



Prisoners  
Education  
Trust

**Nina Champion**

**Learning Matters Project Manager**

# 'More than just a prisoner'

Learning and desistance

- 'Hook' for change
- Developing a  
'pro-social identity'



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# “Learn from the learners”

- How do we enable others to become ‘more than just a prisoner’?
- How do we ensure money is spent in the most effective way?



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# Learner Voice



***"We must be inspired by and sensitive to the learner voice"***

John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning.

NIACE conference April 2012



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***"Listen to prisoners - we are pushed from pillar to post - not asked or listened to"***

Prisoner PET survey respondent, 2011

# Brain Cells

- Results of national prisoner survey
- 526 respondents from 81% of prisons
- Across all sentence lengths



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# Unlocked Potential?

- Top reason for not participating in learning was lack of higher level courses
- Educational profiles of respondents
- Some evidence of regression, not progression



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# The Learning Journey

*"It is good that inmates learn basic skills but it stops there and the opportunity to instill a love of learning is lost and that is tragic."*



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*"A wider range of more advanced classes for long termers/lifers and those of higher than level 2 ability. This lack causes some prisoners to become bored easily and work through the Ed Department quickly leaving them with no focus."*

# Employability needs

*"Having written to many gyms and fitness centres in the community I have learnt that most will only offer those who hold a level 3 qualification a job interview".*



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*"I am a YO, these courses here are level 1, level 2 - they won't help me get a job will they?"*

*"For my level - 3- to be available because levels 1 & 2 don't stand for much these days."*



# Educational Profiles

*'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' ?*



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*'Nearly half those in prison have no qualifications at all' ?*



# The F.E. Gap



**'The heavy concentration on basic skills qualifications is based on little more than a hunch'** Education Select Committee 2005/06



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- 9 out of 24 prisons inspected in 2010/11 *'failed to meet the needs and interests of learners'*.
  - This is a *'serious concern'*.
  - Key weaknesses include *'lack of provision at and above level two'*
- Ofsted Annual Report

# OLASS 4 Opportunity

New OLASS contracts offer an ideal opportunity to assess if the current spectrum of statutory provision is meeting the needs of the prisoner population including..

- Those already with basic skills before prison.
- Those who achieve basic skills in prison and want to progress further.
- Longer term prisoners.
- Those wanting to go into employment requiring level 3 and above qualifications.



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# How to pay for it?

## ***Prisoner solutions ..***

*"Prisoners not being put on courses they don't need or want! This is pointless and a waste of resources and money. No inspiration."*

*"For prison education departments to listen to what the prisoner wants to learn rather than force them into subjects which they have no interest. Prisons are too target driven, leading to alienation of prisoners."*



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*"If level 3 courses were on offer in prison then the chances of gaining employment upon release would increase and in turn prevent reoffending."*

# Learning to be 'more than just a prisoner'



*"Education changes the mindset, helps you communicate, understand in detail. This gives clarity and makes you think about your future in an intellectual way. It stops you doing ridiculous things."*



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Film screening and ex-prisoner panel discussion about  
learning and desistance on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012.

See [www.prisonerseducation.org.uk](http://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk) to book a place