTEM INSTALLED

Prison
HMP Brockhill
HMYOI Bullwood Hall
HMYOI Feltham
HMP Hollesley Bay
HMP Holloway
HMYOI Huntercombe
HMP Leeds
HMP New Hall
HMYOI Onley
HMP The Mount
HMP Warren Hill

HMYOI Wetherby
HMPYOI Hindley
HMYOI Stoke Heath
HMYOI Werrington

APPENDIX 2

PRISONS AWAITING INSTALLATION

HMYOI Castington
HMP Eastwood Park
HMP Lancaster Farms
HMYOI Thorn Cross
HMP Wellingborough

November 2004

Memorandum submitted by the Public and Commercial Services Union

The Public and Commercial Services union (PCS) is the largest trade union in the civil service, representing over 320,000 members. The Prison Service group of the PCS organises and negotiates on behalf of over 1,000 Instructional Officer (IO) grades within Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS). PCS would welcome the opportunity to present written and/or oral evidence to the committee on your current inquiry on Prison Education.

These IOs are currently delivering learning and skills to all types of offenders right across the public Prison Service estate. The instructors fall into two groups:

— Vocational Training Course (VTC) Instructors who teach vocational skills such as construction industry, carpentry, engineering, hairdressing, motor mechanics, industrial cleaning and many other trade based skills including an expanding range of information technology related courses.

— Prison Service Industries Instructors. These instructors train and supervise offenders working in the many and diverse prison industries such as, woodworking, engineering, tailoring and textiles and contracted service workshops. These workshops and the workshop staff are more frequently taking on the role of basic skills training in a working environment.

It is the above PCS members who have been described by past Chief Inspectors of HMPS as "staff who perform miracles on a daily basis".

It is also these PCS members who are at the sharp end of delivery of arguably the most important aspect of an offenders' chance of being prepared to return to society with skills, ability and aptitude to get and keep paid employment following their custodial sentence.

PCS believe those making decisions regarding the future of education and skills training for offenders should hear the views of IOs working in prisons throughout the country.

February 2005

Memorandum submitted by ECOTEC Research and Consulting (Plus Team)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) commissioned ECOTEC Research and Consulting to carry out an audit into education and training provision within the under-18 secure estate, and a linked review of education provision for young people pre- and post-custody.

The research aimed to:

— establish key baseline information at help strategic planning; and

— ensure consistency of service delivery across the three sectors that comprise the newly unified secure estate.

It should be noted that this report refers, in the main, to the findings from the Young Offender Institutions (YOIs). Local Authority Secure Units (LASUs) and Secure Training Centres (STCs) have also been audited, but require a different set of actions in some cases to the YOIs.

Phase 1 was an audit into education and training provision within the under-18 secure estate. Phase 2 involves interviewing 200 young people about their education and training careers pre- and post-custody. A database of 2,000 young people held on a Detention and Training Order (DTO) in March 2001 is also being compiled. Phase 3 is testing the proposition that in areas where there is a high level of non-attendance at school, there is also a high rate of youth crime.

This report presents the audit findings of Phase 1 of the project. Audit teams visited each Young Offender Institution (YOI) and all the Local Authority Secure Units (LASUs) and Secure Training Centres (STCs) with which the YJB currently contracts. Information from the interviews with young people being carried out for Phase 2 is also included.

Main Findings

Overview

The custodial institutions are attempting to meet the needs of socially excluded young people who are best with multiple disadvantages. In terms of education and training, the young people's immediate antecedents are mainly characterised by lack of access and/or non-participation, and long-standing deficits in literacy and numeracy.

Almost all the institutions were doing their best in difficult circumstances. Several provided evidence of a strong turnaround in their educational performance following critical inspection reports. However, Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) have not been provided with the appropriate internal infrastructure and resources, nor do they have the essential external links to initiate and sustain the radical change necessary.

The report and its recommendations focus on the YOIs, both because they supply 85% of the custodial places and because of the degree of the change necessary within them.

Population dynamics

The introduction of the Detention and Training Order (DTO) appears to have accelerated the throughput of young people very significantly. This has increased instability across the whole of YOI regimes. There are fundamental questions about the appropriateness of the curriculum and expectations of learning gains within such short sentences.

Leadership and accountability

There is confusion over the roles of the YJB, the new Prisoners' Learning and Skills Unit in the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and the Prison Service. Education is not the focus of Young Offender Institutions in the way that it is within Local Authority Secure Unites and Secure Training Centres. There is a relatively high degree of territorialism; the current contracting regime exacerbates this. YOIs and their education departments are subject to a disproportionate amount of inspection and monitoring.

Secure colleges

The need is to make a transition from establishments focusing primarily on control to ones which emphasise learning and reintegrating juvenile offenders into education and training in the community. In order to succeed in this, a conceptual framework akin to that of the secure college is essential.

Management

Strategic planning is not well developed. Education departments are disconnected from many of the significant changes that have occurred in mainstream education in recent years. There is limited use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Information is not routinely used for performance management.

Human resources

Custodial education has a serious lack of a career structure underpinned by relevant qualifications. Terms and conditions in YOIs are significantly worse than in Local Authority Secure Units and mainstream teaching. The labour force is predominantly part-time and turnover is relatively high, particularly for education managers. The level of qualifications is relatively low.

There is a serious deficiency of learning support assistant time to assist teaching staff and to work one-to-one with young people. YOIs also lack sufficient special educational needs (SEN) co-ordinators and educational psychologists.

There tend to be divisions among vocational, teaching and prison officer staff, all of who are involved in aspects of educational activities.

Curriculum

There is no clear model or rationale for the curriculum. An appropriate curriculum would take account of the new sentence lengths, the young people's educational antecedents and the importance of managing educational transitions between custody and the community.

Literacy and numeracy profile of young people in custody

The average age within YOIs was 17. Just over one-quarter of the custodial population was of compulsory school age. Nearly half of these young people had literacy and numeracy levels below those of the average 11-year old. Over one-quarter had numeracy levels equivalent to that of the average seven-year old or younger.

Accommodation

Accommodation is a major constraint on expansion, for both the volume and quality of education across Young Offender Institutions. There is a serious lack of facilities, particularly for science and also in craft, design and technology.

Teaching and learning

A broad, balanced curriculum is not on offer. Special educational needs are an area of major weakness, with insufficient support and an extremely low level of transmission of important evidence from and to the community. Literacy and numeracy do not permeate the curriculum sufficiently. Other areas needing improvement are accreditation, awards ceremonies, homework, lesson planning, and National Records of Achievement (NRA).

Costs

At current funding levels, YOIs cannot provide all the young people with an acceptable education. Nearly as much is spent on education for the 300 bed spaces in LASUs as on the 2,900 bed spaces in YOIs. The cost per bed space on average is 8 to 10 times greater in Local Authority Secure Units and Secure Training Centres than in Young Offender Institutions. There is a marked variation in costs across LASUs, and for the larger ones education is significantly more expensive than in Secure Training Centres.

Messages from young people

The majority had been receiving part-time provision prior to custody. There was little evidence of disaffection with formal education—most preferred it to alternative provision such a pupil referral units or education in custody. But even the limited provision available in custody has made a real difference to some young people. Custody was proving very damaging for the minority who has a school or college placement immediately prior to their custodial sentence. The majority had little awareness of what was arranged for them on release in terms of education or training.

Conclusions

The recommendations require a combination of leadership from the YJB and capacity-building within the custodial institutions and in the community. The YJB needs to be assured that it has sufficient quantity and level of expertise to manage this large-scale and challenging process. The Board is likely to need to move into a simpler, more direct and at times more directive role within the secure estate.

The need is to focus on the young person in devising and providing education and training by giving a reality to the DTO to create an integrated programme.

The enhancement of education and training needs to occur within a strategic framework, otherwise problems may be compounded and inconsistency of provision exacerbated, with little to integrate provision within custody and the community.

Much remains to be done if the Detention and Training Order is to fulfil its intended purpose.

Recommendations

The recommendations concentrate on YOIs and take account of the Youth Justice Board's project to develop a literacy and numeracy assessment of learning materials.

It is vital that implementation of this potentially daunting programme does not destabilise establishments under considerable pressure. If the programme is accepted, it would need to proceed with clear timescales, early demonstration of positive intent and constructive dialogue with the key players in YOIs.

The scale of the underfunding of education and training within YOIs might require a bid by the Youth Justice Board in the next spending review. This would put even more emphasis on rapidly drawing up a credible education and training plan to deliver some significant short-term gains; it should still be possible to pilot secure colleges.

1. Youth Justice Board Leadership

The Board to:

1.1 Prepare a strategic plan for education and training.

1.2 Equip itself with an in-house educationltraining team with appropriate experience, or enter into a strategic partnership/national supporter contract in order to provide the change management expertise.

1.3 Design and introduce a curriculum framework with appropriate key performance targets.

1.4 Develop a contracting regime to stimulate new providers of education, training and allied activities.

2. The Secure College Concept

2.1 The YJB should aim to enable the establishment of education and training centres where the students are held in secure conditions.

2.2 Pilot such an approach under direct contract to the YJB with a national supporter and external evaluation framework.

3. Human Resources Strategy

3.1 Aim to create a professional, high-status service with its own career structure and nationally recognised qualifications.

3.2 Devise and implement a coherent programme of preparatory training and continuing professional development for education and training within the secure estate.

3.3 This to be underpinned by a national programme of INSET.

3.4 Use the additional funding to create a special educational needs co-ordinator port, and terms of learning support assistants and educational psychologist posts for all YOIs.

3.5 Offer incentives ton recruit effective teaching practitioners.

3.6 Introduce an education director post working directly to the governor.

4. Assessment, Planning and Review

4.1 Introduce an integrated and computerised assessment system across the secure estate.

4.2 Ensure that education departments are integrated into sentence planning. Education staff to attend all reviews.

4.3 Set targets, monitor them and use financial sanctions to ensure that there is 100% completion and transmission of ASSET to custodial institutions.

4.4 Amend ASSET so that it is clear that the education and training section must be passed immediately to the education department. Modify to ensure that full education information is recorded properly.

4.5 Issue guidance in conjunction with DfEE to LEAs and Connexions service partnerships to ensure that crucial SEN information always speedily accompanies a young person to custody.

4.6 Devise and introduce an added-value measure that applies across the custodial and community components of the DTO and includes measures for education I training continuity.

4.7 Standardised summative educational assessments to be given to all young people immediately prior to released.

4.8 Review existing systems and introduce electronic attendance monitoring systems in all Young Offender Institutions.

5. Teaching and Learning

5.1 Integrate the education and vocational provision to provide a more balanced, broader and coherent curriculum for all young people.

5.2 Devise and introduce an incentive/rewards programme specific to education and training to further elevate the statue of learning.

5.3 Ensure that there is a coherent approach to educational accommodation and that YJB funds are only used where there is appropriate advice on design.

5.4 The role and resourcing of libraries as learning centres needs specific attention.

5.5 Ensure that the National Record of Achievement is completed in custody to the standards applying in mainstream education and that Youth Offending Team (YOT) supervising officers are accountable for ensuring its transition and continuation in the community part of the sentence.

5.6 Review and introduce an appropriate accreditation scheme that has national currency and can be overseen in custody and the community.

5.7 Set standards regarding the formal setting of homework for all young people.

6. Individual Support

6.1 Set standards for and fund dedicated classroom support staff, especially for literacy and numeracy skills.

6.2 Introduce an integrated case management system.

6.3 Introduce a personal tutorial system.

7. Evidence-based Practice and Quality Assurance

7.1 Commission research into the most effective curriculum and teaching and learning styles for engaging young offenders, particularly in terms of reducing their offending.

7.2 Establish a formal education advisory group for each YOI.

7.3 Pilot a streamlined inspection process that incorporates features of existing inspection regimes, but pays particular attention to both parts of the DTO's effectiveness.

7.4 Commission a handbook for education departments, to include case-studies and guidance on evidence-based practice within custody and the community.

7.5 Develop an intranet for education departments across the secure estate so that effective practice can be shared easily and the implementation of the education and training strategy better co-ordinated.

8. Strategic Partnership with the Further Education (FE) Sector

8.1 Negotiate through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and key agencies such as the Association of Colleges a guarantee of full-time courses available immediately on release from custody for all young offenders aged 14 to 18.

8.2 Develop jointly with the relevant bodies a training programme for college lecturers and learning support assistants so that the have the requisite skills to work with juvenile offenders.

8.3 Negotiate with local LSCs for funding for a college member of staff for each YOT.

8.4 Pilot a grid for learning to link up FE colleges, Young Offender Institutions and YOTs.

9. Connexions Services

9.1 Negotiate with the Connexions Service for personal advisers dedicated to young offenders on custodial sentences.

10. ICT

10.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive ICT strategy across the secure estate, linking these establishments to YOTs and FE colleges.

10.2 Prescribe the hardware and software to be purchased, or at the least provide specifications.

10.3 Review the strengths and weaknesses of the Quantum project

and consider contracting relationships separate to this agreement.

The following indicative action plan depends on the Youth Justice Board's acceptance of these recommendations, its ability to acquire the necessary capacity to deliver this programme, and the availability of resources.

ACTION PLAN

Within three months

Recommendations	*No*
Prepare a strategic plan for education and training	1.1
Establish YJB education team/national supporter	1.2
Design curricular framework	1.3
Set specific targets for completion and transmission of ASSET	4.3
Amend education and training section of ASSET	4.4
Issue guidance to LEAs and Connexions service partnerships	4.5
Prepare effective practice handbook for education departments	7.5
Review the Quantum project	10.3

Within six months

Fund special educational needs co-ordinator posts and educational psychologists	3.4
Introduce education director posts	3.6
Ensure that education departments are integrated into sentence Planning	4.2
Devise and introduce added-value measures	4.6
Devise and introduce incentive programmes specific to education and training	5.3
Ensure that the National Record of Achievement is completed in custody and in the community	5.6
Review and introduce an appropriate accreditation scheme for both custody and the community	5.7
Fund and introduce learning support staff	6.1
Establish an education advisory group for each Young Offender Institution	7.2
Devise and pilot a streamlined inspection process	7.3
Commission research into the most effective curriculum and teaching and learning styles for young offenders	7.1
Develop an intranet for education departments across the secure estate	7.5
Develop a training programme for FE college staff	8.2
Negotiate with the Connexions National Unit for dedicated personal advisers for young people in custody	9.1
Produce ICT specifications for the secure estate	10.2
Review systems and introduce electronic attendance monitoring	4.8

Within one year

Commence a pilot of a secure college working directly to the Youth Justice Board	2.2
Develop a new contracting regime	1.4
Devise and implement a national training programme	3.2 & 3.3
Offer incentives to enhance recruitment	3.5
Introduce an integrated electronic assessment system	4.1
Introduce pre-release educational assessments	4.7
Ensure a coherent approach to improving educational Accommodation	5.4
Develop the role of libraries	5.5
Introduce an integrated case management system	6.2
Introduce a personal tutorial system	6.3
Negotiate with the LSC guaranteed provision on release from custody for juvenile offenders	8.1
Secure from local LSCs a college-based member of staff for each YOT	8.3
Pilot a grid for learning, linking selected FE colleges and YOIs	8.4

Within three years

Secure funding and transform Young Offender Institutions into secure colleges	2.1
Create a professional, high-status educational and training service	3.1
Integrate educational and vocational provision within Young Offender Institutions	5.1
Implement a comprehensive ICT strategy across the whole secure estate	10.1

July 2004

Memorandum submitted by Gerald Cooper

Will you please note the obstructive nature of prison staff? Many officers have said to me "Why should you get education in prison? My children cannot get a good education so why should you?" also "I have not got higher qualifications so why should you get them? I have not committed a crime and you have, you should get nothing!"

I knew three men in HMP Wayland who fought to do 'A' levels. A week before their exams they were moved to another prison in a deliberate attempt, I believe, to undermine their efforts. We prisoners need protection from such action.

1 March 2005

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