



## Prisoner Learning Alliance

### Submission to HMIP public consultation on new expectations for adult male prisons

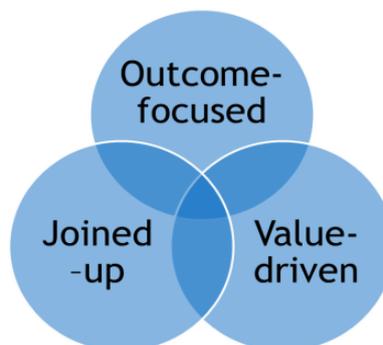
#### Introduction:

- **About the PLA**

The PLA is an alliance of 23 organisations that *'provide expertise and strategic vision to inform future priorities, policies and practices relating to prison education, learning and skills'*.<sup>1</sup>

- **'Smart Rehabilitation' principles:**

The Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) has developed a set of three key principles for the future of prisoner learning which we believe should shape the expectations of prisons. Prisoner learning should be; outcome-focused, joined-up and value-driven:



The PLA make 16 recommendations for how to achieve this, which can be found in Appendix One.

- **A 'Theory of Change' for prison education:**

The PLA would like the expectations to reflect and promote the broad value of prison education, including, but crucially also beyond, employability.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/prisoner-learning-alliance>

We have listened to the views and personal experiences of former prisoner learners who reflected on the role education had played in their rehabilitation journey and have worked with New Philanthropy Capital in devising a [Theory of Change](#) for prison education.

The PLA found the benefits fell into five main themes, shown below:



In this way, education benefits both the individual and the institution. For the prison, education can help ‘humanise’ an environment that is often characterised by confinement, coercion and overcrowding; creating a culture of learning and peer support that carries through the whole prison.

For the individual, engaging in education can lead to positive changes within custody: improved wellbeing and behaviour, for example. It can create a shift in identity, an impetus towards change and a sense of hope. After release, this can empower people to engage with their communities and make a positive contribution to their families and society.

The Wordle below was produced after consulting with over 100 prison teachers and practitioners about the benefits they see of prison education at the 2015 PLA conference:



- **Coates Review**

The PLA welcomes the [Coates Review](#) into prison education, which the Government accepted in full. The expectations should reflect the recommendations and detail of this review, therefore addressing the following;

1. Building capacity of all those who work in the prison (including mentors)
2. Have a personalised and inclusive approach to learning
3. Offer higher-level learning
4. Have ICT that supports learning
5. Offer support for education, training and employment on release

- **Council of Europe**

On the 13th of October 1989, the Council of Europe adopted a set of recommendations outlining the needs and responsibilities concerning the education of imprisoned persons in Europe.

These recommendations stipulate that all imprisoned persons should be offered the opportunity to engage in educational activities and that these activities should serve to develop the whole person, be conducive to effective reintegration, and encourage a reduction in recidivism. The expectations should therefore take these recommendations into account.

*‘All prisoners shall have access to education, which is envisaged as consisting of classroom subjects, vocational education, creative and cultural activities, physical education and sports, social education and library facilities’ (Council of Europe)*

See Appendix Two for more details.

- **Learner Voice**

There should be a strong expectation about the importance of meaningful ‘learner voice’:

*‘Developing a culture and processes whereby learners are consulted and proactively engage with shaping their own educational experiences’.* (Futurelab, 2006)

It should also include listening to those *not* engaging with education, to better understand and address barriers to participation and engagement.

The expectation should be that prisons should operate at the higher ends of the ‘participation ladder’ as much as possible. For more information please see [‘Involve, Improve, Inspire: A Prisoner Learner Voice Toolkit’](#) (2013). A research study led by PET and Dr. Auty found a relationship between activities supporting meaningful learner voice and some elements of positive learning culture across the wider prison. If interested, please contact PET for a copy of the report which has not yet been published.

### **Do our revised Expectations miss any important areas of activity?**

This response will focus on Section 3 of the expectations, with an emphasis on education, learning and skills.

#### **Section 3**

##### **Leadership and management of purposeful activity (Page 34)**

It would be useful to set a clear and aspirational definition of ‘purposeful activity’. For example an activity that has a purpose that is linked to a person’s sentence plan, individual learning plan or health/well being plan.

- **Equitable access**

It may be useful for the expectations to further define what is meant by ‘equitable access’. ‘Inclusive’ which gives a sense both of equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes, may be a better choice of word.

There should be an expectation that achieving equality does not necessarily mean treating everyone equally. For example, paying those who work as wing cleaners more than those engaging in education, may be seen as equality of access as all prisoners are subject to the same pay scales, but in reality discriminates against prisoners who do not have family to send them in money so are less likely to take up education. Another example might be to offer an art class on the ground floor open to all to apply, but a wheel-chair bound prisoner on the third floor could not attend due to lack of physical access. There are also issues relating to vulnerable prisoners (VPs) who often cannot access the same education as mainstream prisoners.

*‘Education should have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners should not lose out financially or otherwise by taking part in education’*  
(Council of Europe)

An inclusive prison should be expected to make all efforts to ensure activities are open to all prisoners and proactively focus on understanding, and then removing, any external or experiential barriers. A focus on learner voice and service user participation is crucial for a prison to really understand what barriers exist in the *prison* that may prevent individuals from engaging with activities.

Good practice examples of a whole-prison approach to addressing barriers include HMYOI Feltham becoming a ‘dyslexia-friendly’ establishment, HMP Werrington becoming an ‘autism-friendly’ establishment and HMP Littlehey, which is working towards becoming a ‘dementia-friendly’ establishment. HMP Dartmoor also runs an inclusive education offer with both VP and mainstream populations together using compacts. Sixteen prisons use an assessment tool called the [‘Do-IT Profiler’](#) which is translated into various languages and uses assistive technology to ensure prisoners with low literacy or learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) can use it.

Communication and effective information sharing is often key to ensuring equality of access, so a real focus on how and who delivers the messages can make a real difference.

Access in prisons can also relate strongly to the regime and staffing. There should be an expectation that the regime and staffing levels should be sufficient to support access to purposeful activities. There should be an expectation that staffing and regimes should always support access to exams. We understand there have been examples where due to low summer staffing levels, learners have not been unlocked to sit exams as the education department has effectively had to shut down due for several weeks due to lack of staff to unlock and escort prisoners to the education department.

*‘All those involved in the administration of the prison system and the management of prisons should facilitate and support education as much as possible.’* (Council of Europe)

Prisoners have told us that they sometimes have to make choices between gym, education, work or having a shower or calling their family. The regime should support basic hygiene needs, as well as access to purposeful activities. There should be an expectation that prisoners should not have to make a choice between the two.

There should also be an expectation that wherever possible prisoners should be empowered to facilitate their own access to purposeful activities. One example is through the use of technology. For example, prisons using wing or cell-based kiosk technology enable prisoners to find information, make digital applications for education, work, healthcare, resettlement appointments and visits, by formulating their own weekly timetable without having to rely on paper-based applications which can lack a paper trail and be unreliable.

There should also be an expectation that, wherever possible, regimes should support independent access to purposeful activities, for example specific house blocks where risk

assessed prisoners can make their own food, access learning resources and other purposeful activities without relying on staff to escort them.

*‘Wherever possible, prisoners should be allowed to participate in education outside prison’ (Council of Europe)*

ROTL (release on temporary licence) is an important way to test responsibility and offer additional opportunities for purposeful activity. There should be an expectation that access to ROTL opportunities should be available wherever possible.

Partnership work with external educational institutions can be a valuable way of promoting normalised learning spaces and promote equality in the delivery of the educational provision. There should be an expectation that prisons should seek and explore partnership working where possible and appropriate.

*‘Where education has to take place within the prison, the outside community should be involved as fully as possible’ (Council of Europe)*

Prisoners should expect that inspectors look at a random sample of individual case files to assess progress against individual learning plans, as probation inspectors do. The sample should be taken from all prisoners and not just those currently engaged in education, in order to assess whether sufficient steps had been taken to engage the individual in learning activities.

- **Promote learning and raising expectations**

Raising expectations is important, but ‘raising aspirations’ might provide a clearer sense of progression and setting the bar high as to what people in prison are able, with support, to achieve. It might also be useful for the expectations to set out what makes a prison ‘aspirational’. At our PLA conference in 2015 former Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick, described his idea of ‘the aspirational prison’. He said:

*‘An aspirational prison refuses to write people off. In aspirational prisons they don’t give up on people who others have given up on before. They refuse to let people perform at a level lower than they are capable of. Aspirational prisons recognise achievement and progress. Aspirational prisons look hard for good things to say. They recognise learning is more than just sitting and being told what to do. Aspirational prisons help prisoners take control of their own lives and environments and become role models. They are always pushing to improve through rigorous self-assessment.’ (Nick Hardwick, PLA conference 2015)*

The transformative effects of education are primarily realised in the raising of aspirations and expectations of the self. An expectation to provide progression routes to further and higher education courses, whether through classroom-based or distance learning, would raise aspirations. Face-to-face collaborations with students at higher educational institutions, through projects such as Inside Out, Learning Together and other prison

university partnerships, are also key to allowing students to realise these aspirations are achievable and by extension, raises their own expectations of themselves.

*'Education should be aspirational. It must offer a learning journey that is truly transformational and enables progression to higher levels. [...] Despite the challenges, there are some beacons of good practice emerging where prisons have forged strong relationships with local FE colleges and universities to introduce and promote higher level learning opportunities. However, these programmes need to be more than isolated initiatives.'* (Coates Review, 2016)

It would be useful to also say that in good prisons there is a strong *culture* of learning throughout the whole prison. The expectation should be that learning is central to the ethos, values and strategy of a prison. There should be a clear strategy developed with all stakeholders, including prisoners and staff and the voluntary sector, as to what the prison aims to achieve and how it will promote learning and raise expectations/aspirations.

In order to promote learning, staff and peer advisors need to know what learning and activities are on offer. There should be an expectation that each prison will have a clear mapping of what is available in the prison and that everyone should know what is on offer.

#### **64. Constructive use of time out of cell**

In order for prisoners to make constructive use of time out of cell there needs to be an expectation that learning facilities will be provided on the wing, for example, wing-based study spaces and learning resources such as books and computers. These facilities could equally be used by staff as well as prisoners to generate a learning culture across the whole prison. For example The Open Academy at HMP Swaleside is a wing-based centre with access to Virtual Campus enabled computers, higher level resources, study space and learning activities for prisoners that live on the wing. The development of a learning culture on this wing is driven by the prisoner leads who support distance learning students and other learners who choose to use the space for their personal development.

There should also be expectations that prisons should enable in-cell time to be used constructively and that living space should facilitate this, for example access to a desk, light, books, art materials and e-learning technology. Prisoners sharing with another prisoner should be able to request to move cells if their cell mate is disrupting their in-cell learning.

#### **65. Open air access**

There should be an expectation that the outdoor environment and activities should promote learning and well being for example gardens, sports, fitness, horticulture, animals, art work etc.

#### **66. Prisoners benefit from regular access to library and additional learning resources**

There should be greater detail as to the expectations that libraries should be spaces to promote learning and wellbeing and therefore have furniture, space, layout, staff, activities and facilities which reflect that.

Libraries should have books which reflect their population including foreign national books. Books should be clearly marked for different levels of reading knowledge including emergent readers and there should be support to help prisoners choose reading materials.

The library should also act as a learning hub and be effectively linked into prison education activities. There should be an expectation of close joint working with education, careers advisors and the voluntary sector.

Libraries should be a space which support distance learners, for example, by access to word processing, Virtual Campus, video conferencing / secure relay messaging to tutors. There should also be support to access restricted, controlled online resources. There should be newspapers as a means of keeping in touch with the outside world.

There should be an expectation that libraries will offer reading groups, author visits and other activities e.g. reading challenge, World Book Day, Cityread etc.

There should be wide access to books and journals not available in prison library e.g. from local council library, college and/or university library.

There should be an expectation that library orderlies are supported through proper training, supervision and qualifications.

Many prisoners studying distance learning courses describe difficulties in affording paper and pens. It should be expected that prisons should provide access to these basic learning resources, whether on a distance learning programme or not.

## **67. PE and fitness**

The gym provides an opportunity for activity, learning and social interaction in an informal, relaxed setting to promote well being.

There should be an expectation that prisoners benefit from sports-based learning where opportunities for personal and social development and educational progression are offered in an embedded and contextualised way.

In good prisons the gym is seen as a sports college (e.g. [HMP Swaleside](#)) where learning and sports are both promoted alongside each other.

There should be an expectation that gyms have facilities for learning in them or near to them e.g. classrooms, study spaces, books and technology.

It should be expected that there is effective joint working between gym staff and education staff.

There should be opportunities for team and individual sports and fitness, happening both indoors and outdoors. This should include opportunities to involve staff and people from the community.

There should be partnership working with other organisations such as voluntary sector organisations, to develop enrichment activities.

## Education, skills and work activities (Page 36)

- **All prisoners are expected and enabled to engage in education, skills or work activities that increase their employability on release.**

We would like to see this expectation amended to include:

All prisoners are expected and enabled to engage in education, skills or work activities that increase their employability, promote personal development, support health and wellbeing and promote social development including family ties.

The expectation should make clear the holistic and wide-ranging benefits of prison education including, but not limited to, improved employability.

### **68. The leadership and management of education, skills and work activities effectively improves outcomes for prisoners.**

- **Ambitions for a prison's performance**

In discussing a prison's 'ambitions' this expectation should also include the words: strategy, values, vision and culture.

We welcome the inclusion of prisoners in setting, reviewing and communicating prisons ambitions, but would benefit from emphasising further.

There should be an expectation that prisons have mechanisms for meaningful learner voice and prisoner participation on a regular basis. Changes made as a result of learner voice should be clearly communicated and form part of a prisons self assessment and review process against its strategy. There should be a student council or similar mechanisms (such as regular focus groups and learner voice reps) for prisoner feedback about education. This feedback should be fed into SMT, strategy, self assessment and QUIGs directly, through a prisoner representative.

- **Provision is aligned to local, regional and national priorities**

Although it is vital to understand local, regional and national priorities in making decisions about the range and content of education, skills and work provision, the first thought should be to ensure that provision is aligned to the needs of the population relating to the individual prisoner as identified in their learning, personal development, sentence and well being plans.

There should be an expectation that prisons should conduct regular needs assessments of their population, taking into account protected characteristics and individual needs, strengths and demographics as set out in assessment data.

- **High quality professional development**

This should include peer mentors, officers, managers, leaders, librarians, careers advisors as well as education staff.

- **Rigour of self-assessment including through the use of the views of prisoners and other stakeholders and how well it secures sustained improvement.**

We welcome this expectation and the emphasis not just on collecting prisoner views, but the expectation that prisons have to show how feedback has led to change and improvement.

As mentioned above, this expectation could go further by clarifying that there should be mechanisms to ensure meaningful learner and prisoner voice and participation on a regular basis, as part of the daily working of the prison, and not just in annual self-assessments. Reference should also be made to expectations: participation should happen at the higher levels of the participation ladder, and not simply short end-of-course surveys. There needs to be an expectation that prisoners shape and influence the provision.

- **English and maths**

Emphasis should be made here on expectations that embedding and contextualising maths and English, and using peer support, are evidence-based approaches to engaging prisoners in achieving progression in basic skills.

There should also be an emphasis on the promotion of reading for pleasure and prison-wide activities to promote English and maths amongst both prisoners and staff. The use of e-learning to provide blended learning opportunities both in the classroom and in-cell where possible should be mentioned here, in line with FELTAG requirements.

IT should also be included here as the third critical ‘basic skill’ required for living and employability.

*‘Digital literacy is a key functional skill paving the way to further learning, employment and access to services in the modern world. The relevance and quality of ICT training in prison is every bit as important as that provided in maths, English and vocational skills provision.’ (Coates, 2016)*

Professional development for staff should also include opportunities to develop English, maths and IT.

There should be an expectation that the prison makes use of voluntary sector and other community organisations such as colleges and universities to promote English, maths and IT, for example, peer mentoring, reading groups, reading challenges, creative writing competitions and exhibitions, prison-university partnerships, writers in residence, author visits etc.

There should be an expectation that English, maths and IT skills should also be available above level 2. Prisons should support prisoners to gain study skills e.g. essay writing, research, making notes, revision techniques etc. Good prisons should support prisoners with the skills for independent study and to develop higher level literacy and communication skills.

Literacy should be set within the broader remit of speech, language and communication skills, as well as written skills.

- **How effectively leaders and managers monitor progress of groups of prisoners so none are disadvantaged or underachieve.**

This is a very welcome expectation and could be monitored by quantitative analysis using data about demographics and protected characteristics. This requires an expectation that this data be monitored and prisoners' progress be captured in a systematic and holistic way, and can be added to by the variety of people involved in a prisoner's life, including voluntary sector organisations and staff from different departments.

Another way to measure would be to take a random sample of prisoners and match their progress against the milestones and objectives set out in their sentence and learning plans.

- **How well Governors [...] hold others to account for improving the impact and effectiveness of the provision.**

This is a very welcome expectation and should include monitoring of outcomes through the gate, including numbers of prisoners going into education, training, employment and volunteering after release.

Impact should be measured against personal learning plans. It should also be measured by assessing the prison's culture as measured by, for example, the MQPL.

There should be an expectation that provision should be evaluated and should link in with research on 'what works' in prison education. Prisons should be aware of the evidence and also work to contribute to that evidence base, particularly when testing new ways of working or innovative provision.

Impact and effectiveness can also be gathered using meaningful learner voice mechanisms to get feedback on short or intermediate outcomes.

Prisons should be expected to understand and ensure their provision is theoretically informed by the evidence available, on desistance and transformation learning for example. Prisons should work with university partners and the Ministry of Justice Data Lab and research team to work towards a strategic understanding of the evidence available and evidence required to inform effective provision: 'what works, for who and why'.

- **Equality and diversity**

This should also be monitored as well as promoted. Prison diversity reps (both staff and prisoner reps) should be expected to see education as a key area of attention. Attention should be paid to diversity of staff as well as professional development opportunities to understand, and therefore promote, equality and diversity.

Equality and diversity should also include the involvement of former prisoners where appropriate as role models and to deliver services.

- **Pay rates**

This recommendation is very welcome due to the impact on inclusion / access and engagement tool. It could be worded with more clarity, that prisons are expected to

reward self-improvement and progress against individual learning milestones at a higher rate than other activities. There must be an end to prisons who pay wing cleaners or unskilled prison industry workers higher than those in education or mentoring. Prisoners should not be disadvantaged by doing education as opposed to other activities.

- **Careers guidance**

Careers guidance should include self employment and social enterprise advice, as well as advice on apprenticeships and further/higher education and volunteering options.

It is not enough just to have advice. The expectation should be that prisons reach out and engage with partners to facilitate through-the-gate support and broker placements and opportunities, both on ROTL, after release or within the prison itself.

The quality of careers advice is crucial, especially when working with people who may not have a clear idea what they want to do. Assessing their strengths, interests, connections and aptitudes should form an important part of this process, as should hearing from inspiring role models.

There should be an expectation that careers advisors should work closely with the library and education department, wider prison departments and other plans in place for individual prisoners.

Careers advisors should be aware of all learning opportunities, including distance learning options, as many employers require qualifications of level 3 or above.

We welcome the expectation of the use of technology and controlled access to the internet for applying for jobs. We would like this to be expanded to match the Coates recommendations, accepted in full by Government, that controlled access to the internet should be available for the purposes of education, training, employment, resettlement and family contact:

*'I believe that the blanket security practices now in operation, that effectively ban internet use in prisons, are putting a major brake on the potential for digital technologies to encourage and enhance learning. Most Prison Governors who responded to a survey commissioned by the Prison Reform Trust and the Prisoners' Education Trust agreed that prisoners should have secure and controlled access to the internet. I support them wholeheartedly in that view. Internet use is a fact of life in most homes, colleges and workplaces in the modern world. To release prisoners with out-of-date -or no -digital skills reduces their job and education prospects, restricts contact with family and friends, and thereby increases the likelihood that they will reoffend.'* (Coates, 2016)

- **Destination data**

We welcome the expectation to monitor progression and destination data and use this information to improve provision, including careers guidance.

## 69. Good quality teaching, learning and assessment

- **Inspiring teaching**

We welcome the focus on inspiring and challenging prisoners and meet their different needs. In order to properly differentiate and to embed and contextualise learning, there should be an expectation that staff will have sufficient time and resources to plan lessons and have access to good practice, and network with other prison teachers in their establishment and in other prisons. Teachers should also have the skills and resources to use e-learning technology, including controlled internet access, in the classroom to engage learners and to set work to complement classroom studies in cell.

*‘Restrictions around internet access impact heavily on teachers. Many told me that they were unable to use potentially valuable internet resources as part of their lessons. These restrictions need to be reviewed, removed where possible, and reduced elsewhere. The current situation is a disincentive to the recruitment of the sort of talented, inspirational teachers I would like to see working in prisons.’ (Coates, 2016)*

Inspectors should consider the extent to which prisoners feel part of supportive communities of learning and recognise a learning culture.

- **Trained peer mentors are deployed to work closely with staff**

We welcome the focus on peer mentors who can be a valuable part of the prison ‘workforce’. However, they are also learners and mentoring should be seen as part of their learning and progression. Rather than the word ‘deployed’, we would rather the expectation stated that trained peer mentors should be supported to work closely with staff to provide guidance and help. Prisons should be expected to meet good practice guidance set out by the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) in training, supporting and supervising peer mentors (such as HMP Dartmoor, which is accredited by the MBF). It should be expected that work by Dr. Woodall and others in safeguarding and supporting ‘peers in prison settings’ should be taken into consideration by prisons. Prisons should also be expected to work with voluntary sector organisations with expertise in peer mentoring.

- **Effective initial assessment**

Prisons should be expected to use a holistic, robust assessment tool. This assessment should be carried out in a supportive, conducive environment at a time that will ensure the most accurate assessment of someone’s learning needs. Prisons should be expected to provide a holistic induction week that includes the assessment, such as The Bridge Programme at HMP Low Newton. Assessments should be digitally recorded so as to avoid prisoners having multiple assessments when they transfer prisons. Their records should transfer with them. The assessment should capture needs and also strengths.

- **Appropriate attitudes and behaviours for work**

To reflect the wider value of prison education, the expectation should be amended to read: '[...]including appropriate attitudes and behaviours for work *and to make a positive contribution to their families and communities while in custody and after release.*'

## **70. Personal development and behaviour**

This section is very welcome and correlates well with the PLA's social capital and human capital themes in the Theory of Change report.

- **How well the provision reduces reoffending**

This expectation could refer to intermediate desistance outcomes - how well provision inspires hope, develops positive social networks, promotes agency, establishes a positive self-identity and offers opportunities for 'giving back'. Transformative learning models focus on the development of critical thinking skills, personal motivation, empathy, attitudes and behaviours.

There should also be an expectation that data (qualitative and quantitative) will be monitored and analysed (as described above) to better understand what works in reducing reoffending and supporting people's desistance journeys. There should also be a focus on the importance of those skills for making a positive contribution to family life. These 'soft skills' or 'intermediate outcomes' (including those developed through engagement with voluntary activities such as arts projects, family learning and reading groups) should be recorded and celebrated as much as formal qualifications.

There should be joint working between education and prison psychologists so prisoners can effectively practice and develop skills learnt on offending behaviour courses.

- **Relevant additional qualifications**

Prisons should be inspected on the extent to which learning is aspirational and enables progression to higher levels, including through distance learning.

- **Extent to which they feel safe**

We welcome the inclusion of safety. There needs to be a clear expectation that this means both physical safety and psychologically safe environments, as learning requires an element of vulnerability and therefore learning spaces need to be 'safe spaces'. This might also mean taking learning to spaces prisoners feel 'safe' for example the gym, the outdoors or on the wing. There should be mechanisms for getting feedback on how 'safe' prisoners feel while engaged in education.

- **Understand rights and responsibilities as a citizen**

We welcome the mention of citizenship. We would also suggest mentioning prisoners' roles as family members in the community (partner, parent, etc.).

This expectation could be build upon by using the word 'empowerment'. To what extent the prison *empowers* prisoners as citizens and provides opportunities and mechanisms to develop their understanding of citizenship and to practice their skills for example through meaningful voice and participation activities.

## **71. Outcomes and achievements**

The PLA is delighted with the inclusion of the expectations that prisons will be measured on the extent to which they enjoy learning. This is absolutely crucial to engaging prisoners and developing a love of learning and a desire and motivation to engage in lifelong learning and self development both in custody and beyond. This recognition should be given greater prominence as it is the basis on which many of the expectations and outcomes will depend.

Inspections should look at the extent to which learners are engaged, enjoying learning, are motivated to learn and are excited by learning.

However, for the bullet point relating to prisoners gaining qualifications that allow them to find jobs “that meet local and national needs”, we would like the wording to be changed to “jobs or self-employment that meet their and their families’ needs and which they enjoy and find fulfilling”.

## Appendix One:

### PLA '[Smart Rehabilitation](#)' blueprint



#### Outcome-focused:

1. **Learning works and should therefore be at the heart of both the youth and adult estate.** There is evidence that prisoner learning can contribute to rehabilitation outcomes. Learning is as important for most adult prisoners' rehabilitation as it is for young people.
2. **There should be a broad vision of successful rehabilitation outcomes for learning.** Learning outcomes in prison should focus on giving prisoners the ability to cope with life in and out of prison (resilience), the ability to desist from offending (desistance) and the ability to make a positive contribution to their family and community. These outcomes may encompass, but go far beyond, helping a prisoner have a job on release.
3. **When it comes to 'employability skills', a broader understanding is required to improve rehabilitation outcomes, including both becoming a valued employee and self-employment.** 'Employability skills' are often narrowly identified with learning skills for a particular occupation, basic literacy and numeracy or CV writing. True 'employability skills' sought by employers encompass much wider capability in self belief, resilience and ability to work with others that are best promoted by a wider vision of learning. Where occupational skills are required, higher level or niche skills are more valued by employers and are helpful in securing sustainable careers in an increasingly competitive jobs market.
4. **Prisoner learning should focus on rehabilitation outcomes and not outputs.** A focus on outputs e.g. numbers of accreditations or hours of teaching, can lead to perverse outcomes and deflects attention from the end rehabilitation outcomes that learning can achieve.
5. **A 'whole person' approach to learning is needed to achieve the desired rehabilitation outcomes.** Prisons should provide a range and combination of learning opportunities to develop 'the whole person'; their human capital, social capital and imaginative capital. Such learning will need to form a 'package' of learning which could include; informal, academic, vocational, relationship, life skills, creative, peer to peer and e-learning.

#### Joined - up:

6. **Improved co-ordination within individual prisons.** There are a range of stakeholders in prisons involved with delivering and funding learning. Education is often siloed from other learning and from broader 'reducing reoffending' work. Successful prisons have strong cross-departmental, interdisciplinary and multi-agency collaboration and a prison-wide culture of learning. Plans made by different prison departments relating to a prisoner should align towards the same rehabilitation outcomes. All learning should be recorded in one place.
7. **Improved co-ordination between different prisons.** Co-ordination between prisons is vital to minimise disruption to learning. Mechanisms for sharing good practice between prisons needs to improve in order to increase efficiency and achieve better outcomes.

8. **Improved co-ordination between prisons and the community.** Most prisoners will leave prison and return to their communities and families. Learning should be part of resettlement plans including support to access learning after release, family learning and relationship skills.
9. **Clear leadership, management and accountability for achieving outcomes.** Given the diverse range of stakeholders for prisoner learning and rehabilitation, it is vital to have clear lines of accountability in this ever more complex landscape of rehabilitation. Those holding parties to account need the ability to ensure outcomes improve.

## Value-driven

10. **Personalised.** Prison populations are diverse and therefore a 'one size fits all' approach will not achieve the outcomes desired. Effective inductions and individual learning plans are key to ensuring the prisoner reaches their learning goals and potential. A personalised approach takes time to understand previous learning experiences and achievements and involves thorough assessments of learning levels and types.
11. **Inclusive.** Learning opportunities in prison should be accessible to all prisoners and reflect their diverse needs and motivations. A narrow employability focused model may indirectly exclude some groups of prisoners from learning. An inclusive learning culture also involves officers and staff.
12. **Engaging.** Insufficient numbers prisoners are engaged in learning as a purposeful activity. A prison's culture and regime must therefore have learning at the heart. Embedded, contextualised learning can effectively 'hook' prisoners to become learners. Responsibility for a learning culture is found at all levels of a prison, from Governor down. What works must trump concerns about 'public acceptability' and more must be done to explain to the public why engaging, enjoyable learning will benefit society.
13. **Aspirational.** Once engaged, many prisoners develop a thirst for learning. Prisoners who achieve their basic skills should be enabled to progress with learning to higher levels to reach their potential. Mechanisms to enable progression to happen should be supported.
14. **Safe.** Learning areas such as the education department can be hot spots for tension and violence due to their communal nature. Staff must be supported appropriately in behaviour management. Measures should be taken to ensure staff and prisoners can teach and learn in safety. Safety can be both physical and emotional. A 'safe space' to learn is respectful, comfortable, builds on strengths and is motivational. Involving learners in solutions are vital in developing 'safe spaces' to learn.
15. **Empowering.** Enabling learners to take responsibility will improve their outcomes, for example through developing learning plans, peer mentoring, service user participation (learner voice) and self-directed learning (as part of a blended learning model).
16. **Excellence.** There should be '*the best teachers, the best managers and the best advisors*' [Ofsted, 2013]. Achieving excellence requires a commitment to Continuing Professional Development of all staff. It also involves partnership working to secure a range of expertise and experience in those delivering learning in prisons including the Community and Voluntary Sector, employers, mainstream education providers, volunteers, prisoners and ex-prisoners.

## Appendix Two:

### **RECOMMENDATION No. R (89) 12 OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES ON EDUCATION IN PRISON**

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 October 1989 at the 429th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the right to education is fundamental;

Considering the importance of education in the development of the individual and the community;

Realising in particular that a high proportion of prisoners have had very little successful educational experience, and therefore now have many educational needs;

Considering that education in prison helps to humanise prisons and to improve the conditions of detention;

Considering that education in prison is an important way of facilitating the return of the prisoner to the community;

Recognising that in the practical application of certain rights or measures, in accordance with the following recommendations, distinctions may be justified between convicted prisoners and prisoners remanded in custody;

Having regard to Recommendation No. R (87) 3 on the European Prison Rules and Recommendation No. R (81) 17 on adult education policy,

Recommends the governments of member states to implement policies which recognise the following:

1. All prisoners shall have access to education, which is envisaged as consisting of classroom subjects, vocational education, creative and cultural activities, physical education and sports, social education and library facilities;
2. Education for prisoners should be like the education provided for similar age-groups in the outside world, and the range of learning opportunities for prisoners should be as wide as possible;
3. Education in prison shall aim to develop the whole person bearing in mind his or her social, economic and cultural context;
4. All those involved in the administration of the prison system and the management of prisons should facilitate and support education as much as possible;
5. Education should have no less a status than work within the prison regime and prisoners should not lose out financially or otherwise by taking part in education;

6. Every effort should be made to encourage the prisoner to participate actively in all aspects of education;
7. Development programmes should be provided to ensure that prison educators adopt appropriate adult education methods;
8. Special attention should be given to those prisoners with particular difficulties and especially those with reading or writing problems;
9. Vocational education should aim at the wider development of the individual, as well as being sensitive to trends in the labour-market;
10. Prisoners should have direct access to a well-stocked library at least once a week;
11. Physical education and sports for prisoners should be emphasised and encouraged;
12. Creative and cultural activities should be given a significant role because these activities have particular potential to enable prisoners to develop and express themselves;
13. Social education should include practical elements that enable the prisoner to manage daily life within the prison, with a view to facilitating his return to society;
14. Wherever possible, prisoners should be allowed to participate in education outside prison;
15. Where education has to take place within the prison, the outside community should be involved as fully as possible;
16. Measures should be taken to enable prisoners to continue their education after release;
17. The funds, equipment and teaching staff needed to enable prisoners to receive appropriate education should be made available