



Prisoners'  
Education  
TRUST



## Department for Business Innovation and Skills

### Further Education - Future development of loans consultation response

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#### Summary of consultation response

- Prisoners Education Trust (PET) and the Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) are concerned with improving education for prisoners and this response focuses on the questions relating to education in prisons rather than the wider implications of the BIS proposals.
- PET and the PLA are deeply concerned about plans to expand the Advanced Learning Loans system both by age and level and argue that this will impact negatively on current and potential prisoner learners.
- PET and the PLA advocate educational progression in prisons and seek to promote it. We are concerned that the expansion of Advanced Learning Loans will hinder rather than promote progression.
- This consultation response includes evidence from prisoners that the withdrawal of funding for level 3 qualifications has been having a negative impact and restricting their educational progression. We therefore recommend not going ahead with plans to expand the loans system and furthermore, would support moving in the opposite direction by taking prisoners out of the existing requirement for Advanced Learning Loans altogether.

#### About Prisoners' Education Trust

Since 1989, Prisoners' Education Trust (PET) has provided access to broader learning opportunities for prisoners, to enhance their chances of building a better life after release. This is achieved through an advice service, peer mentor training and a grants programme which assists around 2,000 prisoners each year to study distance learning courses in subjects and levels not available in prison. We are funded by over fifty different trusts and foundations and also receive a government grant from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

Through our policy work, PET raises awareness of the importance of education for prisoners' in aiding rehabilitation and makes the case for better access to academic, creative, informal and vocational learning in prison. Key to this is incorporating the voices and views of prisoners towards education provision and we use their experiences to influence policy and good practice. We have sought the views of prisoners and incorporate their voices into policy consultation responses.

PET also established the Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) in November 2012. The PLA has a membership of 18 organisations (listed in the annex attached) involved with learning in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and has the following aim; *'To bring together non-statutory stakeholders with senior cross-departmental officials, to provide expertise and strategic vision to inform future priorities, policies and practices relating to prison education, learning and skills'*. The PLA launched its first report<sup>1</sup> in December 2013 and held a one day conference in April 2014, which raised the important question of what the purpose of prison education is and what the future direction should be, particularly when so much is changing so rapidly in the CJS. Concern over the lack of educational progression in prisons was a major theme of that conference.

## **Introduction to policy response**

As the home of the secretariat for the PLA, PET consulted with other PLA members in order to gain a wide range of views on the proposals set out in the current consultation. In this response we draw on our and other PLA members' expertise and prisoner feedback to summarise concerns about expanding the scope of the Advanced Learning Loans system by age and level.

## **Methodology**

In order to listen to a wide range of 'learner voice', PLA members, User Voice and St Giles Trust both consulted with serving prisoners they are currently working with. User Voice work is led and delivered by ex-offenders who consistently foster dialogue between users and providers of services within the criminal justice system aiming to make a difference and to urge policy-makers and people who make decisions to listen. User Voice has developed its innovative council model in prisons, which are designed to provide prisoners with an opportunity to get involved with improving services and work constructively with staff. User Voice sent us seven responses from prisoners they consulted with at HMP Pentonville.

St Giles Trust trains people with experience of the CJS and prison to use their skills and first-hand experience to help others through peer-led support. St Giles consulted with five serving prisoners who are released on temporary licence (ROTL) into the community to volunteer for St Giles Trust.

Female prisoners at HMP Eastwood Park were also consulted with about the expansion of Advanced Learning Loans. Their concerns are incorporated although there are no direct quotes from them.

All prisoners who were consulted about the proposals had concerns about the impact of expanding the scope of the Advance Learning Loans system by age and level. Direct quotes from them are included in this response. Additionally, direct quotes from prisoners

included from a soon to be published PET report: Brain Cells Third Edition<sup>ii</sup>. The report is based on 343 responses to a survey about prison education prepared by PET and distributed through Inside Time newspaper in September 2013.

**Q4: Will the expansion of loans create any particular barrier(s) to access provision based on (i) race, religion, or belief; (ii) disability; (iii) gender; (iv) age or (v) disadvantage? If yes, please explain what the potential barrier would be.**

In so far as the expansion of loans would have a particularly adverse impact on the prisoner population compared to the population generally (see our responses to questions 6 and 7 below), and minority groups are over-represented in the prison population they will disproportionately affect members of all these groups. Furthermore, the loan proposals would have a particularly adverse impact on minority groups within the prisoner population as set out below.

#### (i) Race, religion or BAME

The prison population includes disproportionate numbers of individuals from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups. In September 2013 BAME groups made up 22% of the prison population<sup>iii</sup> whilst the most recent census taken in 2011, indicates that 14% of the general population from England and Wales were from BAME groups<sup>iv</sup>. This means that the adverse effect of the expansion of loans on prisoners will affect BAME groups disproportionately compared to society at large.

Research carried out by Prisoners Education Trust, soon to be published in Brain Cells Third Edition<sup>v</sup> report found that although BAME prisoners were more likely to have some qualifications prior to prison, they were less likely to achieve qualifications whilst in prison than non-BAME prisoners (16% did not achieve any qualifications compared to only 6% of non-BAME respondents). If the Advanced Learning Loans system is expanded further this may then result in even less BAME prisoners achieving qualifications resulting in an even greater widening educational gap between BAME and non-BAME prisoners.

#### (ii) Disability

Prisoners have a high incidence of learning disabilities and difficulties (LDDs) and mental health issues. It is estimated that between 20-30% of prisoners are reported to have a learning difficulty<sup>vi</sup> and that dyslexia is three to four times more common amongst prisoners than the general population<sup>vii</sup>. In terms of mental health issues, 49% of women and 23% of male prisoners in a Ministry of Justice study were assessed as suffering from anxiety and depression compared to only 16% of the general UK population (12% of men and 19% of women)<sup>viii</sup>. A significant number of prisoners' (25% of women and 15% of men) also reported suffering from a psychotic disorder<sup>ix</sup> compared to only 4% of the general population<sup>x</sup>. Clearly then prisoners are a more disadvantaged group than the wider population and are affected by a range of issues that will impact on their ability to make a decision about taking a loan for their learning. This could result in those prisoners being disadvantaged further. A learner who responded to PETs recent survey<sup>xi</sup> said:

*'Keeping my mind occupied helps to lessen the frequency and severity of my bi-polar episodes. This in turn means that I am more able to cope with the stresses of prison life. My studies may well have saved my life'.*

Research carried out by Hughes in 2012<sup>xii</sup> found that education can provide a coping strategy for prisoners and counteract what they see as the negative consequences of prison life. If a prisoner's access to courses by level and age is restricted then this creates a barrier to one of their coping strategies leaving them more vulnerable and potentially more at risk of suicide. A recent report published by the Prison and Probation Ombudsman<sup>xiii</sup> examined learning from investigations into the self-inflicted deaths of 18 to 24 year old prisoners (who are a focus of this consultation). Between April 2007 and March 2014, 89 young people aged 18 to 24 took their own lives in prison with two-thirds of them identified as having mental health problems. Careful consideration therefore needs to be given to extending advanced learning loans to 19-23 year olds who often are vulnerable and in need of activities such as studying towards qualifications to enable them to cope with their sentences.

### (iii) Gender

The majority of the prison population is male. On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014, the prison population stood at 85,869 with 81,850 of those being male<sup>xiv</sup> - about 95% of the prison population. The adverse effect of the extension of loans for prisoners would therefore disproportionately affect men. On the other hand the effect of the extension might have a greater impact on the female part of the prison population. Most women entering prison serve very short sentences. In the year ending March 2013, 59% of women entering prison under sentence were to serve six months or less<sup>xv</sup> and women on remand make up 16% of the female prison population<sup>xvi</sup>. Remand prisoners would not be eligible to take out a loan for their learning and women with short sentences would not have the time to apply for a loan and complete the course before their release, making it less likely that women would engage with learning whilst in prison.

No women who were consulted with at HMP Eastwood Park said they would be prepared to take out a loan to pay for education. They felt that they have a range of issues to deal with when released and did not want the additional pressure of another loan, even though they may not have to pay it back. The women felt that as many of them had had a disrupted education that they were grateful to have the opportunity to learn in prison in an environment conducive to learning. If this opportunity was taken away then they would have a higher risk of not gaining employment on release and may be more likely to come back to prison.

### (iv) Age

The majority of young people in the Criminal Justice System spend an average of 107 days in custody<sup>xvii</sup>. This is a relatively short amount of time to engage with learning. If the loans system was expanded to include 19-23 year olds it is likely that many would not apply for a loan because they would not have sufficient time to apply for funding and complete the course before their release. Again, this is likely to disadvantage those further.

#### (v) Disadvantage

Prisoners are among some of the most disadvantaged in society; financially, educationally and socially.

Finances: According to NOMS<sup>xviii</sup> 48% of people in prison have a history of debt. In a survey of prison outreach services run by Citizens Advice, all respondents said that debt is one of the top five issues that can cause reoffending or poor reintegration into society<sup>xix</sup>. In a survey conducted by the Prisons Inspectorate, between one-fifth and one-third of prisoners believed they would experience difficulties with their finances and claiming benefits after release<sup>xx</sup>. Furthermore, 40% of prisoners and 64% of former prisoners felt that their debts had worsened during their sentence. Over half of prisoners' families have had to borrow money since the imprisonment of their relative<sup>xxi</sup>. Given these financial issues, it is likely that many prisoners will not want to accumulate more future debt. One prisoner said this:

*'Most of us in prison can barely afford a can of tuna in the weekly canteen let alone a student loan!'*

Education: 41% of men, 30% of women and 52% of young offenders were permanently excluded from school<sup>xxii</sup>. In 2012, 47% of prisoners said that they had no qualifications<sup>xxiii</sup>. The educational background of children in custody is poor: 86% of boys and 82% of girls surveyed said they had been excluded from school and around half said they were 14 years or younger when they were last in education<sup>xxiv</sup>. These findings show that many young and adult prisoners have not had the best educational start in life and the introduction of loans for young adults (19-23 year olds) and for level 2 qualifications may be seen as an extra barrier to them. These are people who will often need extra support and encouragement to engage with learning rather than an extra reason for them not to take part.

Employment: A study by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development found that ex-offenders are the most disadvantaged of all the labour market. In 2010 only 12% of employers surveyed said that they had employed somebody with a criminal record in the past three years<sup>xxv</sup>. 13% of prisoners interviewed for the Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction study reported never having a job<sup>xxvi</sup>. These again are factors which may prevent prisoners from taking out loans to fund their own learning. One prisoner said:

*'The prospects for work may in many cases be diminished for most prisoners not least because there is always that stigma attached when applying for a job on the outside. In turn the above fact will more often than not diminish the prisoner's (ex-convict) ability to pay back that student loan!'*

**Q6: Are you aware of the reasons why take up of Advanced Learning Loans by prisoners has been low? Please give examples.**

Figures from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills indicate that less than 50 prisoners have applied for loans for level 3 courses. Furthermore, those that have applied for loans have generally not done so through the providers of education services in prisons under the Offender Learning and Skills Service contracts (OLASS providers); the majority

appear to be serving prisoners who are studying outside of the prison system in the community on ROTL and so are applying for loans to study courses from external providers. This confirms the impression that OLASS providers are struggling to offer level 3 courses in prisons. Responses from prisoners to PETs survey in September 2013<sup>xxvii</sup> indicate a frustration with no longer being able to access level 3 courses, for example:

*'The ability to study at Level 3 in prison has become almost impossible due to the cut backs in funding. Not all prisoners wish to stop at Level 2 and many have the ability and enthusiasm to continue to higher levels'.*

*'The finishing of offering level 3 courses for over 25s is a disgrace'.*

*'I began to study IT at level 3 but unfortunately I was unable to complete due to the recent withdrawal of funding'.*

Factors affecting OLASS providers' ability to offer level 3 qualifications include:

- Level 3 qualifications are by their nature more time-consuming to cover and so prisoners may not have the time to complete courses before their release or move to another prison.
- It is uneconomic for OLASS providers to offer face to face teaching to a small number of learners. There is obviously a very wide range of possible subjects to study at level 3 and it is difficult to bring together a full class of learners with a shared enthusiasm for a subject of study able to begin (and see through) a lengthy course at the same time.

The need for prisoners aged 24 or over to agree to take out a loan and to go through the administrative steps to secure one exacerbates this difficulty in providing level 3 learning. Many prisoners are understandably reluctant to take on debt and many staff are highly reluctant to advise them to do so. Prisons face additional official hurdles before prisoners are allowed to apply for loans including agreement on behalf of the prison governor. A further problem would arise if a prisoner is moved to another establishment having taken out a loan but unable to complete their course. Prisoners are often moved to another prison at short notice regardless of them being half way through a course. Over 30% of respondents to a PET survey in 2012<sup>xxviii</sup> said that staying in one prison would help make learning easier. Prisoners would be understandably reluctant to take out a loan for a level 3 course, for which they will generate a debt but may not be able to complete in their new prison. Given these issues arising from loans and on top of the other difficulties, it is hardly surprising that OLASS providers offer very few courses that require an Advance Learning Loan.

Although SFA statistics<sup>xxix</sup> show 800 learners studying level 3 courses in the first nine months of 2013-14, this represents less than 1% of the prison population. From the numbers it appears that this learning is not generally falling under the scope of Advanced Learning Loans and it therefore appears that they represent individual level 3 modules as part of level 2 qualifications (e.g. in ICT) rather than level 3 qualifications proper.

Distance learning (which PET currently provides funding to prisoners for) offers prisoners an option for Level 3 study which generally does not require an Advance Learning Loan; it

is frequently below the level of a minimum loan in cost, is provided by a provider without a loan facility or is funded directly by PET with charitable funds. However distance learning needs more support in prisons. Since the OLASS 4 contracts were introduced in 2012 without specific funding for distance learning coordinator roles, it has become more difficult for OLASS providers to support distance learning as much as they would like and so some prisoners are not able to access it. Furthermore, whilst PET is clearly an advocate of distance learning, it can not be expected to fully meet the needs of all learners in prison, particularly those undertaking vocational courses. There is a need for prisons to provide practical courses at a level that will be sufficiently challenging for learners and realistically lead to employment. This was the view of one prisoner User Voice consulted:

*'If anything the government could and should provide level 3 qualifications for prisoners (if I'm not mistaken, one needs to have a level 3 qualification in order to enrol into college). Surely one should encourage prisoners to better themselves for a better future or has the government washed their hands of them?'*

The lack of opportunities for progression in prisons (particularly for longer sentenced prisoners) has been highlighted as an issue by others, for example; a study by Ofsted in 2009<sup>xxx</sup> found that *'offenders who already had a level 2 qualification had very little opportunity to progress further'*.

**Q7: What impact do you think the introduction of loans for level 2 qualifications would have on prisoners?**

The answer to question 6 has highlighted some of the difficulties the introduction of loans for level 3 qualifications has had on prisoners and education providers. Introducing loans for level 2 courses would create even more barriers for prisoners wanting to make best use of their time by making level 2 learning much harder for education providers to deliver. One prisoner who User Voice spoke to about the introduction of level 2 loans highlighted a potential issue:

*'Some of the prison teachers will most definitely lose their jobs as there won't be enough students to justify their presence!'*

Under the proposed arrangements prisoners aged 19-23 would be entitled to funding for their first level 2 qualification whilst those over 24 would not be entitled to funding for any level 2 qualifications. However, this is likely to create difficulties for education providers who may not be able to verify entitlement to level 2 as a first level 2 qualification. It would also mean that OLASS providers are likely to be limited in practice to delivering level 1 qualifications leaving many prisoners at a level of prior educational attainment unable to engage with learning. This approach will be counterproductive and detrimental to prisoners and go against the government's commitment to a 'Rehabilitation Revolution'.

There is clear evidence from the Justice Data Lab research that prisoners who undertook distance learning through a grant from PET (and so engaged with higher level learning) had a statistically significant lower likelihood of going on to reoffend on release<sup>xxxi</sup>. These proposed changes would limit the potential for some prisoners' progression to distance learning. In order to apply for funding from PET for a distance learning course, prisoners

must have completed up to level 2 qualifications in the prison. If prisoners are prevented completing level 2 courses because of barriers resulting from funding arrangements, they will be unable to apply for distance learning courses and so opportunities to go forward on their learning journey will be lost with numerous potential negative consequences. Many prisoners have indicated that they would be unwilling to take out loans for level 2 qualifications as highlighted below:

*'Having to apply for a student loan just to study for a course in prison will most definitely lead to less inmates enrolling for education!'*

*'All that will prevail is prisoners not wanting to do education and can only lead to persons being locked up for longer hours and ultimately more crime being committed'.*

*'If I was told I had to take a loan out to study in prison that would scare me as I don't want to be in debt. I then wouldn't go on to study the course'.*

*'This may dishearten people who are not academically confident because their view might be taken to say 'what's the point' 'I may not pass' and 'I am now in debt'. Young people need to be given a chance in life and support, not given more responsibility and stress of a debt to pay to learn at a low level'.*

**Q8: Do you think prisoners should be included in scope of an expanded loans system (down to age 19 second level 2 and level 3 and level 4 qualifications?)**

PET and the PLA would reiterate that we do not support the expansion of the loans system to prisoners for the reasons identified above. Due to the particular circumstances operating for the delivery of education in custody, loan funding is highly unlikely to provide an alternative to grant funding; the learning will simply cease to be offered altogether. **As a minimum**, we would recommend that the Department goes with the second option presented on page 16 of the consultation document, which is to continue to treat prisoners similarly to the unemployed and continue to fund all level 2 training for prisoners without any expansion to the existing scope.

We would support moving further in the opposite direction by taking all education delivered in prison out of the existing requirement for Advanced Learning Loans altogether. This would not add to the overall costs for prison education because the OLASS budget is constrained; it would however give OLASS providers more flexibility to offer level 3 courses as part of their overall offer. Neither would it reduce overall loan take-up; as has been argued above, prisoners are taking out a minimal number of Advanced Learning Loans anyway.

The consultation document states that:

*'Prisoners were originally included within the scope of Advanced Learning Loans in order to strike a sensible balance between not treating them more generously than other learners while not deterring them from undertaking learning that would improve their employability and, thus, benefit society' (p.15).*

It is clear that policy and practice is influenced by perceptions of equity. However, there is a strong social and economic case for fully funded prisoner education given the multiple

disadvantaged backgrounds many come from (see the evidence in response to Question 4). And the clear evidence of what works to achieve desistance and economic benefits must be given due weight. Enabling education and educational progression for prisoners would help to reduce reoffending therefore reducing the number of victims and reducing the cost to the public.

**Q22: Are there gaps in the information that is provided in the links above? If so, please give examples.**

Although the consultation document states that learner factsheets and frequently asked questions and answers have been made available to prisoners through National Offender Management Services (NOMS), and that providers and the National Careers Service have the information they need to tell learners about loans, it is unclear whether or not prisoners have been receiving this information. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that in the context of loans for Higher Education prisoners are being given advice to not take out loans to avoid accumulating more debt. Furthermore, prisoners do not have access to the internet to do their own research into the loans therefore putting them at a further disadvantage to learners in the community.

As argued above, the circumstances of prison education mean that prisoners are rarely offered the option of a course for which the question of an Advanced Learning Loan would arise and therefore the provision of advice for them on Advanced Learning Loans is currently largely irrelevant.

**Q23: Are there other ways we can reach this specific group of learners other than through providers, the National Careers Service advisers and Jobcentre advisers?**

In order for prisoners to have access to information, given their lack of access to the internet, it is necessary to reach them through other methods. These could include:

- Inside Time - the newspaper for prisoners. However this would exclude those prisoners who can not read and write
- Prison Radio Association
- Through the Virtual Campus (VC). However, we have evidence that many prisoners do not have access to the VC in their prison. In a recent PET survey<sup>xxxii</sup> 83% said that the VC was not easily accessible within their prison and over two thirds did not think that the content on there was useful.

## **Conclusion**

PET and the PLA would vehemently oppose expanding the use of Advanced Learning Loans for education in prisons. We argue that prisoners are some of the most disadvantaged individuals in society and that these proposed plans would disadvantage them further. Given that there is clear evidence linking educational progression and reduced reoffending, it is important that prisoners are supported to continue their learning journey rather than more barriers put in their way. PET and the PLA therefore recommend not going ahead with plans to expand the loans system and furthermore, would support moving in the opposite direction by taking prisoners out of the existing requirement for Advanced Learning Loans altogether.



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### Annex: Members of the Prisoner Learning Alliance, August 2014

Member	About the organisation
Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP)	AELP is a not-for-profit non-statutory membership organisation representing the interests of vocational and work-based learning providers - independent companies and Colleges of FE - across England. They currently have over 600 members, most of whom are funded by the Skills Funding Agency, Education Funding Agency or DWP to deliver post-compulsory vocational work-based and work-related learning.
Arts Alliance/Clinks	The Arts Alliance (AA) is the umbrella body for the promotion of arts within criminal justice. The AA is currently managed by Clinks, the umbrella body supporting VCS organisations working within criminal justice. Both Arts Alliance and Clinks represent organisations involved in learning and education of prisoners. The Arts Alliance work with government departments through the Arts Forum.
Association of Colleges (AoC)	The AoC is a not-for-profit membership organisation set up in 1996 by colleges to act as their collective voice. They influence government and its agencies on policies affecting colleges and their students and staff at national and regional levels. They also provide members with professional support services, which include expert advice lines for employment, communications, health and safety, governance and teaching and learning.
Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG)	BTEG plays a unique role by supporting black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME)

	<p>civil society organisations, providing a national voice and promoting equality, inclusion, collaboration and entrepreneurship in BAME communities. They have a strong track record in influencing policies, campaigning and lobbying in relation to BAME education, employment and entrepreneurship. Through their networking and training events they are in dialogue with frontline organisations and a range of agencies including mainstream civil society organisations, government departments, local authorities, companies, the national apprenticeship service and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. BTEG is a member of the Department for Work and Pensions Ethnic Minority Employment Stakeholder Group and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills Equalities Advisory Group.</p>
Centre for Education in the Criminal Justice System (CECJS) at the Institute of Education, University of London	<p>'Evidenced based practice, research and knowledge relevant to prisoner or ex-prisoner education, learning, skills, employability, self-employability and learner voice' form the focus of CECJS. In collaboration with City and Guilds Centre for Skills Development, CECJS have prepared a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework for learning and skills practitioners working with marginalised learners, including offenders in the community. CECJS also organises conferences and seminars about offender learning attended by practitioners, academics and policy makers.</p>
International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS)	<p>The ICPS assists governments and other relevant agencies to develop appropriate policies on prisons and the use of imprisonment. ICPS has an academic partnership with the University of Essex. The Centre makes the results of its academic research and projects widely available to groups and individuals, both nationally and internationally. The ICPS produce a bi-monthly Digest which includes examples of good practice in education and resettlement from across the world.</p>
Institute for Learning (IfL)	<p>The IfL is the independent professional body for teaching and training practitioners across the FE and skills sector with voluntary membership. 2000 members come from the offender learning sector. They seek the views of their members to help shape policy and policy</p>

	implementation.
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)	NIACE is the national voice for lifelong learning. They are a large, internationally respected development organisation and think-tank, working on issues central to the economic renewal of the UK, particularly in the political economy, education and learning, public policy and regeneration fields. They campaign for the personal, social and economic benefits from lifelong learning, work to improve peoples' experience of the adult learning and skills system, and fight for all adults to have opportunities throughout their lives to participate in and benefit from learning.
Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR)	Of the 130+ prisons in England and Wales, virtually all use OCR qualifications as part of their offender learning programmes. Basic skills, Key skills and IT qualifications are most in demand. Every year, about 22,000 Basic Skills certificates are awarded to prisoners. Last year, several thousand OCR GCSE, AS and A Level units were also awarded.
Open University (OU)	The OU is the largest provider of Higher Education in prisons. Approximately 1700 prisoners are studying for Open University qualifications.
Prison Radio Association (PRA)	PRA is a national charity that uses radio to positively engage prisoners; increasing access to education and other services through education campaigns and National Prison Radio Book Club; giving prisoners a voice and providing radio production training and qualifications to prisoners. The charity has won many awards including 10 Sony Radio Academy awards and has received recognition for its work from other bodies including Ofsted, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and the Centre for Social Justice amongst others.
Prison Reading Groups (PRG)	PRG now supports 32 groups in 22 prisons as well as two groups in community settings for those at risk of offending or re-offending. PRG work with a variety of literacy organisations. PRG provide informal learning for self development including empathy, critical self-reflection, cultural capital and soft skills including decision making, social skills, team building, facilitation, negotiation and debate. PRG is committed to learner voice and involvement as groups choose the books

	they read, complete member surveys and contribute to Inside Time and prison radio. PRG intend to further develop partnerships between prisons and local universities in their next stage of work as well as developing work with prisoners' families.
Prisoners' Education Trust	PET provides distance learning courses, advice and support in subjects and levels not available in prisons. PET also promotes and argues the case for prisoner education, and undertakes research informed by prisoner learners, to improve policies and practice. PET established the Prisoner Learning Alliance and continues to provide the secretariat.
Safeground	Safeground is a voluntary organisation founded in 1993 to create arts based education opportunities for people in and out of prison, at risk of or engaged in anti-social activity. They have two prison programmes, Family Man and Fathers Inside, across 20 prisons and YOIs. Both programmes are effective with prisoners less likely to engage with other educational programmes, particularly BME adult males, long sentenced prisoners and those without prior qualifications. Both programmes have demonstrated substantial impact on ETE progression routes and both involve family learning and peer mentoring. They are committed to learner voice through a strong Alumni group who contribute to policy and delivery.
St Giles Trust	St. Giles Trust is a national charity that provides resettlement services in London, the South East, Thames Valley, Wales and West Yorkshire including a peer advice project training prisoners in Level 3 Advice and Guidance. They have developed specific peer-based services aimed at supporting prisoners in custody and post release including a gang exit programme and specialist services for female offenders. St. Giles Trust is also a leading employer of ex-offenders in the UK as currently 42% of their paid staff and 70% of their volunteers have convictions. This is inline with their commitment to train and support serving and ex-prisoners to deliver services.
Startup	Startup is a charity providing a seamless transition from prison to community, by supporting ex-offenders into self-employment. Their services include business planning support whilst in prison

	<p>developing ideas and ‘Startupnow Days’ hosted in prisons, inviting clients to present their ideas to a panel of business experts for advice and potential financial support. Over the past five years Startup has worked with over a thousand ex-offenders, including 463 women ex-offenders. Startup recently won a Centre for Social Justice award in the Worklessness category and a POPS Crystal Heart Award.</p>
User Voice	<p>User Voice is a charity led and delivered by ex-offenders. User Voice’s mission is to engage those who have experience of the criminal justice system in bringing about its reform and to reduce offending. User Voice was founded in 2009 and their aim is to foster dialogue between service providers and users that is mutually beneficial and results in better and more cost-effective services. User Voice received its charitable status in 2010 and has undertaken a range of projects including running User Voice councils in a number of prisons, YOIs and probation trusts. Members of the councils have been able to influence change relating to education and training within the establishments they are in. During the last 2 years, User Voice has also engaged with over 1,300 young people across England &amp; Wales through their Excluded Youth Project ‘What’s Your Story?’</p>
Women in Prison	<p>Women in Prison (WIP) are a national charity committed to reducing re-offending and up-skilling women offenders. WIP have education, employment and through the gate services, including funding distance learning courses through a contract with BIS. WIP facilitate the Surrey Art Awards. Women in Prison involve service users in their policy work, feeding back about services and encourage learner voice through their quarterly magazine. Women in Prison also convenes Women OPEN (the Women’s Offending Policy Exchange Network).</p>

<sup>i</sup> Champion, N (2013) Smart Rehabilitation: Learning how to get better outcomes. London: Prisoner Learning Alliance.

<sup>ii</sup> Taylor, C. (forthcoming in September 2014) Brain Cells Edition Three: Listening to prisoner learners.. London: Prisoners’ Education Trust.

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- <sup>iii</sup> Ministry of Justice (2013) Table 1.7: Offender Management Statistics Quarterly Bulletin: April to June 2013, Ministry of Justice Statistics Bulletin. London: Ministry of Justice.
- <sup>iv</sup> Office for National Statistics (December 2012) Ethnicity and National Identity in England and Wales 2011. [http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776\\_290558.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_290558.pdf)
- <sup>v</sup> Taylor, C. (forthcoming in September 2014) Brain Cells Edition Three: Listening to prisoner learners. London: Prisoners' Education Trust.
- <sup>vi</sup> Loucks, N. (2007) No one knows: Offenders with Learning Difficulties and Learning Disabilities. Review of prevalence and associated needs. London: Prison Reform Trust.
- <sup>vii</sup> Rack, J. (2005) The incidence of hidden disabilities in the prison population. Surrey: Dyslexia Institute.
- <sup>viii</sup> Ministry of Justice (2013) Gender differences in substance misuse and mental health amongst prisoners. London: Ministry of Justice.
- <sup>ix</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>x</sup> Wiles, N. et al. (2006) Self-reported psychotic symptoms in the general population. The British Journal of Psychiatry, 188: 519-526.
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