

PGDip CAREERS GUIDANCE
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ACTION RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

“An evaluation of the education and training that is currently available to offenders serving custodial sentences in Scotland: How are careers guidance services involved, and how can effective education and careers guidance make a positive difference to the future of ex-offenders?”

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PREFACE

Originally, this project was designed to look at youth crime and repeat offending in Scotland today, and what were the typical destinations of individuals leaving custody, in relation to either higher education, training or the labour market.

This proved to be problematic in terms of collating suitable qualitative or quantitative information from young offenders, and the question of destinations is often difficult to quantify since it is hard to establish and/or maintain contact with many young offenders on their release from custody, unless they return to custody.

As a vast majority of young offenders today are repeatedly committing further offences into adulthood, I decided to review offenders in general; addressing how education or training may be able to positively impact on those serving custodial sentences, whilst in, and on release from, prison.

As the subject matter of this report was the Scottish Prison Service, there was a large degree of red tape involved in accessing information. All research needs to be approved by the Research branch at SPS headquarters, and there is a lot of detail that the SPS will not disclose. Therefore due to time constraints and security issues, I was not able to conduct as much quantitative research as I would have liked.

On approaching the prisons directly, I was referred back to the SPS headquarters who quoted the above, and on contacting the individual Learning Centres, I was told to go directly to either Motherwell or Lauder College, who run the education and training facilities for all prisons in Scotland. Unfortunately, they were not forthcoming and again put down their inability to forward me information to bureaucracy.

Due to the time constraints, and protocol and confidentiality issues surrounding much of the information that I was looking for through practical research, much of the findings were gathered via meetings with outside agencies; providers of services to ex-offenders; projects and research which had been done by the Scottish Executive and desk based research using government papers and other literature.

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ABBREVIATIONS / TERMINOLOGY

- SPS – Scottish Prison Service
- PLH – Prisoner Learning Hours
- ODH – Offender Development Hours
- BSA – Basic Skills Assessment
- ILP – Individual Learning Plan
- DfES – Department for Education and Skills
- OLSU – Offenders Learning and Skills Unit
- KPI – Key Performance Indicators

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to research

“Education in prisoners 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”¹

The idea to investigate the current education and training system in place within the Scottish prison system stemmed from an original interest in why the majority of young offenders do not progress on to further education or training. By reviewing education levels of offenders on committing their first offence, through to repeat offenders and recidivism, the question of how effective education and training can positively impact on an ex-offenders level of opportunity and employability arose.

In looking at the impact of education and training on offenders and their release into the community, many pieces of research investigate other social factors affecting prisoners, such as their family and social network; cultural issues and childhood, and what impact these might have on reasons for offending. Addressing these issues would stray from the key question and therefore this report is solely concerned with education levels of offenders on entering prison; their expectations, opinions and abilities as individuals; and how the prison service and outside agencies work with the careers service to deliver effective education and the impact this can have.

In researching the subject of education, many reports lead back to employability skills and the focus on the labour market, and do not look directly at what impact the educational facilities has on offenders whilst serving sentences. This evaluation therefore aims to address the education and training that is currently offered by the Scottish Prison Service, and how the careers services and external providers contribute to this service.

The review of the evidence gathered in this report aims to outline the importance of education and training to increasing positive opportunities and resettlement for offenders upon release from custody, but also to illustrate any deficiencies in the current system, and to suggest how career guidance organisations can help education providers make a positive difference where necessary

¹ www.fpe.org.uk

1.2 Aims of Research

The key aims of this piece of research are:-

- **To review the current system of education and training that is in place within the various institutions of the Scottish Prison System, and its purpose**
- **To compare whether this is in line with the goals of the Scottish Executive and the Scottish Prison System**
- **To examine the views and experiences of offenders who have experienced the education and training offered by prisons**
- **To investigate how positive education and training affects ex-offenders and how careers guidance services can influence this**

“It costs far more to keep a man in prison (£38,000) than a pupil at Eton, yet the amount spent on his education (£1,185) is less than half of what is spent on the average pupil in a secondary school” Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster ²

Education for prisoners in the UK must be improved if they are to be prevented from re-offending, MPs have said. A Commons education select committee report found that half of inmates lacked the skills needed for 96% of jobs available upon their release. Only a third had access to formal education, lasting on average nine hours a week. The government said a green paper on prison learning was being prepared and the MPs' report would be considered.

Scottish Tory MSP and Glasgow justice of the peace, Bill Aitken, said recently that people who used poverty as an excuse for crime were "insulting" law-abiding people in the poorer areas of the UK. Mr Aitken has been quoted as saying "what one has to realise is that an awful lot of the people who do end up doing time in Barlinnie and elsewhere do so because of lack of opportunity and we have to address this lack of opportunities...." . Mr Aitken stated that it is crucial we assess our current education and employment systems both within Scotland’s prison system and outwith³.

The committee found just 31 out of 75,000 prisoners had access to the internet "as a learning tool". Its chairman, Barry Sheerman, said: "Although the government has increased resources for prison education, it has not fully met its manifesto commitment to 'dramatically increase the quality and quantity of education provision'." Re-offenders are costing the tax payer an estimated £11 billion a year. Education has a key role in rehabilitating prisoners into society and finding them secure employment. "If prisoners are to find a real alternative to crime on their release, then prisons will have to dramatically improve their provision⁴.

² www.prisonerseducation.org.uk

³ Source: BBC.co.uk/Scotland

⁴ Source: BBC.co.uk/Scotland

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section of the report presents the results from the literature review, which was designed to address the following:-

- **Current policy in Scotland surrounding education and training for offenders; and educational services that the SPS aim to deliver**
- **Provision of education actually in place (review of 5 prisons in Scotland 2003/2004)**
- **Relationship between education and (un)employment / barriers to opportunities**
- **Developments & links to agencies delivering education & training**
- **The prison education system in England and Wales (review of prisons in England)**
- **Links between career guidance services, education and training for offenders**

Current policy in Scotland surrounding education and training for offenders; and educational services that the SPS aim to deliver

At the end of 2000, the SPS launched their vision for a new and improved service – this vision aims to achieve “correctional excellence”, which is summarized as “*we will be recognised as the leaders in prisons’ correctional work which helps to reduce recidivism and thereby offers value for money for the taxpayer*”⁵. This has become known as the “Correctional Agenda”.

One of the key objectives of this vision is to deliver effective opportunities for prisoners to help reduce recidivism, which therefore includes education, training and employment. This objective is therefore in line with the Scottish Executive’s strategies including Lifelong Learning, Education and Economic Prosperity. The rehabilitation principle is reflected in areas such as access to opportunities, and skills and employability.

⁵Scottish Prison Service (2003), *Making a Difference*, Scottish Executive Justice Department, Edinburgh

The Scottish Prison Service Board adopted a Prisoner Education Policy called “*Education Matters – Learning Works*” in June 1998⁶.

The key aims for prisoner education and learning with SPS are to impact upon prisoner re-offending by:

- Enhancing self esteem and motivation
- Increasing ability to cope with everyday life
- Showing positive ways forward both in prison and beyond; and
- Opening up alternative future opportunities

The policy was implemented in April 2000, with contracts for the provision of prisoner education under the policy running for 3 years with a possible extension for 2 more years thereafter. Currently SPS have contracts for education services with Motherwell College; Lauder College, in Dunfermline; Aberdeen College and Highland Council⁷. These cover basic and core skill provision and supported distance learning and further and higher educational levels.

The key elements of the SPS Board policy are that a prisoner’s education should:

1. Have strong links with the other aspects of the regime
2. Encompass all elements of structured prisoner learning
3. Maximise access to learning opportunities for prisoners
4. Identify, record and address the educational needs of individual prisoners
5. Tackle aggregated prisoner educational needs in a prioritized systematic fashion
6. Facilitate progression, recognise and value individual achievements
7. Articulate closely, that is, link with and take account of, current and developing SPS policy
8. Link, where appropriate, with national initiatives in education and with relevant Scottish Executive policies
9. Make a demonstrable, measurable impact
10. Be delivered through contracts with external education providers, fully congruent with the Scottish Education system

Every prison and young offender establishment in Scotland has a Learning Centre, through which prisoner learning opportunities are delivered in conjunction with other regime aspects. The education delivered focuses on initial assessment in basic skills, with priority given to prisoners who have difficulty in this area. Thereafter individual learning plans are drawn up with the prisoners and learning opportunities based on basic and the five core skills (communications; IT, working with others and problem solving) are delivered.

⁶ www.scotland.gov.uk

⁷ Scottish Prison Service (2003), *Making a Difference*, Scottish Executive Justice Department, Edinburgh

Access is also provided to learning support for those with specific learning difficulties and distance learning in particular through a newly focused link with the Open University in Scotland.

Last year, prison based education contractors and prisoners working in SPS establishments achieved:

- Over 2000 prisoners being education per month
- 415,699 Prisoner Learning Hours (P.L.H's)
- 3,927 Basic Skills Assessments
- 3,677 Individual Learning Plans developed⁸

During 2002, the Scottish Prison Service achieved the status of one of four national sites undertaking a literacies "Pathfinder" project to progress investigations in all areas of literacy, numeracy and IT needs. Accordingly, a range of objectives are anticipated from the project during 2003-2005:

- The establishment of links with strategic planning groups for literacies, including Communities Scotland.
- To establish and develop links with "action plan" groups to link community based provision for prisoners post liberation and assist the integration process
- To pilot new training for learning providers and peer tutors

Cost is clearly a key issue for the SPS, and one of the key incentives to reduce offending is to reduce the cost of prisons by addressing overcrowding. Overcrowding can lead to issues regarding the provision of services, including education, for offenders and policy makers realise these issues are inextricably linked. The prison population reached record levels in 2002, with over 30,000 prisoners checking in and out of SPS establishments every year.

Statistics from 2002-2003 showed that it cost an average of £29,839 per year to provide a prisoner place. The SPS budget has increased from £122 million in 1991-92 to £229 million in 2002-03. In 2003, Scotland had one of the highest rates of imprisonment in the European Union at 129 people in prison per 100,000 head of population⁹.

By delivering effective education and training to offenders, who are keen and willing to participate, this addresses the previous issue regarding a reduction in re-offending, thus lowering numbers of prisoners in institutions and consequently the costs of offending.

⁸ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/ttsharnett.html>

⁹ www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/justice/rrrc-02.asp

Key features of the service that the SPS want to achieve are:-

- A flexible service to meet the needs of the individual prisoner
- High standards of learning and development, mirroring those for students outside prison
- A focus on basic and key skills, as well as vocational studies
- Continuity of education and training throughout sentence, to ensure prisoners are consistently engaged and active, securing positive outcomes
- Target setting, with performance management procedures in place, to emphasise the importance of learning and employability outcomes for offenders

Provision of education actually in place (review of 5 prisons in Scotland 2003/2004)

The practical findings from the research of this subject allowed a more in depth review of one SPS institution in particular, HMP Barlinnie. This information is contained in the Results & Findings section of the report.

With regards to evaluating what is actually in practice within Scottish prisons, in comparison with what the Scottish Executive would like to be in place, **appendix 4** summarises the education and training provision of 5 other prisons in Scotland, as well as Barlinnie.

As there are different contracts in place across Scotland, with various educational providers, there are guidelines that prisons must follow, but the approaches often vary as to how education and training are delivered, consequently results and effectiveness will also vary from establishment to establishment.

Common positive findings:

- Good range of accredited programmes to address offending related issues
- Focus on labour market sectors that will offer employability to ex-offenders
- Good levels of accreditation and certificated courses available
- Focus on vocational skills training
- Good core skills training

Common negative findings:

- Disorganised recording of information & prisoner records of achievement
- Lack of sharing of outcomes and prisoner details, both internally and with external providers
- Reduction in PLH's
- Staff rota problems and subsequent non-prioritisation of learning centre requirements
- Poor quality of library and lack of investment in reading material
- No significant links between library resources and learning centre courses
- Lack of staff in learning centres

- Lack of variety of non-vocational courses
- Limited number of places available on vocational courses
- Low percentages of prisoners engaging with learning centre
- Poor advertising of courses and education that is available to prisoners
- No full time education available to any prisoner
- Financial penalties apply in some institutions for undertaking education (i.e. prisoners earn more by taking up jobs in the prison which do not often lead to new skills)
- Only one institution highlighted employability skills interviewing at induction stage
- Inflexible timetables – should be more flexible provision geared toward individual requirements of inmates

Relationship between education and (un)employment / barriers to opportunities

The objective of prisoner access to education and training courses whilst in prison is to help them to gain skills and qualifications that will help them to enter employment, education or further training on release. Research has shown that prisoners who gain employment or training on liberation are much less likely to re-offend.

It has been found that education programmes in prisons may improve the prospects of offenders by enhancing their employability. 60% of offenders released from prison in the last two years were reconvicted of another offence¹⁰, however lower rates of re-imprisonment were found among offenders who had completed an adult basic education whilst in prison¹¹.

Prisoners who spent more time in academic programmes and vocational training programmes were less likely to be re-imprisoned after release, than those with less intensive involvement.

Therefore, the development of an excellent offender education system is a priority for the government.

¹⁰ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations/justice.rrrc-01.asp>

¹¹ HORS 291, “The Impact of Corrections on Re-offending: a review of ‘What Works’”, 02/2005

Developments & links to agencies delivering education & training

The SPS future strategy aims to:-

- Create a tailored pathway for each individual prisoner, addressing issues to help fulfill their future potential
- Assess individual needs
- Agree a pathway for goals in learning; skills and employability
- Address: - **Basic skills** (reading; writing; numeracy; ICT)
Core skills (communications; problem solving; team working)
Life skills (confidence building; relationships; authority; finance)
Work skills (attitudes; motivation; reliability; trainability)
Vocational skills (sector specific training e.g. hospitality or construction, etc)
Re-integration skills (preparation for release; careers guidance; links to external providers)

This future strategy includes the working in a coordinated way with external parties, including education providers and training bodies, to promote positive intervention and inclusiveness on resettlement for offenders.

Currently, the SPS have contracts for education services with Aberdeen, Lauder and Motherwell Colleges, as well as Highland Council who utilise the services of Inverness College.

These contracts cover basic and core skill provision, and supported distance learning at Further and Higher education levels. Some support is offered to the provision of skills training, however this is mainly delivered by SPS officers.

The Open University are currently delivering education to degree level for a small percentage of prisoners in the UK. The Open University recently introduced the “Widening Participation Strategy” which aims to offer the opportunity of higher education to everyone. The Open University is Scotland’s major provider of higher education to students in prison and young offender institutions. In addition to teaching and supporting prisoners undertaking degree level study, the Open University now also run access courses designed specifically for prisoners wishing to enter further and higher education on release from custody. The Open University hopes to increase the number of prisoners participating in further education courses from 650 (figures in 2003) to 1000, over the next 3 years¹².

One training provider engaged by the SPS is APEX Services. As part of a reintegration strategy by HMP Barlinnie, Apex have an onsite adviser handling employability training with a group of inmates undergoing a pilot construction skills training course. Apex provides the link from prison life to taking up employment within the construction industry.

¹² <http://www3.opn.ac.uk/near-you/scotland/p3>

Other such programmes are under construction; therefore it is essential for the SPS to maintain progressive partnerships and positive relationships with education and training agencies that will allow the SPS to meet their target objectives.

f) **Prison education system in England and Wales: Case study no.3 (appendix 3)**

The Department for Education and Skills works in partnership with HM Prison Service in relation to education in prison. The aim of this partnership is to help prevent re-offending by providing education and training for all prisoners, so that they can find work or go on to further education and training on release.

This partnership was created in response to the Criminal Justice Strategy Plan from the Resettlement Directorate, and illustrates the commitment of the prison service to address effective resettlement and stop the “revolving door” syndrome.

A theme of this strategy plan was to target the high volume repeat offender, who is likely to:-

- Come from a high crime postcode
- **Have a poor education**
- Be unemployed
- Have accommodation problems
- Have relationship problems
- Have addiction problems¹³

If these issues are not addressed it is highly likely that the individual will re-offend. Therefore, the objectives of the partnership between the DfES and the prison service are:

- To build on the education and training capacity in prisons
- To access learning needs of prisoners at the early stages of sentence – and offer individual learning plans where possible, for in or after prison
- To integrate education and training in prisons, to capture the interest and attention of prisoners

It was hoped to provide more incentives to prisoners to learn, and to contribute to better arrangements for resettlement.

HM Prison Service has established the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU), headed up by Chris Barnham. This department aims to address the key concern that a disturbing number of offenders have low skills and poor, or no, qualifications. Many offenders do not have the necessary skills to obtain employment. This situation is compounded by the challenges of engaging offenders in learning activities and programmes.

Government ministers are actively considering the long-term shape and purpose of work with offenders on skills and employment, aiming to reduce re-offending by opening up choice and opportunity through skills development.

¹³ <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs/ttsharnett.html>

The principle considerations at this time, of the OLSU include:-

- The impact of skills acquisition on employment and recidivism
- Quality of teaching and learning in prisons
- Wider education interventions
- Broadening the curriculum
- Helping offenders obtain the skills needed for their local labour market and sustain a job or training place¹⁴

It was not possible to access documentation detailing prison reviews in England, as this information was restricted on the websites. However, **appendix 5** details the education that was offered at a cross section of prisons, to give an overview of some of the education regimes that are available.

Common themes from the educational provision in the 5 prisons reviewed include:-

- Higher numbers of full time staff available in education
- Education is available to prisoners on a full time basis
- Wider variety of courses and training available than in Scotland
- All courses provide nationally recognized qualifications on completion
- Prisoners show motivation and interest in learning and training: staff effectively promote the facilities and this results in more applications

Case study 3 (appendix 3) details findings from an ex-offender who served sentences in both England and Wales, and he was very much a fan of the education system in English institutions. He believed that the inmates who participated in educational reform in English prisons were much more enthusiastic and keen to undertake education and training, and a key reason for this was better quality and attitudes of the teaching staff – the prisoners were treated with more respect, and detailed that there is also a much wider variety of courses and training than in any of the Scottish prisons that he has served in (3). Whilst serving sentence in Scotland, case study number 3 was told that Scottish prisons are currently attempting to bring their education systems in line with those delivered in England.

¹⁴ http://www.dfes.gov.uk/offenderlearning/ac_message.cfm

Links between career guidance services; education and training for offenders

Career guidance services are in place within various prisons in Scotland, via Careers Scotland, the main agency for guidance in the country. From reviewing their website, the organisation aim to provide an in-house adviser, who works for Careers Scotland, to contribute to the instruction that inmates receive prior to resettlement, in the few months prior to release, as well as providing a point of contact on the outside.

The bulk of findings about this service were gained from practical research, by talking directly with careers advisers who have worked within the prison system. Literature on this subject did not disclose much detail on the contribution that guidance services should make.

It was expressed in Scottish Prison Service literature that guidance services should be made available, in order to extend and enrich the range of education and training made available to people in prison, and also to promote the importance of education and training in the successful resettlement of offenders once they are released.

Offenders should also have access to information, advice and guidance at all times, which is an objective of the SPS. This includes e-learning and use of new technologies.

3.0 METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

The key problems experienced in the researching of this subject were predominantly in relation to confidentiality and security issues within the Scottish Prison Service. Accessing relevant information and also making direct contact with prisoners themselves inside most establishments was made very difficult by the Scottish Prison Service.

Therefore, due to time constraints and limited resources, the most effective methods of research involved a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research. This had to be undertaken due to the problems encountered in collating the required volume of qualitative information from prisoners in person.

Had the piece of research been undertaken over a longer timescale, it would have been possible to acknowledge the Scottish Prison Service's policy of contacting the research branch at the SPS headquarters, where the piece of work would have been approved: this would have allowed for more access into other prisons in Scotland and other reports. Therefore it would have allowed for the acquisition of broader and potentially more representative findings.

- **Qualitative**

- **:Group interview with a group of prisoners from Barlinnie prison & 2 case studies (25/04/05)**

- These case studies were undertaken following a group question and answer session in HMP Barlinnie, with a group of 12 prisoners following the SVQ 2 access to construction vocational training course. The question and answer session proved to be difficult to gain honest and reflective responses from the group, due to peer pressure and some disengagement.

- The case studies allowed more insight and a better understanding from prisoners, with more in-depth open questioning techniques and probing analysis

- **:One to one interview with ex-offender (GCVS) (05/05/05)**

- To gain insight into the experiences of an ex-offender, who has undergone education and training in prisons both in England and Scotland. Also to review whether or not this has made a positive impact on his future opportunities

- **Quantitative**

- **:Review of questionnaires on New Leaf employability project (Low Moss) (26/04/05)**

- The New Future's Fund Initiative "New Leaf" project allowed evaluation on a quantitative basis with a review of 25 prisoners. Although minimal, when combined with the qualitative analysis of prisoner experience and expectation, it provided information on more prisoners than I would otherwise have gained access to

:Review of prisoners education levels and barriers to resettlement (Low Moss) (26/04/05)

The review of education levels was done by utilising client profiles of prisoners who participated in the “New Leaf” project at Low Moss prison. The profiles outlined the levels of education that prisoners had before sentencing, and their perception of barriers to the future on release. Again, this allowed access to otherwise unobtainable information. Again, 25 profiles were used

- **Meeting with Learning Centre manager at Barlinnie prison (25/04/05)**
This allowed insight into what the actual education and academic training facilities are in a Scottish prison. The centre manager offered valuable insight into how education was delivered; targets and the level of engagement with offenders
- **Meeting with careers adviser in LINK centre at Barlinnie (25/04/05)**
The LINK centre provides point of contact between offenders due for release, and career guidance / job search facilities. The adviser is a Careers Scotland representative, who works from the prison a minimum of 1 day per week. This allowed evaluation of the contribution careers services make to education, training and resettlement issues for prisoners
- **Discussion with Prison Contracts Manager at Motherwell College (20/04/05)**
Although this contact was limited, it illustrated the difficulties in accessing information about education and training within the prison system.
- **Interviews with centre trainers and vocational course tutors at Barlinnie, and observation of education and training in prisons (25/05/05)**
The vocational course tutors were able to provide access to the training suites which enabled direct observation of the practical training prisoners are able to receive, and information on levels of certification and its significance to prisoners
- **Meeting with external agencies providers; including GCVS; Apex and Reed in Partnership (25/04/05)**
Organisations including APEX Training; GCVS and Reed in Partnership facilitated the collation of information regarding the impact of education and training in prisons, on the employability and opportunities for ex-offenders. It is important to review this information in relation to how education can make a positive difference to the future and resettlement of offenders
- **Desk based research: internet; journals; textbooks; government papers and articles**

4.0 RESULTS / FINDINGS:

RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN	EVALUATION OF EDUCATION & TRAINING PROVISION	REVIEW OF HOW CAREERS GUIDANCE SHOULD INFLUENCE PROVISION
<p>Qualitative: :Group interview with a group of prisoners from Barlinnie prison & Case Studies 1 & 2 (APPENDICES 1,2 & 10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some inmates clearly did not see the benefit of additional academic training and education, purely for learning's sake. These inmates tended to be older and often more cynical, therefore had perhaps not had employment opportunities when out with prison, and only saw the benefit in vocational training in order to secure employment. • Case study 1 held cynical and negative views about education, preferring to use the financial incentive to undertake work in prison • Perceptions of education were that it is not relevant to obtaining gainful employment • Case study 2 was more optimistic and keen to undertake study: younger person • Both case studies believed prison staff to be discouraging of education and unhelpful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of the education and training that is being focused on now are intervention programmes designed to address multiple issues. i.e. education that tackles offending-linked behaviour e.g. parenting skills; relationships; alcohol & drug misuse and broader social and life skill needs • Offending-focused interview preferred to more academic courses, in order to address Scottish Executive objectives • Inmates received Worknet training on employability skills • Careers advisers are not working effectively with prison librarians or learning centre, and are not actively involved with education

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education “second best” to work in prison, even if work is unskilled and does not benefit inmates 	
<p>Qualitative: :One to one interview with ex-offender: Case study 3 (APPENDIX 3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study has very negative views of the education provision within Scottish institutions • Lack of variety of educational courses and vocational training available • Lack of respect for prisoners and their abilities • Consistent and regular reviews of achievement for inmates in England • Full time training also available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case study 3 believed that guidance services were not influential enough in Scotland, and did not integrate effectively with the education system • More practical work with outside agencies to show prisoners their possible options on release
<p>Quantitative: Review of questionnaires on New Leaf employability project (APPENDIX 8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24% of the respondents found the links to the education providers very useful • Exactly the same proportion stated that the colleges were of no use whatsoever to them. • Only 16% believed that a lack of education was a barrier to their future resettlement. • These findings illustrate that prisoner opinions are split, and that provision is inconsistent and therefore is a troubling indication of prisoner thoughts on the education provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respondents were keen to involve the careers services more in determining need and assisting with employability • Careers guidance could provide the link between employers and training in prison • Effective careers could stress importance of updated training and education to inmates, and its impact upon their successful integration to society • More work with careers could improve offenders perceptions of education and its relative importance to them

<p>Quantitative: Review of prisoners education levels and barriers to resettlement (APPENDIX 7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite 61% of respondents having no formal education, only 33% believed that this was a principle barrier to employment on release • Only 39% had undergone formal training • All respondents between ages of 18 and 34 – working age • Education often regarded as alternative to work parties, not in addition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers guidance staff had little input regards education in HMP Low Moss, at the time of this survey • Prisoners were not influenced by the work of educational contractors (Motherwell and Cumbernauld colleges), or aware of their significance in inmates’ resettlement • Better tracking of success rates of prisoners who underwent education and training
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RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN	EVALUATION OF EDUCATION & TRAINING PROVISION	REVIEW OF HOW CAREERS GUIDANCE SHOULD INFLUENCE CONDITIONS
<p>Meeting with careers adviser in LINK centre at Barlinnie</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Scotland staff in house on one or more days per week • Only concerned with inmates with impending release • Not directly involved with learning centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned primarily with employability and vocational training • Lack of emphasis on education for its own purpose
<p>Meeting with Learning Centre manager at</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inmates do not receive a choice in terms of courses available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LINK centre and guidance staff only utilised for inmates due for release

<p>Barlinnie prison (APPENDICES 6 & 9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowding leads to delivery issues • Ineffective determination of need at induction • Poor use of the ILP: lack of addressing individual need • Lack of effective record keeping on prisoner achievements or need • Lack of incentive for inmates • Poor motivation from prison staff • Lack of places on courses available • No full time education available • Learning centre perceived as “dumping ground” by staff and inmates • High turnover of inmates in centre • Lack of commitment to learning from inmates • Limited selection of courses available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prisoners are not engaged with guidance services; missing out on vital training • More contact with outside agencies and educational establishments required • Group work sessions ineffective: more one-to-one guidance interviews • Guidance staff not involved in stressing importance of education and training enough
<p>Interviews with centre trainers and vocational course tutors at Barlinnie, and observation of education and training in prison (APPENDIX 10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inmates participating on courses had limited educational achievements • Very enthusiastic about course content and delivery by trainers • Problems with theory content, due to limitations with literacy/numeracy • Inability to ensure consistency due to varying levels of ability • Enthusiastic about numeracy/literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links with career guidance and job centre staff for potential employers: success stories on employment • Recognition and reward for prisoners on achievement • Possibility of full time courses in near future • Accreditation on course completion for inmates • Referrals from course instructor to careers on

	<p>training when part of a vocational course i.e. inmates see the relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited number of places: courses perceived as preferential treatment 	<p>inmates with good work record</p>
<p>Meeting with external agencies providers; including GCVS & Apex (APPENDICES 12 & 13)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main issues are with literacy & basic education of ex-offenders • Stigma attached to disclosing poor education leads to avoidance – this needs to be addressed in order to improve all-round education • More one-to-one as opposed to classroom style teaching • Better use of inmates as mentor/tutors for educative purposes (as in English/Welsh institutions) • Education in prisons more beneficial as a self-esteem and confidence boost at present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better use of careers guidance on release from prison to try and break the cycle of previous offending lifestyles • Effective transfer of offender records to careers guidance services, to help address individual need and employability • Careers to ensure inmates are aware of the importance of education and training that is undertaken in prison, and how it can benefit them on release (not viewed seriously by many at present) • To stress importance of keeping up momentum of studying/training – time lag can cause issues for future employers • Careers work more with education to increase motivation and enthusiasm of inmates • Careers to manage relationships with potential employers in local labour market
<p>Desk based research: internet; journals; textbooks; government papers and articles</p>	<p>Refer to Literature Review section (page _)</p>	<p>Refer to Literature Review section (page _)</p>

5.0 DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS

A detailed analysis of this subject was difficult due to the time constraints and difficulties caused by protocol and confidentiality, and it proved complex to try and critically analyse a subject so high up on the agenda of the government and Scottish Executive in such a short space of time.

The objective behind this report was to address the common belief that the purpose of education for offenders is to equip the learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding they will need to lead life as workers, as citizens and to be fulfilled in their personal and family life¹⁵. The findings from the research in this report were to analyse what the current provision is for education of offenders in Scottish prisons; how significant it is and whether or not careers guidance services make an effective contribution to this provision for offenders, both whilst serving sentences and on liberation.

The findings of the research provided much information for debate, in relation to current education and training provision; what should be and is available and how it impacts upon the inmates who do, or do not, undertake said education or training.

Many prisoners who participated in surveys and supplied information said that they believed their only requirement was in vocational assistance and training, but did not realise that a principle barrier they would face on release was their lack of education and literacy / numeracy problems.

There needs to be more input from the careers service with the learning centres; perhaps working more closely with the colleges who deliver the education and training contracts to stress the importance of education and academic or vocational training to prisoners.

From the findings, the following points have been deduced:

- The education system in both Scotland and England is still very haphazard: there needs to be much more rigid procedures in place for recording individual needs of prisoners
- Tracking of educational needs and qualifications undertaken by prisoners has to be more coherent and logical
- Better communication between institutions when transferring information is essential
- More frequent reviews need to be implemented, in order to target the effectiveness of the training and education systems that are currently in place

¹⁵ Uden, T. (2004) *Education and Training for Offenders & Ex-Offenders in the Community*, NIACE: Latimer Trent

- Comparing the education systems in England and Wales through case studies and literature reviews, there needs to be access for prisoners in Scotland to full time study. At present, prisoners need to take part in a work schedule which encroaches into this time, however prisoners in English institutions have the opportunity to undergo education on a full time basis
- The research outlined the views of prisoners which are so often not taken into account: there is currently no input from prisoners on the type or level of training that they receive, and this may improve perceptions and participation levels if included
- There is presently a lack of communication between SPS and HM Prison Service: case studies outlined the inadequacies of the Scottish education system, as experienced by inmates: this must be addressed sooner rather than later
- Consistency between prisons and their programmes should be monitored: despite a variety of providers, reviews of the provision in different SPS institutions highlighted obvious discrepancies and good practice adhered to throughout
- Research highlighted the poor communication between prison learning centres and careers guidance services in many SPS institutions: this should be addressed and careers staff to take a more prominent role in addressing inmates educational needs at all stages of their sentence
- Evaluation of services in England and Wales highlighted a lack of adequate staffing to meet prisoner needs in various institutions: if attention is not given to appropriate teaching, this will reflect on the perceptions of the inmates
- Research uncovered cynical views of learning centre staff: their lack of motivation due to high turnover of inmates impacts on the delivery of effective services
- Research uncovered a lack of communication in place between learning centres and those who plan sentences for prisoners: by putting this in place, education and training would be consistent and planned

6.0 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Evaluation of research and its contribution

The research proved that problems which have been continuing over previous years, such as poor monitoring of prisoner education and outcomes, as well as targets for prisoner learning, are still a serious issue across the UK.

However, there have been more frequent KPI reviews and some prisons have been able to publish encouraging statistic, indicating an improvement in delivery of education and training services. However, there are prisons still showing a decrease in prisoner learning hours and prisoner participation in education. There are clear inconsistencies and this needs to be resolved.

A recent House of Commons report (31/03/05) from the Education and Skills Select Committee stated that “the current state of prisoner education is unacceptable”¹⁶. This followed a year long inquiry into prison education, and although it had been able to acknowledge some improvements recently, the situation was still far from adequate.

This research has provided much needed insight into the delivery of education to prisoners in both England and Wales, and Scotland, but has also been able to provide insight into the opinions and needs of the inmates themselves. This is necessary if the education and training system in British prisons is to improve and be more effective.

The report also highlighted clear inconsistencies between the delivery of education and of careers guidance services, which need to work more cohesively if they are to be productive.

6.2 Recommendations for improving the situation or guidelines

- Career guidance services could be of more assistance in terms of the promotion of education and training in prisons, and advertise the necessity and subsequent benefits of such to prisoners on liberation. This is vital since in Scottish prisons, the HM Inspectorate reports highlighted that approaches to keeping prisoners informed about courses and activities were limited and unsuccessful¹⁷.
- The opportunity to study and train is offered to all prisoners, although many do not take this up. They do not seem to equate skills gained whilst learning; working or training in prison, to skills that employers are looking for on the outside. This should be promoted more actively in prison so that offenders are aware of how they could improve their own situation and how important it is (role of careers guidance)

¹⁶ <http://fpe.org.uk/news/index/html>

¹⁷ HM Inspectorate of Prisons, 2004

- Prisons could look to providing a more holistic approach to delivering the full range of prisoner learning activities, and ensure that the role of formal education is valued and promoted more actively – this would hopefully lead to a more positive outlook by the majority of prisoners who would embrace a new learning culture
- More marketing and attraction of prisoners into the libraries and relevant literature for courses and training offered at the learning centres
- Funding: this is a problem across the board, especially for those prisoners who hope to study long term e.g. through the open university
- Additional funding for books and relevant material, especially for those prisoners who have literacy problems and visual impairments.
- Training: Prisoners interviewed felt that the training or employment opportunities offered to them in prison were not challenging or allowing them to build on useful skills for future employability.
- From the evidence gathered in prison reviews, showing the vocational qualifications and training that is offered; the courses tended to have a service provision for the prison – that is, they were activities that would add to the effective running of the prison, such as hairdressing; industrial cleaning or painting and decorating. It would be beneficial to the prisoners to offer them training that had the sole purpose of giving them additional skills and training for the future, in subjects or activities that they could be consulted on and were interested in.
- In some prisons, with the introduction of the new prisoner pay awards, prisoners in the enhanced working parties can attend 2 sessions of education per week. However they lost their bonus if they wished to attend additional sessions in the learning centre (HMP Shotts, 2004). All prisoners should have access to appropriate learning opportunities without penalty.
- The BSA should be completed on an individual basis, not in groups, in order to uncover greater needs of individual prisoners
- If inmates had the opportunity to undertake full time education, then they would be able to incorporate both academic education and special interest courses (e.g. art, German, etc) for the prisoner as well as more employability focused training and intervention programmes to address offending issues
- More widespread use of the pilot assessment tool “the Alerting Tool”, which invites prisoners to write briefly about their enthusiasms and interests, and to self-assess against a list of everyday uses of literacy and numeracy. Prison staff regard this as being more effective than the BSA, and more likely to be properly completed by prisoners.
- BSA information should be passed on to staff in the learning centre ASAP, as delays in some prisons result in staff being unable to complete an ILP for prisoners after induction.

- More effort needs to be made by learning staff to track progress and certify training; career guidance can in turn express the relevance and importance of recording qualifications and training to prisoners, for future employment purposes and CV building
- More internet access for prisoners, and better links between prison library and learning centre training
- More systematic approaches to self-evaluation by staff need to be in place in order to effectively plan for improvement of services
- Greater and more effective use of ILP's for prisoners will help to focus their learning and assist prisoners to monitoring progress – staff need to be able to demonstrate more fully to prisoners the benefits accruing to prisoners from their involvement in education – to counter the feeling by many prisoners that education is just a break from the monotony of prison life
- If prisons could bring down the numbers of re-offenders, this could bring down the cost of the prison service, per head of population (approx. £38,000 per prisoner, per annum), which would therefore increase available funds to be spend on more effective and comprehensive education and training facilities for prisoners.

Anne Owers stated that “...our prisons are still 24% overcrowded.....and they are still discharging prisoners who have been unable to benefit from the education, training and resettlement support they needs. The prison population is, in reality, the difference between a manageable crisis and an unmanageable one”¹⁸.

HM Prison Service and the SPS need to focus on at least some of the above issues, if they are to address re-offending in a constructive and effective manner, as well as more effectively utilising the services of career guidance organisations in a purposeful and forward thinking manner, in turn resulting in economic and social development and reformation.

¹⁸ <http://www.hmprisonservice.gov.uk/prisoninformation>, 05/05/2005