



Prisoners
Education
Trust

Transforming Youth Custody: Putting education at the heart of detention

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About Prisoners Education Trust

Since 1989, Prisoners Education Trust has been providing access to broader learning opportunities for prisoners, to enhance their chances of building a better life after release. We do this through an advice service, peer mentor training and a grants programme which assists over 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.

Introduction to policy response

As a member of the Standing Committee for Youth Justice (SCYJ), Prisoners Education Trust supports and concurs with their response to this consultation.

In this response we re-emphasise several points raised in the SCYJ response, however we also draw on our expertise and prisoner feedback to make some additional comments relating to the valuable role of learning, both in prison and after release, towards rehabilitation and reducing re-offending.

Methodology

In order to listen to the ‘learner voice’, a number of focus groups with children in the youth estate were facilitated by PET and also by the charity Kinetic Youth, who run youth councils in a number of YOI’s. PET consulted with young people from HMYOI Feltham A-side and Kinetic consulted with young people from HMYOI Warren Hill, HMYOI Cookham Wood, HMYOI Downview JBU and HMYOI Rochester.

The young people's version of the consultation was used as a starting point for semi-structured focus groups. The full focus group responses can be found in Annex A (PET focus groups) and Annex B (Kinetic focus groups).

A vision for the youth estate of 'secure colleges'

PET believe that a youth estate that is more effective in delivering better outcomes for children and young people needs to be based upon the following principles:

The youth estate should continue to shrink in size, building upon the success in reducing the numbers of young people in custody and recognising that custody is only appropriate for the most troubled children and young people...

- We should celebrate the success in recent years in reducing the numbers of young people in custody and continue to seek savings in overall costs and improved outcomes through that route rather than necessarily via lower unit costs;
- In particular, we must avoid efforts to improve the effectiveness of 'secure colleges' having the perverse effect of making them an attractive option for sentencers (as arguably happened with the introduction of secure training centres) leading to increased numbers in custody;
- As the numbers of young people in custody continue to decrease, we need to recognise that the few young people who are in custody will be the most troubled and disturbed who are therefore likely to present significant challenges. .

The time in custody will usually (quite rightly) be relatively short and will always be an interlude in the time before and after custody in the community where the bulk of personal development, education and development of non-offending behaviour need to be grown and practiced; making better use of the time in custody will have relatively little impact unless the support around that in the community, family unit and peer group is more effective...

- The experience from STCs is that much higher investment, more time in education, and a less prison like experience during the period in custody do not in themselves deliver appreciably better outcomes and therefore investment in through-the-gate and community-based support for the young people, their family and peers, is crucial.

The system both in custody and in the community needs to be focused on the overall outcome of non-offending behaviour and must avoid different parts of the system working across each other towards intermediate output targets which potentially leads to perverse focus on activity that cuts across overall objectives...

- Targeting particular educational qualifications, however much they may be of value in themselves, can drive the system to pursue its own numerical targets in ways that fail to meet the real needs of children or to engage them effectively;
- Education must be seen as encompassing learning in its broadest sense. This includes informal, creative, vocational and academic learning as well as activities that broaden horizons and promote personal development; too often 'education' in prison is a 'place' rather than an activity and has a

narrow, and often negative, connotation of being ‘the place where we do boring literacy and numeracy worksheets’; ‘secure colleges’, and in fact all custodial establishments, should have a culture and ethos of learning and holistic personal development; for some young people tackling their own personal and psychological issues may simply be a greater priority than an academic qualification;

- In order to have an effective outcome focus, both the pastoral and educational activity needs to fall under the same local management structure (whether directly managed or via a contract with a provider); this is a fundamental principle of the general approach to education through academies, free schools and all policy development in education in recent years;
- Effective coordination on outcomes with services in the community is vital; all too often coordination now with local authority services is not good enough; the Government could consider giving a financial incentive to the ‘secure college’ for managing the best outcomes for the young person by co-financing post-release support services (whether from the local authority or other providers - local, educational, voluntary) to incentivise co-funded services to meet the most important needs of the young person to help achieve the overall outcome of non-offending. For example a local authority might be more prepared to spend money allocated for ‘Troubled Families’, ‘Pupil Premium’ or youth services on a young person leaving custody if there was some match-funding from the ‘secure college’ to ensure a smooth transition into the community. This would also help incentivise partnership working and ‘buy-in’ from both custody and community service providers. This could be piloted by one YOI establishment initially.

‘Secure colleges’ must adhere to the principle of listening to the voice of their own students to focus their services; in the light of our own work with groups of learners this is likely to include...

- A safe environment; as the youth estate continues to decrease, it is likely to contain the most disturbed and troubled young people from the population; that will mean that there has to be a sufficient investment in security infrastructure to keep them safe; young people have told us safety could be improved by improving opportunities for therapeutic support, liaising with young people about IEP schemes, staff training and activities to promote improved respect and communication between young people and with staff.
- A culture of learning; In 2012 PET established the Prisoner Learning Alliance; one of the work themes of the PLA for 2013 is to explore how best to promote a culture and ethos of learning, in its broadest sense, throughout the whole prison establishment; although this work is not yet completed , a number of strands have already emerged from looking at good practice examples; these are set out in Annex C.

In line with feedback from students, the education provided in the youth estate must engage and meet the aspirations of the young people, be relevant to their needs and offer challenge and variety...

- The education on offer must engage young people; there is good evidence that basic literacy and numeracy is often more effectively delivered by

embedding such learning in courses - eg sports, arts or practical vocational subjects that do engage the students;

- It needs to include the life skills (eg in managing independent living) that many young people find they need;
- It needs to offer the standard of qualification, progression routes, challenge and range of subject matter available to their peers who are in the community; and it needs to connect to continuing programmes of learning after release;

In order to meet these aspirations for engagement, variety and continuity ‘secure colleges’ should be looking to exploit the exploding potential of IT based distance learning / e-learning / virtual academy tools as a blended model of learning...

- Distance learning based on access to IT equipment gives the opportunity to offer a very broad and challenging curriculum tailored to the interests and needs of individual learners;
- It offers the potential of continuity of learning beyond custody with the same virtual tutor support and can overcome the problem that custody often causes in disrupting enrolment to FE colleges in the community; however access to IT in the community (at school, YOT, library etc). must be supported to enable the young person to continue with e-learning after release;
- In order to realise this potential, it is essential that the Government take a balanced view of the security risk of use of IT in the youth estate compared to potential it offers to help address the much larger risks of re-offending;
- PET’s experience of distance learning in the adult estate equips us to provide advice and support to providers developing this aspect of learning in custody.
- IT can also offer opportunities for maintaining better contact with family, mentors, YOT workers, distance learning tutors etc. through secure email and Skype-contact to promote better resettlement outcomes.
- IT also has potential to assist with developing thinking skills using gaming technologies, as well as e-learning.
- IT must however be used as part of a blended learning model where interaction with teachers and peers is encouraged to get additional support, develop social skills and promote emotional well being.

The focus on education in youth custody needs to extend to support lifelong learning beyond age 18...

- While we welcome the focus on education and learning for under 18's, this focus should be continued into the adult estate; many of the arguments set out in the Green paper explaining the focus on education for children and young people, can be applied to the adult estate;
- Over 18's also have learning needs both related to literacy and numeracy, but also personal development such as personal responsibility, self-respect,

self-discipline and interpersonal skills; as well as the need for progression routes to higher level qualifications. We believe that time in custody should be utilised to the full to set both young people and adults ‘back on track’ and a focus on learning in its broadest sense with the clear outcome aim of reducing reoffending throughout the prison estate would be of significant value.

- a) How should we best engage young people in custody (both sentenced and remanded) in education and training? What evidence is there that different approaches work well?

Listen to young people

Structures should be in place to listen and actively involve young people in helping to shape their learning and education. Involving service users makes services more effective and can also have benefits for service users. There are examples of good practice in YOIs having youth councils or student councils. These structures should be developed further to ensure the views of all young people in custody are heard and opportunities for active participation are available and supported¹.

Embedded and engaging learning

There needs to be a more engaging education offer. This needs to include embedding the learning of literacy and numeracy skills in courses that young people want to engage with (practical, vocational or creative). See Appendix A for list of courses young people suggested in focus groups.

The Arts Alliance Evidence Library contains details of evaluations of creative-learning projects working with young people in custody and the community².

Our report, ‘Fit for Release’, co-authored with Prof. Rosie Meek, details the benefits of sports-based learning including a case study of the Second Chance programme at HMYOI Portland³.

Great teaching and learning

The over reliance of worksheet - based learning is not conducive to an engaging style of teaching:

“We do the same thing every day - worksheets. It’s boring”

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

Highly trained and qualified staff, with engaging learning styles and experience of working with ‘hard to reach’ young people is key. The Institute for Learning have recently published a report on ‘Great teaching and learning⁴’ and highlight the following:

¹ http://nya.org.uk/dynamic_files/targetedsupport/Voice%20and%20Influence%2017.01.11.pdf

² <http://artsevidence.org.uk/about-arts-alliance/>

³ <http://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/index.php?id=597>

⁴ <http://www.ifl.ac.uk/publications/leading-learning-with-the-157-group/great-teaching-and-learning>

- Freedom to innovate, be flexible and be creative, including taking learning away from formal classroom setting
- Cross curricular projects
- Learner voice input into content and delivery of curriculum
- Using technology to stimulate learner involvement
- Embedded pastoral support
- Teacher development
- Team relationships
- Sharing of good practice and CPD

Positive role models

Engaging young people should also include peer / ex-offender led projects such as Youth Empowerment Services Plus⁵, started by a PET funded ex-prisoner who now employs and trains ex-prisoner to deliver effective and engaging group work with young people at risk of offending or re-offending (See Appendix D for more details):

“They should have inspirational people visiting here, someone from the same walk of life as me that has succeeded”

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

Aiming higher

“Most qualifications offered were from Entry Level to Level 2, although most were at Entry Level 3 or Level 1, which impacted on the progression that the learners could make... Indeed, there was evidence that some young people repeated courses because there were no higher level courses available in particular areas”.

Inside Education: The Aspirations and Realities of prison education for under 25's in the London area, Institute of Education, 2012⁶

The SCYJ highlight that a study by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner⁷ reported a ‘poverty of aspiration’ for young people’s educational attainment in many secure facilities:

“Some of the teachers expect you not to learn”.

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

A report by the Institute of Education into prison education for the under 25's in the London area recommended that learning should be ‘mindful of learners interests, culture and aspirations’⁸.

Progression routes

The Transition to Adulthood Alliance found in their research that young people were frustrated that their aspirations for a better future were not always recognised⁹.

⁵ <http://www.yesplus.org.uk/>

⁶ www.ioe.ac.uk/Study_Departments/CECJS_John_Cass_Report.pdf

⁷ Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2011) ‘I think I must have been born bad’.

⁸ www.ioe.ac.uk/Study_Departments/CECJS_John_Cass_Report.pdf

⁹ Transition to Adulthood: A Good Practice Guide ‘Aiming Higher’ (2010)

Engaging learning should involve offering progression to more demanding levels of qualification for those able to achieve them and to prevent young people repeating work:

"In bricklaying it's a mix of theory and practical. You can get a level two qualification so it's challenging, it's hard. I like it, they push you".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

"I am repeating courses I've done before"

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

A report by The National Association for Gifted Children, published a report highlighting that the youth justice system needs to be better at recognising and promoting children with high learning potential¹⁰.

Personalised learning

Learning should be young person centred and personalized as far as possible to their individual learning needs. Effective individual learning plans are crucial. We accept that it is a massive challenge to deliver such a mixed curriculum to a mixed age group of relatively small numbers (compared to the vast majority of secondary schools), many of them only there for a short time, and with the full expected range of interests.

Adequate access to IT to learn via distance learning techniques (either correspondence or e-learning based) offers the obvious solution. Such an approach would also facilitate continuity of learning and instruction through the gate. The introduction of the Virtual Campus is one route to e-learning, although research which PET and Prison Reform Trust are due to publish this summer indicates that the content and usability of the virtual campus need to be significantly improved to provide the expansion in learning provision which is possible using this secure intranet. An excessive concern for security should not be allowed to deny access to learning through such a route.

Currently the lack of online access means that some young people are being released on temporary licence to a YOT office to access learning opportunities. This is one solution, however due to risk assessments is not available for all and therefore the use of virtual campus and virtual academy technology¹¹ should also be available. Distance learning and e-learning would also help mitigate the problem faced by many children leaving custody that they miss college enrolment dates.

However this should not replace the role of the teacher and of the importance of social integration with peers. Technology and distance learning should be used as part of a blended learning model in order to develop young people's social and interpersonal skills, as well as to enable development of positive relationships and social capital that is crucial for promoting desistence and emotional well being.

¹⁰www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/doc/Learning_Matters/Releasing_Potential.pdf

¹¹ "[Online pedagogy: reaching out to the 'hard-to-reach learners'](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=17084817&ini=aob)" (2013) Anita Devi and Andy McGarry, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?articleid=17084817&ini=aob>

PET can offer expertise in the area of distance learning in a prison environment as we fund over 2000 prisoners who are over 18 each year to study through distance learning.

Meaningful qualifications:

Young people understand the value of having recognised qualifications. Where possible, Secure Colleges should enable access, by use of e-learning, distance learning, virtual academy or ROTL to mainstream provision as part of a blended learning model so qualifications started in custody can be completed after release if necessary.

"I'd rather have proper qualifications like GCSEs and City & Guilds, not 'prison' qualifications like OCR or OCN. Everyone on the outside knows you've been in prison if you say you've got them".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

Meeting basic needs

None of the above will work however while young people's basic needs, such as sufficient food, are not being met:

"There's too much else to think about than education .. lack of food, dirty showers that don't work properly".

"I can't concentrate when I'm hungry, the food is bad. Just a small box of cereal in the morning and a small baguette for lunch".

"We need snacks and juice like they have at Ashfield. They had them here during Ofsted but then took them away again once they had gone!".

Young people in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

- b) How would you segment the young people in custody to deliver education and training?
- c) How might the educational balance in Secure College best be struck between basic skills, traditional academic subjects, vocational learning and wider life skills?

Thinking, behaviour and communication skills

For many children the urgent priority is not academic attainment but development of thinking and behaviour skills which will be an essential pre-cursor to any traditional academic development whether in custody or outside; this may be particularly true of someone in custody for only a short period. At least 60% of young people in the criminal justice system have communication needs¹². Soft skills such as improving thinking, behaviour and communication do not always need to be labelled as such and instead can be embedded into other engaging activities:

¹² Bryan, K and Mackenzie, J (2008) Meeting the Speech, Language and Communication needs of Vulnerable Young People

"I'm more confident in speaking - used to stutter when speaking to adults - now I can be confident when I talk like in situations like this".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) Member of Youth Council, PET visit focused on learner voice, June 2012

"Rugby is good for you. You have to learn to be disciplined and you have to be disciplined in life too really. Team work as well, now I work in teams on the rail tracks, so that helped." (From 'Fit for Release', 2012)

Young person now released from a YOI, who has gained employment in the rail tracks and is a volunteer rugby coach, after completing a Second Chance programme¹³.

Life skills

The importance of life skills was highlighted by young people in the focus groups, particularly those who were expecting to live independently after release:

"After release last time I was going to college but I struggled living by myself and got in trouble again. I need more help with life skills. They should teach you about having a tenancy, to keep the music volume down and stuff".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

Kinetic Youth found though their focus groups that:

"Across the establishments young people were very clear that they not only needed help to achieve academically, but they also needed help to learn the skills needed to thrive in life in general".

Kinetic Youth focus group facilitator, April 2013

The young people highlighted the following areas for integration into the mainstream learning framework:

- Financial Skills
- Independent living skills
- Access to learning new hobbies
- One to one support from trained professionals
- Help with communication (understanding their situation better)
- Better help with the realities of dealing with housing issues, education, getting a job
- More time to talk with adults in a relaxed environment
- Positive peer mentoring
- Sense of feeling safe and secure and looked after, to enable development
- Improved communication between them and the outside world.

¹³ <http://2ndchanceproject.co.uk/view/16/our-impact>

Advice and Guidance

To achieve effective personalisation, there also needs to be effective advice and guidance, particularly as due to lack of the internet they are reliant on other people to access information:

"I'd use the internet to look up colleges and courses. Then I wouldn't need to rely on my YOT worker to do it for me which takes time".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

Young people may also need inspiration.

"They should have a career day to give us ideas for jobs".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

Broadening horizons:

A balanced curriculum should also include ‘horizon broadening’ activities and trips, working towards Duke of Edinburgh, Sports Leaders Award or similar (See appendix A).

"We need to expand their horizons about jobs and further education. For all their bravado they have often never been out of their local area. We need to help them think about looking for colleges or work further afield. Good careers advice is really needed as they may not know what options are available to them".

Governor of a YOI, PET visit, June 2012.

Family interventions and learning

A holistic model of learning should also include their family, where appropriate. We agree with the SCYJ that family and parenting staff should be introduced across the youth estate to work with young people and their families during their sentence and after release. We agree that if efforts are not made to address family problems while in custody we are setting them up to fail by returning them to the same negative circumstances.

The young people in the focus groups spoke positively about family days, however these were infrequent.

"The family day was good, there were snakes, a rock climbing wall and we could decorate cakes for our family".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

PET believes that the wider family should also be much more involved and receive support. HMP Parc have a ‘Family Intervention Wing’ (Invisible Walls project) which promotes family learning¹⁴. A similar initiative should be introduced in ‘secure colleges’ for young people, their siblings, parents and their own children where appropriate.

¹⁴ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-17539577>

"Sexual health, relationships and parenting courses would be good. They don't educate you, just do tests".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

- d) How can we best meet the needs of young people with learning disabilities, special educational needs or mental health needs and how might EHC plans be used to ensure appropriate special educational provision is in place?

Holistic and Therapeutic

We agree with the Standing Committee for Youth Justice (SCYJ) that the starting point for the effective engagement for young people in custody must be a 'holistic and therapeutic environment'. Although some therapeutic provision is currently available, it should be more widely available and higher ratios of staff to young people would allow more one to one teaching:

"There should be more one to one. I like 'reflective learning' when you get help with your learning one to one. They also talk to you about your feelings so you can get stuff off your chest, which helps. But you only get to do reflective learning when you have been in a fight. It should be available for everybody".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

"It is important to try to get them to talk about their childhood experiences. They are not good at understanding where the root causes of their behaviour comes from. They often are unable to recognise and make sense of their experiences and who they are. They lack the ability to process their experiences. Intelligence is a resilience factor, they need to understand yes it is bad now, but there is a way out".

Governor of a YOI, PET visit, June 2012.

Special Educational Needs

Ofsted have found that custodial establishments often struggle to obtain statements of special educational needs¹⁵. One Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator at a YOI told us:

"Young people who are identified with special educational needs rarely come to us with their statements. It would be good practice for information (all collated records such as detailed background information, IEPs or (ILPs), and any statement of SEND), identified by schools to be provided in time or during transfer for appropriate planning by the secure estates or the receiving establishment. It would also be useful if we could have a person in the Local Authority whom we can contact as soon as the learners are transferred to us. A close working relationship with the Local Authority would be very useful".

SENCo at a YOI, response to PET enquiry about SEN in YOI's, March 2013

We agree with the Standing Committee for Youth Justice that EHC plans should be extended to the youth secure estate and that the obstacles are not insurmountable. We also agree that funding attached to plans should be passported with the child into custody.

¹⁵ Ofsted, Transition through detention and custody: Arrangements for learning and skills for young people in custodial or secure settings (2010)

Mental health needs:

We agree with the SCYJ that children with serious mental health needs should be transferred to specialist mental health environments, staffed by fully trained mental health professionals, where their needs can be met. We also agree that Secure Colleges should have access to a range of specialist services including speech and language therapists; psychiatrists; psychologists; bereavement support; learning difficulties staff; art/music and drama therapists and substance misuse workers.

Enhanced units:

We echo the concerns of the SCYJ that specialist units or wings only available for a section of the prison population can foster inequality of provision and resentment. We agree with SCYJ that all children in custody are vulnerable and thus all need to have an environment and activities designed for vulnerable children. We agree that singling out a group of children within an establishment as more vulnerable, or using other criteria such as home postcode, to offer an enhanced service, is not helpful.

"Heron get the good stuff like football coaching and Kew Gardens came to do a six month course with them. We should all have the chance to do that".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013 talking about Heron Wing¹⁶ at HMYOI Feltham

- e) How would young people best be kept safe and secure in your model of a secure college?

Safety is of crucial importance and will become even more so as the population continues to decrease, leaving the most damaged young people in custody. Effective management of violence in custody is a prerequisite to effective teaching and learning.

"The young people feel least safe in education - which is same in most YOI's - education often called 'fight club' by young people. Young people can feel lots of anxiety about coming to education. This is because education only place where the young people mix with rival gangs. Ideally I would want education on the landings. As we have to move young people around separately this causes delays so they can be twenty minutes late to class".

Governor of a YOI, PET visit, June 2012.

Effective behaviour management and strategies to prevent and reduce violence is key. The young people themselves should be involved in coming up with solutions:

"Have clear and consistent boundaries. There has to be significant losses for bad behaviour but significant gains for good behaviour. ROTL has been an effective incentive for good behaviour. We also use 'Re-Code' training for staff and prisoners to help defuse incidents effectively. This has significantly reduced the use of force against young people.

¹⁶ The Heron wing is a 30-bed unit, with a focus on education, training and employment for young people serving DTOs, who have demonstrated a strong commitment to turning their lives around. The initiative is funded by a partnership of the Ministry of Justice, Youth Justice Board, London Development Agency and Metropolitan Police Service. The young people are from Newham, Hackney, Lewisham, Lambeth, Croydon and Southwark boroughs.

We also tasked the Youth Council to come up with suggestions for reducing violence, which they did. They came up with good ideas including peer mediation on induction before young people get to the landings. As a result we have now introduced mediation training and have young people helping with inductions”.

Governor of a YOI, PET visit, June 2012.

“When the student council first started in July 2012, the council members were tasked with reviewing the proposed Rewards and Incentives scheme due to be introduced in the education department in September 2012. In two lengthy meetings the scheme was discussed at length by the young people. The problems they highlighted, their new suggestions and their positive feedback were sent to management. The feedback was extremely beneficial for the staff involved and several changes were made to the final policy thanks to the student council’s input”.

Student Council facilitator at a YOI, November 2012

In focus groups facilitated by Kinetic Youth, the following suggestions were made by young people to improve safety and security:

- Develop different ways that young people can release their anger (talking, sports etc)
 - Ensure all young people understand what is happening to/for them at all times, a lack of effective communication produces frustration and in turn leads to anger.
 - Address issues as soon they are highlighted, things that are left only become bigger and harder to solve.
 - Young people need to be listened to, they need to know that they are not invisible and that what they have to say is valued and acted upon.
- f) How should we best approach the particular challenges of a group of young people in custody (youngest, most vulnerable, most dangerous and disruptive) and ensure their needs are met?

Care should be taken when labelling particular groups of young people, in particular making distinctions between those who are ‘disruptive and dangerous’ and those who are ‘most vulnerable’. We agree with a Governor of a YOI who says:

“We often label young people naughty or vulnerable, but in truth they are all vulnerable”.

Governor of a YOI, PET visit, June 2012.

Again we would emphasise the need for a holistic and therapeutic environment with opportunities for one to one learning and pastoral support available to all.

- g) What other key services you would deliver, or establish partnerships with, within a secure college both to support the provision of high quality education to young people in custody and to prevent them from offending on release?

Young people in all the establishments spoken to wanted to have their basic needs met when leaving custody. They wanted to have housing settled in advance of leaving custody to enable them to make other plans such as education or training.

Young people in the focus groups highlighted that pre-release planning varied with some giving examples of good support from their YOT workers and others having less effective support. Understandably not having plans in place stopped them from concentrating on their learning while inside and increased anxiety about their release.

"My YOT worker was supposed to come in yesterday for a review before I am released next week, but she didn't turn up and now I don't know where I'm going to be living when I get out. If I don't know where I'm going to live I can't make other plans".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

Through-the-gate support: mentoring and financial assistance

Young people in the focus groups wanted the option of continued through-the-gate support and people around them who cared. Some of the young people had mixed experiences of post-release mentoring. From this experience the young people highlighted that mentors should ideally have some personal understanding of the young persons background, should receive proper training to facilitate useful sessions and that the mentoring relationship should last a sufficient amount of time:

"I had a mentor before who was a good guy. He was an ex-offender. He helped me get a flat and told me I needed to wear good clothes to my college interview. I had help from him for six months, but it wasn't long enough. If I'd had his support for longer I might not be in here again".

"Mentors didn't work for me, they weren't very professional, they were too friendly and so I didn't really get anything out of it, we didn't really talk about important stuff".

"Mentoring should go on for however long you need".

Young people in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

The importance of having sufficiently well qualified and trained mentors is highlighted in Appendix D.

Young people in the focus groups were concerned about financing education and training after release;

"They don't do EMA any more do they? That helped with travel costs to college".

"When I was released before I got a funded bursary to help me with books and travel to college which really helped".

Young people in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

PET resettlement project

A combination of mentoring and bursary support has helped 80% of young people in the PET resettlement programme to access ETE.

Prisoners Education Trust receives funding from various trusts and foundations over four years for bursaries to support young adults (under 26) with their resettlement plans on release from prison. All bursary recipients have a London connection. Bursaries are used to cover costs such as training and equipment to help with resettlement, and they are accompanied by support from a mentor. PET find appropriate mentors from organisations including St. Giles Trust, De Paul UK and Trailblazers.

Over the past four years, PET have awarded thirty three bursaries, providing funding and mentor support to young people. 80% of bursary recipients are now in employment, education or training, with ten at University. Two bursary recipients have been reconvicted. That is a serious setback for both individuals, but a reconviction rate of 6% is relatively low, particularly for young people. A more detailed evaluation is underway.

Please see Appendix D for some sample case studies of young people receiving support from the PET resettlement project.

- h) How can we best meet the needs of young people in custody who are looked after children or care leavers?**
- i) What skills competencies and experience should staff have to successfully meet the needs of young people in custody?**

Highly trained and qualified staff, with engaging learning styles and experience of working with ‘hard to reach’ young people is key. The Institute for Learning have recently published a report on ‘Great teaching and learning¹⁷’, and highlight the following:

- Freedom to innovate, be flexible and be creative, including taking learning away from formal classroom setting
- Cross curricular projects
- Learner voice input into content and delivery of curriculum
- Using technology to stimulate learner involvement
- Embedded pastoral support
- Teacher development
- Team relationships
- Sharing of good practice and CPD

The young people in the focus groups said that staff needed to listen, be patient, treat them with respect and in return they would get it back. Young people felt that staff should encourage learning through a variety of ways and stop trying to fit young people into their teaching methods. Young people felt that staff should give more ownership of learning to the individual, allowing them to work from their rooms, as they would at home in order to complete coursework. Young people felt that staff should show an interest in them, their learning and their futures.

Staff need to be enabled to teach in this way, by freeing them to think out outcomes and not short-term output targets. They should also have access to regular and effective CPD.

¹⁷ <http://www.ifl.ac.uk/publications/leading-learning-with-the-157-group/great-teaching-and-learning>

Embedded learning which is engaging should be encouraged and replace an over reliance on worksheets and traditional classroom-based learning.

Training and experience in youth work can also be valuable. For example Kinetic Youth provide experienced youth work practitioners in several YOIs to provide independent and objective learner voice facilitation, as well as extra-curricular youth club style activities¹⁸. Their work received a Highly Commended Award in 2012 from Children & Young People Now. The full time youth worker in HMYOI Cookham Wood is funded by the prison, however the local authority fund additional part-time workers to supplement this work which encourages partnership working through-the-gate, smoother transition and more effective resettlement outcomes.

Teaching staff should also be able to call on the expertise of specialist staff when required, including speech and language therapists, SEN professionals etc.

- j) **How would your model of a secure college support young people leaving custody to get placements in education, training or employment on release and support them to maintain this engagement?**

Effective coordination on outcomes with services in the community is vital; all too often coordination now with local authority services is not good enough; the Government could consider giving a financial incentive to the ‘secure college’ for managing the best outcomes for the young person by co-financing post-release support services (whether from the local authority or other providers - local, educational, voluntary) to incentivise co-funded services to meet the most important needs of the young person to help achieve the overall outcome of non-offending. For example a local authority might be more prepared to spend money allocated for ‘Troubled Families’, ‘Pupil Premium’ or youth services on a young person leaving custody if there was some match-funding from the ‘secure college’ to ensure a smooth transition into the community. This would also help incentivise partnership working and ‘buy-in’ from both custody and community service providers. This could be piloted by one YOI establishment initially.

- k) **How would your model of a secure college support greater co-operation between or integration of custodial and community services?**

Firstly there needs to be greater co-operation between the prison and the education provision. In a Secure College model the regime of the prison and the education provision need to be working together for the shared goal of preventing re-offending. It makes no sense for them to be operating to different targets. There needs to be one head in charge of both the residential/pastoral side of the institution and the education. It would be unthinkable for a School (Academy, Free or any other) to be run on any different basis and Secure Colleges should be no different. In the same way, we need to explore mechanisms for joining up between community support services and in custody. One option the Government should consider is a co-financing budget, as discussed above.

- l) **What scope is there for education provision in a secure college to be continued when a young person is released from custody and does the current legislative and policy framework provide sufficient flexibility?**

One mechanism for ensuring continuity of education between custody and beyond is to maximise use of distance learning based on ICT (see vision section above).

¹⁸ <http://www.kineticyouth.co.uk/#!kinetic>

“Young people felt that the point of resettlement was to leave custody and succeed in the community (colleges/workplace), nobody wanted to return to the Secure College after release”

Kinetic Youth focus group facilitator, April 2013

- m) How long is required to achieve tangible progress with groups of young people in custody and between custody and community?**

The majority of children in custody are (thankfully) not there for long and it is important to be realistic about how much can be achieved in custody compared to the importance of joined up support in the community through YOTs and other key services (such as housing and further education).

In the community young people will face additional challenges and barriers to progress and their journey to desistence is unlikely to be a linear one. Young people in the focus groups were clear that the ability to access support, on a voluntary basis, such as mentoring, should be available for as long as they needed it. Mentoring schemes which lasted for just six months felt too short for some young people with experience.

Utilising time effectively

Although young people are generally in custody for a short time, there is time which is currently ‘wasted’, such as evenings and weekends, which could be put to better use in engaging young people in learning and developing soft skills:

“Weekends are 23 hour bang up so I just watch TV and sleep. It would be good to have weekend activities, like team sports. This could be as a reward under IEP”.

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

“Young women at HMYOI Downview wanted more practical environments to access dance activities and drama and music; all of which they would like to have access to in their down time, not just school teaching hours”.

Kinetic Youth facilitator at HMYOI Downview, April 2013

- n) What incentives or accountabilities could be put into place to promote custodial and community services to work effectively in partnership before, during and after a young person is in custody, with the aim of improved longer term outcomes?**

Continuity from pre-custody education to custody

“For those who were interrupted from their learning in the community, every effort should be made to maintain their learning and not to cut individuals off from mainstream learning”

Kinetic Youth focus group facilitator, summarising responses from young people, April 2013

There need to be clearer requirements (followed-up and inspected) for integrated management plans linking the development in custody with the support and services that are provided by the YOT and other local authority services, including schools and colleges. This needs to include how continuity of education is going to be managed between pre-custody, in-custody and post-custody.

"They told me I would get my work sent in from college to complete, but nothing has happened".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

Our feedback from young people themselves indicates that where this works well it is highly valued:

"I had a teacher visit me and she also writes to me. If I didn't have that contact with my old school I'd feel left out and feel no-one wanted to help me get back to education".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

Continuity between custodial establishments is also key to avoiding repetition or disrupting learning. Distance learning and e-learning options can help reduce disruption as young people are transferred between establishments, as well as from custody to the community. We would however advocate a reduction in transfers of young people between establishments which can be unsettling and disruptive.

Effective learning assessments, information sharing between the local authority and custody and development of individual learning plans is crucial.

Continuity from custody to post-custody education

The first ten and one hundred days after - release are particularly important to set someone on the right track. Having positive activities to be engaged in as soon as a young person is released is important, as often there might be a gap between release date and the start date for a college course. Access to distance learning or e-learning could also help bridge that gap.

"My YOT worker has helped me sign up for a college course in September for gym instructing, but I'm not sure what I'm going to do during the summer after I'm released while I wait for the course to start. I want something that starts as soon as I get out".

Young person in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

As mentioned above, a co-financing model between custody and community could help incentivise joined up working to ensure a smooth transition from custody to positive activities including education, training, volunteering and /or engagement in youth services post release.

Mentoring should begin while the young people is still in custody to help develop the relationship prior to release, rather than merely being met 'at the gate', to encourage continuity.

Colleges and universities should be encouraged to widen participation by having specific support services for those with experience of the criminal justice system, for example the Open Book Project at Goldsmiths University is an ex-offender led project providing informal learning opportunities, mentoring, outreach and student support to access mainstream education provision¹⁹.

¹⁹ <http://www.gold.ac.uk/outreach/open-book/>

- o) How can we design our approach to ensure that the widest range of providers with relevant experience can participate?
 - r) What physical environment might be required?

Size:

Young people in the focus groups were more concerned about adequate staffing and effective delivery; however the young women (aged 16/17 yrs old) at the Josephine Butler Unit HMYOI Downview did express concern of being part of a larger unit.

This highlights the importance of ensuring the specific needs of girls and young women in the youth estate are taken into consideration in designing services.

Environment:

Focus groups run by Kinetic Youth indicate the priorities for young people in terms of physical environment as:

- Rooms for learning to be matched for the subject
 - Rooms should be inviting
 - More relaxed and less oppressive looking

Young women at HMYOI Downview wanted more practical environments to access dance, drama and music activities in particular.

The focus groups also revealed a desire for a more comfortable learning environment including more comfortable chairs, classrooms that were not so hot and stuffy and that did not smell horrible.

As embedded learning increases, there should be a move towards more practical learning spaces, rather than traditional classrooms.

The wings are also often an untapped learning environment, particularly for informal learning and peer mentoring.

Library facilities:

The library should be a key facility in a secure college. Some young people told us they currently do not get sufficient access to books and technology resources:

"I haven't been taken to the library for three months. The officers are too lazy to take us. They just say write down what book you want and we'll get it. But I don't know what book I want 'til I look in the library".

“The computers in the library don’t work and haven’t worked since 2010”²⁰.

Young people in a YOI (male, under 18) April 2013

- s) What are the key ways in which costs can be driven down, recognising constraints on public finances and the need to make significant savings?

²⁰ <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/corporate-reports/imb/annual-reports-2011/feltham-2010-2011.pdf>

Reducing numbers

The main route for savings in the custodial youth estate should be through continuing to reduce the numbers in custody rather than necessarily focusing on reducing unit costs. We welcome the success in making such great progress to reduce numbers in youth custody. However we must ensure that ‘secure colleges’ do not become a seductively attractive option for sentencers, leading to an increase in the youth custody population.

The lesson from STCs is that higher staff ratios, less prison-like environments and more hours of education a week (all at considerably higher unit costs) do not in themselves deliver significantly lower re-offending rates (especially once account is taken of the fact that the most violent and disruptive children are not suitable for management in an STC regime and are sent to YOIs).

Invest to save

We should aim therefore for a youth estate population which continues to fall and can expect that population to continue to contain some of the most damaged and disturbed children for whom preventing re-offending will remain a massive challenge and therefore significant investment in this smaller group of young people, their families and peer groups will be required to turn their lives around, however the long-term, intergenerational economic saving of succeeding in their rehabilitation should provide the economic incentive to invest at this stage²¹.

Prevention and early intervention

Prevention work with young people at risk of offending, their families and peers is crucial to continue reducing the numbers in youth custody. Programmes like YesPlus (run by former PET-funded ex-prisoner) and other similar initiatives can help prevent young people entering custody. Adults in custody should be given the opportunity of developing their skills as mentors and gaining higher level qualifications in youth work or similar, to enable them to help prevent young people entering the system. Enabling them to have support to access distance learning and mentoring qualifications can enable this to happen (See Appendix D for two case studies).

The reduction in the custody threshold and development of effective community-based sentences can also reduce numbers in custody. Specific work to reduce breaches of community sentences are also valuable, for example by the use of community reparation mentors²².

Working with parents in prison and supporting children of prisoners is crucial to break the intergenerational cycle of offending. Organisations working in the adult estate like Safeground²³, Storybook Dads²⁴, the Family Intervention Wing²⁵ at HMP Parc and the excellent work of charities engaged in running visitors centres and family days should be promoted and facilitated. Providing education and learning opportunities to adults in prison can also have a knock-on impact of raising their expectations for the academic

²¹ <http://www.artsevidence.org.uk/organisations/independent-research-organisations/national-philanthropy-capital/>

²² http://seekjustice.co.uk/RelationalJusticeDownloads/relational_justice_bulletin_20.pdf

²³ <http://www.safeground.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/FM-Impact-Study-final-version.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.storybookdads.org.uk/>

²⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-17539577>

potential of their children and can also help them help with their children's homework after release.

v) **How can tangible educational progress for different segments of young people in custody best be measured, including by qualification?**

The primary objective should be achieving an outcome of establishing young people on a positive life course that does not involve offending behaviour. Although a possible contributor to this and desirable in themselves, a focus on intermediate outputs such as number of qualifications risks skewing the system away from the overall outcome - see the section on vision above.

w) **How might payment by results or incentive approach apply to a secure college and what outcomes should it focus on?**

There needs to be a focus on the outcome of avoiding re-offending; a focus on intermediary output targets is often counterproductive to that end (e.g. number of accreditations or number of hours in education). This can encourage rote delivery of programmes of little value that can be delivered at volume regardless of the pupil's needs (often repeated worksheets or basic literacy and numeracy courses whose content would be better delivered by embedded learning in topics that are more engaging). It is better to look at distance travelled for the specific young person based on a baseline holistic assessment and individual learning plan which includes personal development of soft skills and behaviour, as well as academic and vocational learning.

Results or incentives should be offered for those who develop effective partnerships to ensure a smooth transition from custody to the community for the young person.

x) **What are the likely impacts of our proposals on groups with protected characteristics?**

Whilst the number of young people in custody has decreased, the proportion of BME young offenders in custody is rising. The reasons for this must be analysed and addressed, and the specific needs of BAME young people in custody and after release need to be better met.

"70% of the young people here are BME and from South London. Only two of my staff are BME and most are not from the inner city. Cultural issues are significant. We need to meet their language and heritage needs - I worry about this".

Governor of a YOI, PET visit, June 2012.

As a minority in the youth estate, girls needs and perspectives must not be ignored. We agree with SCYJ who highlight the importance of not gendering education and training provision, by for example only providing hair and beauty for girls and motor mechanics for boys, thereby reinforcing gender stereotypes. Groups with protected characteristics should be consulted and listened to as to how to meet their specific needs.

y) Do you have any further comments on our proposals?

Please see appendices for more detailed information:

Appendix A - Full notes from three focus groups facilitated by PET and staff member responsible for the Student Council, held in April 2013 with under 18's at HMYOI Feltham

Appendix B - Responses from young people collated by Kinetic Youth, through focus group consultation. Responses are collated across various establishments (HMYOI Cookham Wood, HMYOI Warren Hill, HMYOI Downview, HMP Rochester YO's only) and from a small community cohort.

Appendix C - Summary of initial findings on ways to promote a 'learning culture' in custody by members of the Prisoner Learning Alliance (2013)

Appendix D - Case studies of PET-funded ex-prisoners who mentor young people.

Appendix E - Case studies of young people on PET resettlement project.

Appendix A



Prisoners
Education
TRUST

Full notes from three focus groups facilitated by PET and staff member responsible for the Student Council, held in April 2013 with under 18's at HMYOI Feltham

Therapeutic environment:

"There should be more one to one. I like 'reflective learning' when you get help one to one and also they talk to you about your feelings so you can get stuff off your chest which helps. But you only get to do reflective learning when you have been in a fight. It should be available for everybody".

Types of courses:

"I'd like drama as I want to be an actor, I used to do drama at school and enjoyed it".

"I'd like to do music production using a Mac computer".

"I'd like to do music lessons"

“Sports would be good, football coaching, playing matches, trying different sports like basketball”.

“I like art here. It’s good that they encourage us to apply for Koestler awards though and we get use different mediums. The lessons are a bit long though, there hours”.

“I like cookery, there should be more of that. We get to cook our own food from our culture and I need to know how to cook when I live on my own”.

“Bricklaying is good - time goes fast when you are there. Its fun. Also painting and decorating. But its hard to get a place, there’s a two month waiting list”.

“I’d like a barbering workshop”.

“GCSE’s like science and history - I like history. I suppose they don’t want us to do science because of the Bunsen burners and stuff, but we use knives in cooking and not all science involves dangerous stuff”.

“They should have prison radio here, I’d like to do a radio course”.

“Football coaching, they had a programme with Charlton at Cookham Wood”.

“More sports and fitness courses”.

“Media studies would be good, we all like to talk about films and what’s on tv”.

“The family day was good, there were snakes, a rock climbing wall and we could decorate cakes for our family”.

“Mechanic and motorbike courses”.

“Driving lessons and theory test”.

“Heron get trips into town, and they do trips at Cookham - canoeing, hiking and camping for Duke of Edinburgh. I’d like that”.

“Trips to museums”.

“They have a business course here which I was excited about doing, but its boring. I thought it was going to be more practical and exciting. They should help you more with setting up your own business, should get alan suger in here or the person who set up facebook”.

“We should do filming”.

Life skills:

“I think there should be a special resettlement class about twelve weeks before release to help with life skills like ironing clothes, how to access college, life skills, cooking, how to do a job or college interview”.

“After release last time I was going to college but I struggled living by myself and got in trouble again. I need more help with life skills. They should teach you about having a tenancy, to keep the music volume down and stuff”.

“Sexual health, relationships and parenting courses would be good. They don’t educate you, just do tests”.

“There should be an independent living wing where they give you a budget and kitchen to cook your own food for the last month so you learn life skills”.

Types of qualifications:

“I’d rather have proper qualifications like GCSEs and City & Guilds, not ‘prison’ qualifications like OCR or OCN. Everyone on the outside knows you’ve been in prison if you say you’ve got them”.

“You basically learn more s**t in jail, it makes us worse, while we could be on the out doing our GCSEs”.

“ I don’t want jail qualifications, can’t get nowhere with them. Want official gcses, they’re better for the future”.

“They should help us get apprenticeships in plumbing, electrics or rail track work, but my YOT worker said it will be hard to get an apprenticeship without gcses”.

ICT

“We should get to use the computer more, not just once a week”.

“They should have the internet so I can get more pictures for art, we always have to use the same ones”.

“The computers in the library don’t work and haven’t worked since 2010”.

Learning environment:

“I’d like more comfy seats, it’s too hot in here and it smells and the equipment is old, like the TV”.

“If there is too many people in the class it makes it hard to concentrate”.

“In bricklaying it’s good as they have tea and biscuits in the workshop. Sometimes radio is on in background when we do the practical work. It’s a good atmosphere in the workshop”.

Advice and Guidance:

“I’d use the internet to look up colleges and courses. Then I wouldn’t need to rely on my YOT worker to do it for me which takes time”.

“I don’t know if I’ll get into college, some colleges don’t want people with criminal records. They are not obliged to take you. It depends on your crime”.

“I don’t know what to do to get help to go to college after release. I’ve not been given any advice or information”.

“My YOT worker doesn’t want to help, she just sits there and talks s**t”.

“My YOT worker is safe, she is understanding and lines stuff up for me to do”.

“They should have a career day to give us ideas for jobs”.

Continuity:

“My YOT worker has helped me sign up for a college course in September for gym instructing, but I’m not sure what I’m going to do during the summer after I’m released while I wait for the course to start. I want something that starts as soon as I get out”.

“They told me I would get my work sent in from college to complete, but nothing has happened”.

“I was at a PRU before coming here but no one has been in touch”.

“My school sent me one exam to do, which I did, but that’s it, they didn’t send any more. I wanted to finish my GCSEs like my friends”.

“I had a teacher visit me and she also writes to me. If I didn’t have that contact with my old school I’d feel left out and feel no-one wanted to help me get back to education”.

“There should be a link to go straight to college without any gap”.

“There should be more work experience opportunities”.

Teaching

“When teachers go on leave there is no cover so no class”.

“Some teachers are good and nice, others will give you an iep for any reason. Others will reason with you”.

“We do the same thing every day - worksheets. It’s boring”.

“Some of the teachers expect you not to learn”.

“There should be better incentives to engage, not just to play chess or scrabble at the end of the lesson - I don’t want to play board games. We should be learning in lessons not playing games”.

“They should have smart boards like in school, its more interesting”.

“There should be a mixture of lessons and one to one”.

“I just go to education to get out my cell and socialise as maths worksheets are boring, jail is boring, its just a waste of time”.

Lesson length

“Art classes are three hours long. The class is good, but too long. I get bored and hungry”.

“We do one hour of maths, followed by one hour of English, followed by one hour of something else back to back with no break”.

Progression:

“I am repeating courses I’ve done before”

“They give us year 6 work, it’s boring so I don’t do it, then I get IEP so I loose my tv and social, it causes me stress”.

“In bricklaying it’s a mix of theory and practical. You can get a level two qualification so it’s challenging, it’s hard. I like it, they push you”.

Basic needs:

“I can’t concentrate when I’m hungry, the food is bad. Just a small box of cereal in the morning and a small baguette for lunch”.

“We need snacks and juice like they have at Ashfield. They had them here during Ofsted but then took them away again once they had gone!”

“There’s too much else to think about than education .. lack of food, dirty showers that don’t work properly”.

“If had showers in cell on enhanced level would work harder”.

Weekends - wasted opportunity

“Weekends are 23 hour bang up so I just watch TV and sleep. It would be good to have weekend activities, like team sports. This could be as a reward under IEP”.

“We should have sports activities on the weekend to give us longer out of cell. At the moment we only get one hour”.

Heron wing - not equal opportunities to engaging learning:

“They have better stuff like football coaching on heron wing”.

“Heron get the good stuff like football coaching and Kew Gardens came to do a six month course with them. We should all have the chance to do that”.

Funding support post-release

“When I was released before I got a funded bursary to help me with books and travel to college which really helped”.

“They don’t do EMA any more do they? That helped with travel costs to college”.

Housing post-release

“My YOT worker was supposed to come in yesterday for a review before I am released next week, but she didn’t turn up and now I don’t know where I’m going to be living when I get out. If I don’t know where I’m going to live I can’t make other plans”.

“MY YOT worker is good and she has arranged it so I can start to bid for accommodation ready for release”.

ROTL

“They should allow us to have more ROTL to start apprenticeships”.

Library

“I haven’t been taken to the library for three months. The officers are too lazy to take us. They just say write down what book you want and we’ll get it. But I don’t know what book I want ‘til I look in the library”.

“I asked for a particular book but they couldn’t get it for me”.

“They need more books in the library”.

Mentoring

“I had a mentor before who was a good guy. He was an ex-offender. He helped me get a flat and told me I needed to wear good clothes to my college interview. I had help from him for six months, but it wasn’t long enough. If I’d had his support for longer I might not be in here again”.

“We should have toe by toe here. More one to one help”.

“Mentors didn’t work for me, they weren’t very professional, they were too friendly and didn’t really get anything out of it, we didn’t really talk about important stuff”.

“Mentoring should go on for however long you need”.

SEN

“There are learning assistants to help those at a lower level”.

“If you have got a special educational need its up to you to tell them. I’ve got ADHD. I find reflective learning helps me but I have to misbehave first to get it”.

“I need anger management but you only get that if you’ve been involved in a fight”.

Being listened to

“My YOT worker doesn’t listen to what I’d like to do. She refers stuff to me that I’m not interested in”.

“I don’t expect anything to change”.

Being inspired

"They should have inspirational people visiting here, someone from the same walk of life as me that has succeeded".

Appendix B:



Responses from young people collated by Kinetic Youth, through focus group consultation. Responses are collated across various establishments (HMYOI Cookham Wood, HMYOI Warren Hill, HMYOI Downview, HMP Rochester YO's only) and from a small community cohort.

1. We want Secure Colleges to be a place to learn. Do you think Secure Colleges should be big or small?

For the most part the young people we spoke with said they were indifferent to the size of an establishment as they felt with adequate staffing and effective delivery numbers would be irrelevant. However, when speaking with the smaller units (HMP YOI Downview) young people did express their concern of being part of a larger unit as they felt the size of their current establishment was adequate.

2. What would be a good place for young people in custody to learn? What would it look and feel like?

There was a clear consensus here that a secure college should offer rooms for learning that matched the subject (workshops, cookery, DIY, resettlement, Dance, Music) and that the rooms should be inviting for young people. Young people at HMYOI Cookham Wood and HMYOI Warren Hill were adamant that the environment should remain 'secure looking' but be more relaxed to encourage better responses from individuals, better ownership of the environment and less oppressive, as the later does not encourage learning.

Young women at HMYOI Downview wanted more practical environments to access dance activities and drama and music, all of which they would like to have access to in their down time not just during school teaching hours.

3. What other help do young people need in a Secure College?

Again, across the establishments young people were very clear that they not only needed help to achieve academically, but they also needed help to learn the skills needed to thrive in life in general. They highlighted the following areas for integration into the mainstream learning framework:

- Financial Skills
- Independent living skills

- Access to learning new hobbies
- One to one support from trained professionals
- Help with communication (understanding their situation better)
- Better help with the realities of dealing with housing issues, education, getting a job
- More time to talk with adults in a relaxed environment
- Positive peer mentoring
- Sense of feeling safe and secure and looked after, to enable development
- Improved communication between them and the outside world.

4. Who could be in a Secure College?

This question raised many an eyebrow, most initial answers were to have a mixed population as the young people felt being kept away from the opposite sex had nothing but detrimental effects on their socialisation upon release. A small number of individuals were again indifferent to this.

Young people from HMYOI Warren Hill, HMYOI Cookham Wood and HMP Rochester did feel that a more appropriate age system could be implemented. They felt that most people grow up immensely between the ages of 15 - 18 and that most 18 year olds rush to leave the juvenile estate to be around more people their own age without really understanding the services they would no longer receive. Age grouping suggestions were as follows:

- 14 - 15 years
- 16 - 17 years
- 18 - 19 years

Young people felt that this would enable the older young people to remain in an environment where they can benefit from all the services available to juvenile offenders while socialization with people their own age (and of course eliminating the legal issues around 18 yr old / adults and minors).

5. What would be important to make sure young people in a Secure College are kept safe?

A piece of work carried out at HMYOI Cookham Wood produced the following suggestions to improve safety and security across the secure estate:

- Develop different ways that young people can release their anger (talking, sports etc)
- Ensure all young people understand what is happening to/for them at all times, a lack of effective communication produces frustration and in turn leads to anger.
- Address issues as soon they are highlighted, things that are left only become bigger and harder to solve.
- Young people need to be listened to, they need to know that they are not invisible and that what they have to say is valued and acted upon.

6. What makes you want to learn?

Young people said that there were a number of things that encouraged them to learn. They felt that access to a wide range of subjects taught in a variety of ways to appeal to many different learning styles would improve an individual's motivation to learn. They felt that it would benefit learners to split classes/learning groups into learning ability, with the addition of peer mentoring to encourage those with less ability to find a peer to communicate and explain things better. They felt that if young people could link their learning to the practicality of finding employment this would really enthuse young people to engage, however , they would like to see some evidence that there would be jobs to move on to. One to one working was highlighted as a great way to support those with in depth learning needs.

7. Are there any subjects we could put together to make them more interesting?

Suggestion for a Multi-skills course for Plastering, Plumbing, tiling, electrician, over a set time could help young people gain an understanding at a basic level of skills needed in life as well as a taster into a field they may wan to explore further.

8. What kinds of learning should you be able to do?

Young people felt that that they should be offered the opportunity to study at GCSE and A Level as many young people in custody are able to learn at this level and should not lose the opportunity to attain accreditation and better improve their resettlement chances. On-line learning that replicates what learning styles are being used in the community.

9. Does getting qualifications and certificates encourage you to learn?

A resounding yes to this one, ALL young people felt that getting certificates made them feel proud of what they have achieved, you can never have too many. Although, one individual who was studying at a higher A-Level in HMYOI Cookham Wood felt that for him, getting certificates of achievement was worthless as he was aiming for a place at university and they would be worthless.

10. If someone has a disability or special needs, what can we do to make it easier fro them to learn?

One to one support from teachers, peers and other trusted adults to help them access the learning available to them.

11. Should young people in custody see someone for advice on careers?

Absolutely yes, even if it is just for a part time job upon release, this is an area that young people need help with as they can't get this information on their own. Local job centres in resettlement areas should also help.

12. What would help young people continue building a good future when they leave custody? What support do you think would help and who might be involved?

Young people in HMYOI Warren Hill, HMYOI Downview, HMYOI Cookham Wood and HMP Rochester all stated that when a young person leaves custody they need to have their basic needs met, they need accommodation that is suitable, they would like the option of continued through the gate support and they would need people around them who cared.

13. Do you think it would be helpful for a young person to keep attending a Secure College when they leave custody?

NO, young people felt that the point of resettlement was to leave custody and succeed in the community (colleges/workplace), nobody wanted to return to the Secure College after release.

14. Where should Secure Colleges be located?

Young people in all establishments felt that being near to their home is important so they can keep regular contact with the outside world and they would be able to start resettlement whilst in custody through ROTL (college, work, positive activities) and not have to worry about finding opportunities once leaving the secure estate.

15. What should staff do more of, and how best can staff help young people in custody?

The young people said that staff needed to listen, be patient, treat them with respect and in return they would get it back. Young people felt that staff should encourage learning through a variety of ways and stop trying to fit young people into their teaching methods. Young people felt that staff should give more ownership of learning to the individual, allowing them to work from their rooms, as they would at home in order to complete coursework. Young people felt that staff should show an interest in them, their learning and their futures.

16. Should courses at a Secure College be: Short/Long/Don't mind

Across the establishments the answers were similar. For those on short term sentences, short courses with accreditation/certificates would be helpful, for those who were interrupted from their learning in the community, every effort should be made to maintain their learning and not to cut individuals off from the mainstream learning (GCSE's, A-Levels, Practical courses).

For individuals serving longer sentences, more substantial courses should be offered that can be continued in the community upon release (whether this be classroom based or in the work place).

Annex C

Prisoner Learning Alliance initial findings on how to develop a ‘learning culture’ in custody (April 2013):

- Governor and Senior Management Team committed to learning.
- Training of staff to help understand their role in promoting a learning culture.
- Using prisoners and staff to be ‘learning champions’.
- Regular prison-wide learning events for both prisoners and staff.
- Getting learning ‘into every corner’ of the prison by providing activities and outreach in the gym, workshops, the wings, kitchens, healthcare, resettlement etc.
- Encouraging learning outside the core day at evenings and weekends.
- Utilising the library effectively as a hub for learning.

- Effective communication between departments and people who can ‘join the dots’ between departments.
- Recognition of success in learning through awards or other celebration events.
- Recognition of staff’s involvement in promoting learning.
- Listening to prisoners and learners voices and working in partnership with prisoners to find solutions and generate ideas for learning.
- Working holistically with the community and prisoners families to promote and support learning.
- Leadership prepared to look at the ‘bigger picture’ outcomes rather than a narrow focus on outputs.

Annex D:

Case Studies of PET-funded ex-prisoners who mentor young people

PET are aware of a number of prisoners we have funded to do level 3 or above qualifications, who have gone on to use their unique mix of ‘high qualifications’ and personal experience of the criminal justice system to help others. The two case studies below illustrate the importance of enabling prisoners to access learning to a higher level in prison, so they in turn can help others break the cycle of offending:

Case Study One: Graham Godden of Youth Empowerment Services

“I was released from prison in July 2009 after serving 8 years of an automatic life sentence - this was the third time I had been released following previous long sentences. What was going to be different this time? I walked out the gate with something I had never been released with before - to accompany my £46 release grant - I had my new found education; a wealth of qualifications and self esteem and a confidence in my abilities, underpinned by my successful academic achievements. I also had a business plan, a group of supportive people and a vision and passion that was burning in my chest”.

PET-funded OU student Graham went on to successfully set up a charity called Youth Empowerment Services (<http://www.yesplus.org.uk/>) To date Youth Empowerment has now worked with over 6,000 young people, has employed 14 ex-offenders as facilitators and have worked in partnership with Kent and Sussex Police and a number of youth support organisations.

Graham says “I continue to apply much of the academic learning I gained through my education. Youth Empowerment has very much been driven by research, evidence and academic understanding - something I would not have had the first clue about had I not been supported in my education by PET. I owe a great debt to PET - they provided a platform of opportunity from which much has been achieved. Education is so important when you really want to achieve a new way of life.

When recruiting new ex-prisoners as group work facilitators, one of the main criteria we look for is engagement in education whilst in custody and beyond, particularly if they have achieved higher level qualifications. We also provide an extensive programme of accredited training for all our workers including the opportunity to obtain a professional Certificate of Effective Practice in Youth Justice (FHEQ Level 5²⁶). We pride ourselves on having workers who combine their experience of the criminal justice system with academic knowledge which underpins effective practice”.

Case Study Two: Chris Syrus of Syrus Consultancy

“Probably the first decision I made when I entered prison was that I’m not gonna do this again. I’m not spending five years inside only to go back inside again after. I decided I wanted to work with young people after I was released. When I was growing up I didn’t have many people who had pushed me to do education. I knew I needed knowledge in order to help others. So I wrote to the Prisoners Education Trust and explained why I wanted to do a psychology degree, and they agreed to fund it. I also worked to complete a Level 3 City and Guilds in advice and guidance with St. Giles Trust and got ROTL to go to their office to give advice and help to others about housing and other things. I felt like I had a purpose, it was good”.

Since his release Chris has published a book and set up a social enterprise, Syrus Consultancy C.I.C which uses the arts, combined with personal development to support young people into Education, Training and Employment outcomes, while deterring young people away from crime. In 2010 Chris was awarded the ‘Turnaround Peace Award’ by Mayor of London for his work mentoring young offenders.

Christopher Syrus was awarded Croydon’s Next Top Role Model 2012 at event hosted by Croydon African Caribbean Family Organisation (CACFO). He says “I am putting my experiences to good use and have turned it into a positive. Education is key. The reoffending rate is ridiculously high, the government needs to get more prisoners to tap into education and help to see themselves as a student not just a prisoner”.

Annex E:

Sample case studies of young people on PET resettlement project

Hamid was convicted of a serious offence and went to prison at the age of 18. He used his time well in prison. With support from Prisoners Education Trust he completed Open University modules in business studies. He also took practical courses, giving him qualifications in rail track maintenance.

On release, Hamid applied for a university course in business studies, with the help of his mentor. The modules he completed in prison helped him to get on to the degree course. He has started the course and is doing well. With his resettlement bursary he has been able to buy a computer that he needs for the course. He is also doing part time rail track work, to help cover his living costs.

²⁶ <http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/course/k208.htm>

Hamid has made time to volunteer at the local Somali youth group. He helps with football coaching and with the administration work. He is open about his past, and hopes that the young people who come to the group meetings will gain something from his experiences.

Daniel felt he was ‘nothing but trouble’ in his teenage years. He was excluded from school with no qualifications. He was often in trouble with the law and then, when he was 19, he committed a serious crime and served three years in prison.

He started by gaining basic literacy and numeracy qualifications (at NVQ Level 1, and then Level 2). He began to realise what education could achieve, and took distance learning courses. He gained a Level 3 qualification in Fitness Management, and a Personal Trainer Diploma. On release, with a bursary from Prisoners Education Trust and the support of a mentor, he started work in a gym. Over the months he has built up his own business, taking courses and working with individual clients. He says his self confidence has grown. He is pleased with his progress, now working long hours, but self-employed, doing work he enjoys.