

A research report into the skills gaps of the Offender Management workforce

By Rebecca Cheung

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Executive Summary

Skills for Justice are strongly committed to supporting the Government's ambition of a radical prison reform agenda. Working prisons are aimed at preparing offenders for employment on release by ensuring the prison mirrors the workplace. This involves offenders working a full working week of 40 hours during which time they are helped to develop transferable skills.

In June 2010, Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke announced in his speech the Government's vision for criminal justice reform, stating: "*Prisons must be places of punishment, but also of education, hard work and change*". This proposal is also evident within the Coalition Programme for Government, which states:

"Prisons must become places of hard work and training, where prisoners are expected to work a 40 hour week, with money from their earnings deducted to support victims' groups."

The proposals are set out in the Ministry of Justice's '*Breaking the Cycle*' Green Paper which outlines the coalition Government's ambitions to ultimately reform how offenders are punished, protecting the public and reducing reoffending. This is all part of the Government's aim to drive a Rehabilitation Revolution seeking to transform the sentencing, punishment and rehabilitation of offenders¹.

This report seeks to examine and offer a contribution to the analysis of the offender management workforce, ensuring that workers on the frontline have the right skills, knowledge and understanding to perform a given role to the required standard. The specific focus is to identify the skills gaps for those working in the offender management sector (Prison and Probation).

Between July to September 2012, Skills for Justice circulated a survey to the offender management sector aimed at exploring issues around employees' skills and workforce development. The survey sought to better position and equip employers to meet the demands of the Government's ambition.

A total of 79 people were targeted. 77% of the target audience belonged to Community Justice and Probation, while 23% were from prisons. 44% of the Prison target audience responded but only 21% responded on behalf of Community Justice and Probation.

Our research has identified the following skills gaps in the offender management workforce. Respondents from the Prison workforce identified the top skills listed as either poor/very poor impacting on the workforce:

- 1. Understanding of Local Labour Market Skills Shortages/LMI**
- 2. Commercial/Entrepreneurial skills**
- 3. Future Gazing Employment Opportunities for Offenders**

¹ Policy Exchange (2011) Inside Job

4. Marketing and PR

Respondents from the Community Justice and Probation workforce identified the top skills listed as either poor/very poor impacting on the workforce:

1. **Risk Management**
2. **Marketing and PR**
3. **Commercial/Entrepreneurial skills**
4. **Commissioning/Procurement**

Community Justice and Probation; and Prisons have some similarities and differences in terms of the skills ratings identified by employers. For instance, **collaborative working** is an area where both workforces are rated highly (i.e. as good and above). For this skills set (collaborative working) there is 80% positive rating for Community Justice and Probation, while a corresponding positive rating of 75% for Prisons.

By contrast, **commissioning/procurement** is an area which probably requires improvement for Community Justice and Probation. Respondents feel only 40% of the workforce are competent with this skill set, whereas 75% of the Prisons workforce are perceived to be competent in this skills area.

Marketing and Public Relations seems to be a weakness for Prisons because only 12.5% of the workforce was rated as good, while 50% of the Community Justice and Probation workforce were considered good for the same skill set. Through collaborative engagement and shared learning, Community Justice and Prisons can benefit from each other's strengths. Shared learning can be used for mutual benefit.

There is potential to share each organisation's learning and development materials in order to address the skills gaps, particularly for those skills identified as a weakness by one section of the workforce, which can be addressed by support from other organisations that identified the skill area as a strength. In addition, where a skills gap exists for both workforces, e.g. marketing and PR, this can be overcome through collective learning and sharing best practice.

Employers were asked what steps their organisation is taking to address the skills gaps identified in their workforce. There was a general consensus across the offender management sector that the skills gaps would be addressed by putting staff through relevant training/initiatives to up-skill the workforce.

This report also explores the amount of training which is provided in-house by employers, and the topics covered by the learning materials, as well as the types of methods adopted for delivering learning and development to staff. Half of prison respondents reported that approximately 50% to 79% of learning and development of their workforce is conducted in-house, while almost two thirds of the Community Justice and Probation respondents stated a larger proportion (over 80%) of their training is provided in-house.

Prison respondents selected e-learning (88%) and classroom/workshop based learning (88%) as the most popular methods of learning used to deliver L & D. Similarly Community Justice and Probation respondents rated classroom based learning (77%) and e-learning (69%) at the top. With both workforces favouring these two methods there is clear potential for shared learning if materials were to be deployed across sectors.

In addition, employers were asked to select, from a list of categories, which learning and development materials they would be potentially interested in sharing with other offender management employers on a quid pro quo basis as part of a membership network.

The Offender Management Learning Network (OMLN) will be designed specifically to support employers working in the public, private and voluntary sectors of Prisons and Probation. The development of a UK wide learning and development network will enable employers to share their learning and development resources online. This is to make best use of each other's expertise and materials to up-skill their workforce to rise to the challenge of reducing re-offending.

The report outlines the following recommendations:

- *To achieve the ambition of making prisons real places of hard work and creating more challenging, employment focussed unpaid work, offender management employers must address the workforce's skills gaps and skills shortages to help support offenders carry out real work in custody. So, too, the skills of Community Justice staff must be developed to improve the quality of unpaid work as part of community-based offender management programmes.*
- *It is important to make people fully aware of this resource and explain the potential benefits it can offer to staff and their organisations working within the offender management sector.*
- *To ensure the online resource will be used to its full capacity, consideration needs to be given to the user friendliness of the system, with regard to such issues as: easy access in relation to passwords; service from the helpdesk in relation to response to queries; making sure web links are in working order; and simplifying general navigation around the system.*
- *Respondents requested that the learning materials are not developed for commercial interests outside the offender management sector.*
- *There is strong evidence to suggest the Offender Management Learning Network will help address the skills gaps of Prisons and Community Justice/Probation by sharing each other's expertise at minimal cost.*
- *It is important to make people fully aware of the rules and regulations on taking up membership of the network (e.g. copyright and confidentiality etc).*

- *It has been acknowledged that e-learning and classroom/workshop based learning are the most popular methods to deliver learning and development in the offender management sector. Therefore these methods would be suitable for staff because they are familiar with them.*
- *It is important to ensure that the content and terminology used within the Offender Management Learning Network (OMLN) are regularly updated in line with changes to practice and legislation.*
- *Skills for Justice might want to consider developing a model for the OMLN that embeds the use of National Occupational Standards (NOS) as part of staff competence.*

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to offer a contribution to the analysis of the offender management workforce, ensuring that workers on the frontline have the right skills, knowledge and understanding required to perform a given role to the required standard. The specific focus is to identify the skills gaps for those working in the offender management sector (Prison and Probation). In order to address the skills gaps Skills for Justice will develop a UK wide Learning Network. This will support offender management employers to provide real work for offenders in custody and in the community. The Network will enable employers to share their in-house learning and development resources online to make best use of each other's materials and expertise at minimal cost.

Skills gaps refer to the situation where an organisation has employees who are not sufficiently highly skilled to meet the organisation's objectives (Campbell, 2011). In addition, skills gaps are deficiencies between the skills of the current workforce and those required to meet business objectives. These gaps are measured by asking employers about the expertise of their current staff.

Sharing best practice across all organisations in the offender management sector should assist custodial providers in learning from each other, and in developing stronger links and understanding between public, private and voluntary sector providers.

Offender management refers to an overarching framework that enables key stakeholders and organisations to work together. This is to ensure that the offenders, whose crimes cause damage and harm, are dealt with in a co-ordinated and effective manner. In driving the delivery of effective public services, offender management services need to be more successful in resettlement of offenders in order to effectively tackle crime and reduce the number of people in prison. The offender management sector aims to protect the public and reduce re-offending by delivering the punishments and orders of the courts, helping offenders to reform their lives and in doing so prevent people from becoming victims of crime in the future.

Probation Services are provided by 35 Probation Trusts across England and Wales. The Probation Board for Northern Ireland is responsible for reducing re-offending and protecting the public, supported by 31 offices across the country. The Scottish Probation Service was disbanded in 1968, and since 1991 Criminal Justice Social Work Services, funded by Central Government (Scottish Assembly), is responsible for Probation Services.

Altogether there are 133 prisons across England and Wales, 14 of which are managed and are contracted to private sector partners, with the rest run through Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS). The Northern Ireland Prison Service is an agency within the Department of Justice and consists of three operational establishments: Maghaberry Prison, Magilligan Prison and Hydebank Wood. The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) established in 1993 is an agency of the Scottish Government. There are 13 publicly managed prisons and 2 privately managed prisons within the SPS.

Aside from Prisons and Probation, offender management also includes Community Justice. This covers local efforts to promote the employment of offenders to do unpaid work for the benefit of local communities, and the involvement of local communities, especially voluntary organisations, in providing various kinds of support for offenders, victims and their families.²

² Gibson, B and Cavadino, P. (2008) *The Criminal Justice System. An introduction* Waterside Press

Background

In December 2010, a Green Paper '*Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders*' was published. The paper addresses three main priorities of punishing offenders, protecting the public and reducing re-offending. In doing so the paper sets out how an intelligent sentencing framework, with more effective rehabilitation, will enable the cycle of crime (which creates new victims every day) to be broken. It made the case that although there had been reductions in the level of re-offending over the period 2000-2009 there was still a need for significant reform of the Criminal Justice System.

'Despite record spending and the highest ever prison population, we are not delivering what really matters: improved public safety through more effective punishments that reduce the prospect of criminals re-offending time and time again'. (Ministry of Justice, 2010)

The key findings that have emerged from the Green Paper point to the need to make fundamental changes to the Criminal Justice System. Some of the proposed changes are:

- Introducing the new concept of 'working prisons' (whereby prisoners are obliged to work a full working week of 40 hours). Prisons will become real places of work, developing new employment skills and knowledge and assisting offenders to secure employment on release.
- Making Community Payback increasingly intensive by ensuring the activities carried out by offenders are meaningful and will both benefit local communities and develop skills for future paid employment.

In July 2011, a response to the reforms in *Breaking the Cycle*, the Ministry of Justice published the *Competition Strategy*. This document set out the Government's ambition for encouraging greater involvement of the private and voluntary sectors in the rehabilitation of offenders in order to reduce re-offending and improve outcomes and efficiency. This would be achieved by inviting private organisations to provide services where they could do so effectively and at a lower cost.³

Crime can have a devastating impact on the lives of victims and the cost to society can be huge. There is a need to ensure that prison sentences punish the offender, as well as providing the maximum opportunity for reducing the likelihood of re-offending. Re-offending costs around £13 billion a year⁴. Almost half of all crime is committed by people who have been convicted of a criminal offence. By sustaining a safer community that would enable business to flourish and keep citizens safer by reducing re-offending, preventing victims and cutting the cost of crime. At the point of entering prison, many offenders have very poor skills, have a history of homelessness, are unemployed, have drug addiction and mental health problems. These social exclusion factors are strongly associated with re-offending. Enabling offenders to undertake

³ Delivering Justice: the role of the public, private and voluntary sectors in prisons and probation.

⁴ http://www.nao.ork.uk/publications/0910/short_custodial_sentences.aspx

constructive work whilst in prison will help them develop basic transferable skills in the workplace. This will make them more attractive to employers and help them find and keep jobs on release or whilst serving a community sentence⁵, which, in turn, will encourage them to become law abiding tax payers who contribute to our economic growth rather than being a burden to society.

Research shows that the availability of suitable employment and tackling unemployment are critical to reducing re-offending. It has been recognised that factors other than employment contribute to lower re-offending. But this lack of follow through into work or future training on release presents a missed opportunity to have a more positive impact. However, many offenders face significant barriers to entering the labour market even when they are committed to changing their lives. One of the reasons for this is that almost half of prisoners have no qualifications or skills relevant to employment⁶.

In 2006, the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies published 'Wings of Learning' which highlighted the benefits of developing Prison Officers in the skills and knowledge required to support learning outside of the prison workshop or classroom. Prisoners who have this support from custodial staff do much better in developing the new skills that will make them more employable on release⁷. Prison Officers can play a crucial role in the development and rehabilitation of offenders, if they have the skills, knowledge and understanding to support offenders to make the right choices on release.

The activity delivered as part of this project is funded through our successful Employment Investment Fund (EIF) bid. The EIF has been developed to stimulate employer investment in skills and to improve the use of these skills in the workplace in the most effective way. This project is just one of a wider programme of activity supported via the UKCES Employer Investment Fund in recognition of our 2020 vision for the justice and community safety sector. This particular project is part of a suite of projects designed to inform the development of high performing workplaces in the sector in order that employers are better equipped to meet current and future work challenges.

Skills for Justice will explore and pilot interventions that will equip staff at all levels with the essential skills and knowledge they need to deliver the Government's ambition of working prisons and improving community payback. In addition, we will develop a profile of the skills and knowledge gaps in the offender management workforce that may potentially hamper the achievement of the Government's ambition to reduce re-offending. By mapping offender management employers' current training and learning provision against those skills and knowledge gaps identified, we will establish what learning can be potentially shared and 'fill in the gaps'. The research is heavily focused around encouraging offender management

⁵ BIS: Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation (May 2011)

⁶ Compendium of reoffending statistics and analysis, published November 2010.

⁷ Skills for Justice (2011) *Response to Breaking the Cycle*

employers across the UK private, public and voluntary sectors to get involved by sharing their perspectives of their skill gaps and any issues regarding reducing re-offending.

What are ‘Working Prisons’?

There is a commitment to change prison regimes in order to make them much more productive environments. To achieve this, opportunities will be presented to both voluntary and private sectors to take on some of the roles and functions predominantly occupied by ‘prison industries’⁸.

It is anticipated that working prisons will consist of prisoners working a full working week of up to 40 hours. The regime and core day will be focused around enabling work, within the requirement of ensuring a safe, decent and secure regime. Real work in prison is about providing individual prisoners with the opportunity to apply to work full-time in a commercially viable role. The concept of working prisons provides prisoners with the opportunity to earn a wage in excess of that provided to prisoners, currently to maintain or develop their work ethic and to acquire or develop transferable workplace skills.⁹

While prison will serve as the work place, the prison governor does not run the work or control the hours worked. This is fundamentally different from what work opportunities are currently available in a secure estate.

Prisoners who will have access to work in prisons are those who pose the least security risk. Real work will only be available to a subset of the prison population, who are free of drugs, have demonstrated good behaviour and have been selected by the respective employer.¹⁰

Work in prisons is only considered a part of ‘purposeful activity’. Real work in prison seeks to provide inmates with the opportunity to acquire new skills and build on existing ones, enabling them to make reparations to victims and support themselves and their families and preparing them for resettlement back in the community.

What is Community Payback?

Community Payback is defined as penalties imposed on offenders by criminal courts that do not involve imprisonment. These are various forms of reprimand, financial penalties, supervision and unpaid work.¹¹ There are proposals for ‘tougher’, more rigorous and intensive delivery, adopting more physical kinds of work, and the increased use of competition in order to drive down costs. Kenneth Clarke announced that those given Community Payback will in future be

⁸ CLINKS Members Briefing (2011) *Breaking the Cycle – effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing*

⁹ Policy Exchange (2011) *Inside Job*

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ E. McLaughlin and J. Muncie. (2006) *The Sage Dictionary of Criminology*. Sage Publications

required to do a full five-day week of productive work and job seeking, providing thousands of hours of constructive tasks.

Community Payback projects undertaken by offenders consist of hard work and provides opportunities for offenders to develop important life skills. This purposeful activity will help reduce the risk of re-offending thereby making the community a safer place. Offenders are required to wear orange high-visibility jackets, marked Community Payback, to ensure the public can see when offenders are carrying out Community Payback.

The Government's goal is to reform Community Payback and Probation Services so that they are able to both punish and reform offenders much more effectively. According to the Home Office (2011), two-thirds (67 per cent) felt that Community Payback was a very or fairly effective form of punishment. One in ten thought it was very effective and 57 per cent thought it was fairly effective.

The case for change

This section will utilise research evidence to explain why the government is pursuing a radical reform agenda. This will see the introduction of real prison work to rehabilitate offenders and to strengthen community payback's contribution to reduce re-offending.

In 2012, the Ministry of Justice revealed that young offenders receiving a low level community sentence in 2009 had a lower re-offending rate (63 per cent) than those receiving a high level community sentence (67 per cent)¹². Therefore community sentences need to be rigorous and effective in both the punishment and the rehabilitation of offenders. The intentions are to ensure that community payback is rigorous and properly enforced so that the sentence provides punishment and reparation and instil the routine of hard work.

In 2011, BIS conducted a review of offender learning, the response to the review produced a strong consensus about reforming offender learning as a key priority. The following points were raised:

- effective collaborative working is the key to making local arrangements operate well, with the effective engagement of employers;
- greater local influence is needed on provision for offender learners, both in prison and in the community, in order to equip them better to compete for work in the labour market into which they will be released, with resources distributed according to the needs of learners in prison and with the needs of those serving community sentences taken into account by the FE and skills system;¹³
- take up and continuation of learning and employment opportunities should be encouraged through mentoring for prisoners, with a focus on transition when leaving prison, as well as for those serving community sentences;
- the quality of offender learning should be paramount, along with the implementation of the virtual campus across all prisons, and flexibility of delivery in the community.

Many years of investment in offender learning, has brought about improvement in quality, as measured by inspection outcomes, increase in prisoners participating in programmes and outcomes more relevant to work and rehabilitation.¹⁴

The responses received to the review of offender learning present an almost identical picture of the proposals set out in the Governments Breaking the Cycle Green Paper. Community Payback must be more intensive, more immediate and better enforced, with local communities directly benefiting from the hard work of offenders. Also the notion of working prisons will aim to

¹² Ministry of Justice (2012) *2012 Compendium of re-offending statistics and analysis*

¹³ See ref 2

¹⁴ *ibid*

provide prisoners with transferable skills when released from prison so that they can eventually gain the confidence and skills to go back into work rather than returning to crime.

In August 2012 the prison population stood at 86,801, yet only 10,000 people work in custody.¹⁵ Research conducted by Working Links found that prison staff and management are supportive of the Government's ambitions to increase the proportion of offenders working in prisons.¹⁶ However, there are a range of issues that need to be overcome if the government is to achieve its ambition to see more offenders in prison working a full 40 hour week.

The Government's agenda in seeking to increase the proportion of offenders engaged in real work is mainly focused on improving offenders' capacity to find work on release, the potential to generate income for the prison and the impact that real work can have on rehabilitation.¹⁷ The association between employment on release and the chances of desistance from offending suggests that increasing work in prison is essential to delivering the Government's overarching ambition to break the cycle of re-offending.

Preparing offenders for work on release can be viewed differently. For some Governors the emphasis is on demonstrating that offenders have the right attitude and the required skills to deliver for employers on release. For others, it is about the link between employment and desistance. The significance that Governors place on skills, and the link that they draw between equipping offenders with the skills that employers need is consistent. This suggests the importance of ensuring that offenders are work-ready on release. Therefore, to equip offenders with the right skills and the right attitude to working life, working prisons must mirror the workplace outside as closely as possible. Research evidence indicates that the skills most valued are 'soft skills'¹⁸. These are personal attributes that enhance an individual's interaction such as communication, managing time and working in a team. Very often, employers value these skills over qualifications and other credentials. However, demonstrating these skills can be difficult for those who have not had much experience of work.

Those with a stake in how working prisons will operate in practice are yet to reach a decision about the specifics of prisoner wages, issues around taxation and National Insurance, and how offenders can spend money while in custody. There is agreement that some of the income generated by offenders should go towards victims of crime to support victim funds. In addition, offenders who earn should use some of their income to support their families in order to maintain links. If offenders are able to return to a home which is stable this could reduce the likelihood of re-offending. Therefore, those offenders who are able to offer financial support, even while inside prison, are more likely to find stability when released¹⁹.

¹⁵ Justice for Business, (2012) Ministry of Justice

¹⁶ Made in Prison: A research report into the benefits and challenges of working prisons.

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ Prejudged: Tagged for Life (2010), Working Links/ Learning a Living (2011), Working Links

¹⁹ See reference 14

A wider benefit other than increasing offenders' employability has been highlighted by Governors. There is potential for working prisons to contribute to their own running costs. Working prisons must resemble a working week beyond prison walls in order to prepare offenders for release; industries operating in prisons must operate on the same principles as businesses in the communities. One of the biggest barriers to establishing working prisons is that offenders in custody are able to miss work because of other priorities.

The Offender Management Learning Network (OMLN) could potentially save £105 million per annum between 2015-2020. The cost saving has been estimated on 5,000 prisoners earning £3.10 per hour for a 40 hour week within prison establishments. For this calculation, full-time is defined as an individual working for eight hours per day for 220 days per year. The 220 days per year is calculated by taking all possible weekdays in a given year (52x5). It has been acknowledged that prisoners must be paid fairly for the work they undertake because real employment requires a realistic and equitable wage. A prison minimum wage has been developed as a safeguard in response to a fair wage to reflect the reduced living costs of those in prison. Therefore a wage could be set at £3.10 per hour to reflect subtracted living costs²⁰.

In addition, evidence shows that prison education and vocational interventions produce a net benefit to the public sector ranging from £2,000 to £28,000 per offender (or from £10,500 to £97,000 per offender when victim costs are included)²¹.

The Offender Management Learning Network ultimately aims to share learning materials amongst employers to equip them with the skills to support the Government's proposed changes by:

- Managing prisons that will be places of hard work and training, where prisoners will work 40 hours per week, developing employment skills and earning money, from which deductions will be made to support victims of crime, generating an additional income of £208 million²² for the public to fund victim services, prisoner resettlement and National Insurance contributions.
- Overhauling community payback schemes to ensure they are tougher, punitive and prevent offenders from committing crime. Offenders will serve longer hours carrying out unpaid, purposeful activities for the benefit of their local communities.

To achieve the ambition of making prisons real places of hard work and creating tougher and punitive community payback, employers in the offender management sector must ensure the Prison workforce has the skills required to help support offenders carrying out real work in custody; and that the Probation Service workforce has the skills to help improve community payback. In developing an Offender Management Learning Network, employers may potentially

²⁰ Geoghegan, R and Boyd, E (2011) Inside Job: creating a market for real work in prison. Policy Exchange.

²¹ Lifelong Learning and Crime: An analysis of the Cost-Effectiveness of in-prison educational and vocational interventions – IFLL Public Value Paper 2 [NIACE 2009]

²² *ibid*

share their learning and development materials online as part of membership of the network. This will make best use of each other's knowledge, expertise and materials to up-skill their workforce enabling staff to rise to the challenge of reducing re-offending at a reduced cost.

Methodology

Research Design

The research used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to help understand the current landscape of the offender management sector. The rationale for mixing the methods is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the information required. The research began with a quantitative study to generate data and then a qualitative study was carried out to explore deeper meanings.

In the first phase, the quantitative data was collected using a web-based survey and the data was subject to a functional analysis. The objective of the quantitative phase was to identify the skills gaps of the offender management workforce, what learning materials they have and the potential to share these with other employers across the sector. Skills for Justice aimed to gather information on the following four key themes relating to the Government's ambition to reduce re-offending:

1. What are the skills gaps of the workforce in relation to the Government's ambition?
2. What learning and development do employers currently have to address these skills gaps and shortages? What are their gaps in learning and development provision?
3. Which learning materials are employers potentially willing to share with other employers as part of a shared membership resource?
4. What features would attract (offender management) employers to join the Offender Management Learning Network?

The second phase to the research design involved a small detailed desk review using a variety of different electronic sources such as web based search engines that provide access to general websites and newspaper articles; and governmental websites that provide access to government papers. The Green Paper, Breaking the Cycle had a great influence in the desk review because the notion of creating an Offender Management Learning Network is based on the new Government proposals set out in this paper.

Target Population

The survey was aimed at the attendees of the offender management Occupational Committee across all the four nations, from the public, private and voluntary sector, as well as those who have already registered interest in the project. In addition, the target audience included those employed in organisations' Human Resources department, Training and Development, at Management or at Practitioner level.

Data Collection

The primary technique for collecting the quantitative data was a self-developed questionnaire, containing questions of different formats. These included multiple choice, asking either for one option or all that apply, dichotomous answers like 'Yes' or 'No', self-assessment items, measured on a scale, and open-ended questions. The questionnaire consisted of 19 questions, which were organised into 4 sections. The questionnaire was routed to the relevant sections depending on whether the respondent was from Prison or the Community Justice and Probation workforce.

The first section of the survey asked questions about organisational details. The second section analysed the skills gaps of the Prison or Community Justice and Probation workforce. The third section was focused on employers' learning and development provided in-house and the potential to share these materials with other employers across the sector. The final section was for respondents to register interest in the project.

The survey questionnaire was web-based and accessed through the URL, which was sent to members of the Occupational Committee and those who registered interest in the project. One of the advantages of web-based surveys is that the responses are automatically stored in a mail format and easily transferred into Excel or SPSS formats. In addition, the survey was made available with a paper copy for those employers who had restrictions with Internet access.

A week before the survey deadline, participants received an email notification from Skills for Justice about the importance of their input for the project. To those subjects who had not yet responded by the set date, a telephone reminder was sent to encourage completion which helped to prevent a low response rate.

Data Analysis

After the survey deadline, all of the responses were grouped together in one folder which was imported back into the survey software (SNAP) where the results could be viewed by each category. With the paper-based surveys, data entry was an ongoing process from the moment the questionnaires started returning. This was to check that the data that had been entered into the spreadsheet corresponded with data on the paper questionnaires.

Once all of the returns had been inputted into SNAP the next stage was to export the data into Excel for cleaning. The process of cleaning the data involved labelling each case with unique identification numbers, sorting data, duplicate case checks, missing checks, routing checks and quality checks

The data was presented in the visual form of graphs and charts. The results of the data analysis will be reported in the following section.

Results

Between July to September 2012, Skills for Justice circulated a survey to the offender management sector aimed at exploring issues around employees' skills and workforce development. The survey sought to better position and equip employers to meet the demands of the Government's ambition and aspiration to improve services.

A total of 79 people were targeted. 77% of the target audience belonged to Community Justice and Probation, while 23% were from Prisons. 44% of the Prison target audience responded but only 21% responded on behalf of Community Justice and Probation.

Organisational Details

The responses came from the following organisations:

- GEO UK
- Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust
- NOS Probation Learning and Development
- Pact
- LAURUS
- Women's Wisdom (x2)
- Thames Valley Probation
- Restorative Justice Council
- Sodexo
- National Offender Management Service (NOMS)
- Pact
- Warwickshire Probation Trust (x2)
- Northumbria Probation Trust
- Scottish Prison Service
- Prison Officers Association (Scotland)
- Hampshire Probation Trust
- Custodial and Detention Services, Care and Justice Services, G4S (x2)
- London Probation Trust

The largest proportion of respondents is employed by public sector organisations (57%). The private sector and the voluntary sector together constituted 19% of the response rate. The remaining 5% came from the 'other' category.

The breakdown of respondents by organisation type by strand (Prison and CJ and Probation) indicates that the biggest response rate was on behalf of Community Justice and Probation in the public sector with 69%. An equal proportion responded on behalf of Prisons with 38% from

private and public sector, whereas for Community Justice and Probation only 8% responded on behalf of the private sector.

Skills gaps of the Offender Management workforce

Employers were asked to rate specific skills across their workforce. The skill sets differ slightly for Prison and Community Justice and Probation workforce.

Table 1: Skills rating of the Prison workforce

Skill Type	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Poor (%)	Very Poor (%)	Don't know (%)
Collaborative/Partnership Working	12.5	62.5	25.0	0.0	0.0
Commissioning/Procurement	25.0	50.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
Commercial/Entrepreneurial Skills	12.5	37.5	37.5	0.0	12.5
Contact and Project Management	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
Engagement with Employers/Training Providers/Influencing Skills and Winning the Hearts and Minds of Employers and Workforce	0.0	37.5	50.0	0.0	12.5
Financial Management	12.5	50.0	25.0	0.0	12.5
Future Gazing Employment Opportunities for Offenders	0.0	25.0	50.0	0.0	25.0
Jail Craft/Key Skills for Non-Prison Officers	0.0	50.0	0.0	12.5	37.5
Managing Change	0.0	75.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
Marketing and PR	0.0	12.5	37.5	12.5	12.5
Providing Employment Mentoring for Offenders	0.0	37.5	25.0	0.0	37.5
Understanding of Local Labour Market Skills Shortages/LMI	0.0	12.5	50.0	37.5	0.0

Table 1 indicates four particular skill types which are less than good in the following areas:

- Understanding of Local Labour Market Skills Shortages/ LMI (88%)
- Future gazing employment opportunities for offenders (50%)
- Marketing and PR (50%)
- Engagement with Employers/Training Providers/Influencing skills and winning the hearts and minds of employers and workforce (50%).

One respondent on behalf of the Restorative Justice Council stated that restorative justice skills and knowledge is essential for staff working in both Community Justice and Prisons.

'There is a need for supervisors and managers of Restorative Justice Practitioners to improve their restorative justice skills and knowledge. Many practitioners are supervised by those who have little or no knowledge of restorative justice'

This indicates that staff require to improve on this essential skill type especially when practitioners are required to work with complex or sensitive cases. The organisation is narrowing the skills gap by having a trainer's register and trainer's code of practice which stipulates a minimum standard for restorative justice training. Furthermore a practitioner register has been introduced to ensure a quality standard.

Table 2: Skills rating of the Community Justice and Probation workforce

Skill Type	Very Good (%)	Good (%)	Poor (%)	Very Poor (%)	Don't know (%)
Collaborative/Partnership Working	40.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Commissioning/Procurement	20.0	20.0	30.0	0.0	30.0
Commercial/Entrepreneurial Skills	20.0	30.0	30.0	0.0	20.0
Contact and Project Management	20.0	40.0	10.0	0.0	30.0
Desistence and Offender Engagement	40.0	50.0	10.0	0.0	0.0
Engagement with Employers/Training Providers/Influencing Skills and Winning the Hearts and Minds of Employers and Workforce	10.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	30.0
Financial Management	20.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Initial/Induction Training for Unpaid Work	20.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	30.0

Supervisors New to Role

Managing/Supervising Offenders on Community Payback	40.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Marketing and PR	0.0	50.0	30.0	0.0	20.0
Motivational Interviewing Skills	30.0	60.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
People Management of Remote Workers	0.0	70.0	10.0	0.0	20.0

The majority of respondents from Community Justice and Probation reported that their workforce have significantly high strength in most core skills areas. However, **commissioning/procurement** has been identified as a weaker skill set with less than 50% of respondents indicating that it is a significant strength of their workforce. Commissioning is fundamental to the delivery of services that are responsive to local priorities in relation to offenders' risks and needs. It focuses on outcomes and value for money and a substantial increase in competition is not possible without the ability to commission services and manage the resulting contracts effectively.²³

Looking at both Tables 1 and 2, it is evident that Community Justice and Probation and Prisons have some similarities and differences in terms of the skills ratings identified by employers. For instance, **collaborative working** is an area where both workforces are rated highly (i.e. as good and above). For this skills set (collaborative working) there is 80% positive rating for Community Justice and Probation, a corresponding positive rating of 75% for Prisons.

By contrast, **commissioning/procurement** is an area which probably requires improvement for Community Justice and Probation. Respondents feel only 40% of the workforce are competent with this skill set, whereas 75% of the Prisons workforce are perceived to be competent in this skills area.

Marketing and Public Relations seems to be a weakness for Prisons because only 12.5% of the workforce was rated as good, while 50% of the Community Justice and Probation workforce is considered good for the same skill set. Through collaborative engagement and shared learning, Community Justice and Prisons can learn from each other. Since the strengths of one workforce is a weakness for the other, shared learning can be used for mutual benefit.

Employers were asked what steps their organisation is taking to address the skills gaps identified in their workforce. There was a general consensus across the offender management

²³ Criminal Justice Alliance (2012). *Delivering Justice: the role of the public, private and voluntary sectors in prisons and probation.*

sector that the skills gaps would be addressed by putting staff through relevant training/initiatives to up-skill the workforce. The following statements were typical:

"We have a number of initiatives ongoing to address these gaps. These include developing and delivering workshops and e-learning. It also includes developing tools such as resourcing plans to help managers to implement their skills. We use the feedback from Investors in People assessments and Employee Engagement Surveys to develop action plans to address the key issues."

"There are skilled individuals within Trusts within specialist roles and this seems to serve the present needs of Trusts. However, the requirements for Providers of Probation Services are changing and it seems to me that this could be a gap for the future. Individual Trusts are starting to address this but nationally there could be a need for additional training for staff who not previously undertaken these roles."

"Managers are now provided with development training, guidance, mentoring following success at promotion boards. These are designed to meet the needs of different management levels."

Respondents from the Prison workforce identified the top skills listed as either poor/very poor impacting on the workforce:

- 1. Understanding of Local Labour Market Skills Shortages/LMI**
- 2. Commercial/Entrepreneurial skills**
- 3. Future Gazing Employment Opportunities for Offenders**
- 4. Marketing and PR**

Respondents from the Community Justice and Probation workforce identified the top skills shortages that have the greatest impact on their organisation in order to make 'Community Payback' a reality

- 1. Risk Management**
- 2. Marketing and PR**
- 3. Commercial/Entrepreneurial skills**
- 4. Commissioning/Procurement**

Risk management was identified as a top skill shortage within Community Justice and Probation despite not been included in the skills rating of the CJ and Probation workforce (table 2). This suggests that respondents feel that this particular skill type has a big impact on making Community Payback a reality and needs to be addressed.

Two identical skill areas have been identified as having an impact on the both Prisons and Community Justice and Probation these are: **marketing and public relations**; and **commercial/entrepreneurial skills**. This could provide an opportunity for employers to

consider sharing training resources and learning materials in order to enhance understanding in these areas.

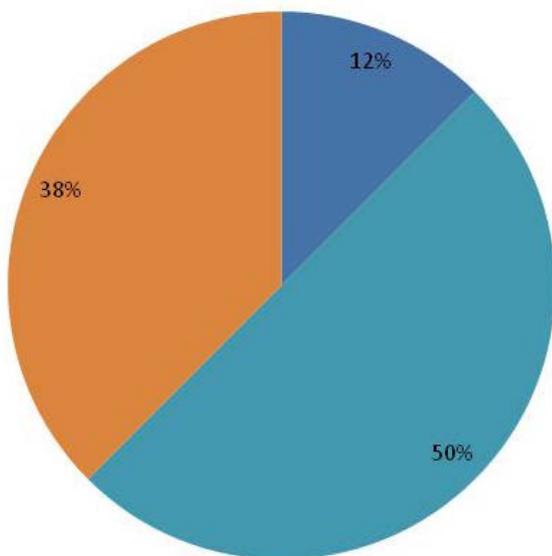
Learning and development of the Offender management workforce

Half of prison respondents reported that approximately 50% to 79% of learning and development of their workforce is conducted in-house. While almost two thirds of the Community Justice and Probation respondents stated a larger proportion (over 80%) of their training is provided in-house.

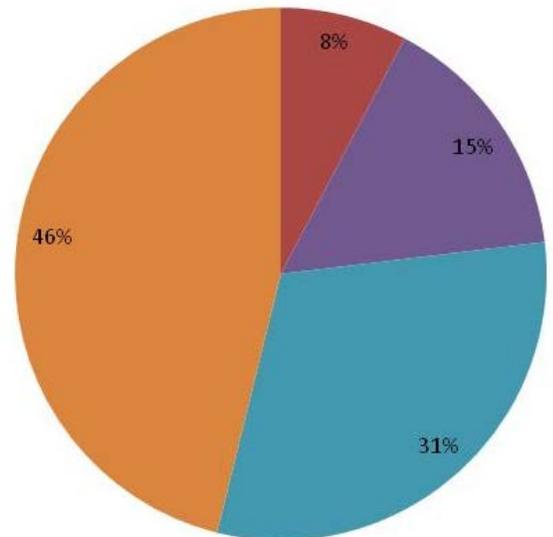
Almost a third of respondents from Community Justice and Probation stated 50%-79% of learning and development of the workforce is provided in-house. On the other hand, for 8% of organisations working in Community Justice and Probation, less than 20% of learning and development is provided in-house for the workforce. Unlike Community Justice and Probation, 12% of prison respondents stated that they have no in-house training for employees (see graph 1).

Graph 1

Proportion of L & D provided in-house in Prisons



Proportion of L & D provided in-house in Community Justice & Probation



Employers were asked to identify the gaps they need to fill in learning and development that would address skills and knowledge needs required of working prisons and community payback. The following were the main responses:

Skills gaps to address what is required of working prisons

“All skills around future employment opportunities of offenders and providing support for offenders to be able to identify and access appropriate employment opportunities in the locality they are being discharged to (which can be very different from the locality that the prison is based, especially for women).”

“We are actively looking to develop offender specific training programs for prison staff who work with Female Offenders and Young Offenders. We are acutely aware of the need to look more broadly at Leadership and Management Development activity - the whole journey from application, through assessment, recruitment and development.”

Skills gaps to address what is required of community payback

“I think we need to map what is currently provided and identify gaps- mandatory training is satisfactory, but development training for CP staff is probably insufficient.”

“We recognise the changing horizons with community payback but it is sometimes difficult for the smaller organisations to ensure that they are in the hearts and minds of the large providers. We consider that we have a good knowledge of community payback and as award winners for providing gender focused services we believe that we can add value to other organisations.”

Employers were asked how they would address their skills gaps in learning and development provision. For both Prison (88%) and Community Justice and Probation (67%) there was a consensus that developing new learning materials would help address skills gaps in their workforces. The second most popular category to address the problem of skills gaps identified by prison respondents is by sending staff to external providers (75%). This was significantly slightly lower for those responding on behalf of Community Justice and Probation with 31%.

Respondents were asked to list all of the topics covered by their learning materials. The following table provides a summary of organisations in the offender management sector that have learning materials covering the following topics.

Topic	Prison	CJ/Probation
Collaborative/Partnership Working	-	46%
Commissioning/Procurement	25%	15%
Commercial/Entrepreneurial Skills	38%	15%
Contact and Project Management	63%	38%
Desistence and offender management	-	85%

Engagement with Employers/Training Providers/Influencing Skills and Winning the Hearts and Minds of Employers and Workforce	50%	31%
Financial Management	50%	31%
Initial/Induction Training for Unpaid Work Supervisors New to Role	-	62%
Managing/Supervising Offenders on Community Payback	-	62%
Marketing and PR	0	8%
Future Gazing offender management Employment Opportunities	0	-
Motivational Interviewing Skills	-	77%
People Management of Remote Workers	-	23%
Jail Craft/Key Skills for Non-Prison Officers	63%	-
Managing Change	75%	62%
Providing Employment Mentoring for Offenders	13%	-
Understanding of Local Labour Market Skills Shortages/LMI	-	-

In relation to learning and development, respondents were given a multi-choice list to select the methods they use to deliver staff training. The list comprised of the following methods:

- Books
- CD ROMS
- Checklists
- Classroom/workshop based
- E-learning
- Leaflets
- Learning Logs
- On the job secondments
- Problem based materials
- Self-learning books
- Slides
- Videos.

Prison respondents selected e-learning (88%) and classroom/workshop based learning (88%) as the most popular methods of learning used to deliver L & D. Similarly Community Justice and

Probation respondents rated classroom based learning (77%) and e-learning (69%) at the top. With both workforces favouring these two methods this could potentially enhance shared learning if materials were to be shared cross-sector.

E-learning is becoming a preferred choice for training staff in the workplace, with employees struggling to devote time to classroom based learning. It gives staff more flexibility to work at their own pace and whenever they want. Web-based learning is cheap, and offers the employer additional benefits in terms of staff spending time away from the workplace, which represents a significant cost savings (Acas, 2012).

Classroom based learning is a popular option amongst employers because it offers learners the opportunity to have face to face interaction with peers and instructors. It also provides a structured way of learning.

Prison respondents stated that only 25% of learning and development is offered through self learning books. This was the least popular option for training staff. Whereas for Community Justice and Probation, presentation slides (38%) was not a popular option for employers to help develop staff in their job role.

Table 2: learning and development materials employers would be **potentially interested** in sharing with other offender management Network employers on a quid pro quo basis as part of a membership network.

Topic	Prison	CJ/Probation
Collaborative/Partnership Working	-	38%
Commissioning/Procurement	13%	31%
Commercial/Entrepreneurial Skills	13%	31%
Contact and Project Management	13%	31%
Desistence and offender management	-	46%
Engagement with Employers/Training Providers/Influencing Skills and Winning the Hearts and Minds of Employers and Workforce	13%	31%
Financial Management	13%	38%
Initial/Induction Training for Unpaid Work Supervisors New to Role	-	31%
Managing/Supervising Offenders on Community Payback	-	23%
Marketing and PR	0	31%

Future Gazing offender management Employment Opportunities	13%	-
Motivational Interviewing Skills	-	38%
People Management of Remote Workers	-	23%
Jail Craft/Key Skills for Non-Prison Officers	13%	-
Managing Change	25%	-
Providing Employment Mentoring for Offenders	13%	-
Understanding of Local Labour Market Skills Shortages/LMI	13%	-

In total 67% of the respondents stated they were interested in finding out more information with regards to the project. Therefore the next step is to drill down into more detail relating to the specific learning and development materials they are willing to share with other employers. This is essential for when the Offender Management Learning Network is being developed. Other significant points for network participants to consider are: the rules and regulations; exchange value of learning materials; and copyright issues.

Key Challenges

Commercial sensitivity

- Sharing learning and development materials with different employers across the offender management sector can be difficult. This relates to issues of commercial sensitivity and confidentiality and to ensuring that materials are not developed for other commercial interests outside the offender management sector.

Competition

- The role of competition in the public sector and greater involvement of the private and voluntary sectors is growing due to cuts in public spending. The Government's ambition for encouraging collaborative working in the rehabilitation of offenders is to try and cut re-offending and improve outcomes and efficiency. This would be achieved by inviting private and voluntary organisations to provide services where appropriate to do so effectively at a lower cost.²⁴ It is important that any conflict of interest is managed effectively.

The workforce

- Regular movement of offenders between establishments is a problem. There are implications for the applicability of the working prisons agenda in local prisons holding offenders for very short periods.

²⁴ Criminal Justice Alliance (2012). *Delivering Justice: the role of the public, private and voluntary sectors in prisons and probation.*

Conclusion

Establishing the Offender Management Learning Network (OMLN) will be a step forward in addressing the skills gaps of the offender management sector. This report has identified the skills gaps in both the Prison and Community Justice and Probation workforces. The Offender Management Learning Network (OMLN) will specifically aim to support employers working in the public, private and voluntary sector of Prisons and Probation. The development of a UK wide learning and development network will enable employers to share their learning and development resources online. This is to make best use of each other's expertise and materials to up-skill their workforce to rise to the challenge of reducing re-offending.

Respondents from the Prison workforce identified the top skills listed as either poor/very poor impacting on the workforce:

1. Understanding of Local Labour Market Skills Shortages/LMI
2. Commercial/Entrepreneurial skills
3. Future Gazing Employment Opportunities for Offenders
4. Marketing and PR

Respondents from the Community Justice and Probation workforce identified the top skills listed as either poor/very poor impacting on the workforce:

1. Risk Management
2. Marketing and PR
3. Commercial/Entrepreneurial skills
4. Commissioning/Procurement

Two identical skill areas have been identified as having an impact on the both prison and community justice and probation these are: marketing and PR; and commercial/entrepreneurial skills. This could provide an opportunity for employers to consider sharing training resources and learning materials in order to enhance understanding in these areas. Through collaborative engagement and shared learning, community justice and prisons can benefit from each other's strengths. Where the strengths of one workforce is a weakness for the other, shared learning materials can be used for mutual benefit.

Employers were asked how they would address their skills gaps in learning and development provision. For both prison (88%) and CJ and Probation (67%) there was a consensus that developing new learning materials would help address skills gaps in their workforces.

Respondents have revealed the topic areas of the learning materials they would be potentially interested in sharing, however this needs to be discussed further with employers in terms of detail.

Sharing learning and development materials with different employers across the offender management sector can be difficult. This relates to issues of commercial sensitivity and

confidentiality and ensuring that materials are not developed for other commercial interests outside the offender management sector.

Recommendations

- *To achieve the ambition of making prisons real places of hard work and creating more challenging, employment focussed unpaid work, offender management employers must address the workforce's skills gaps and skills shortages to help support offenders carry out real work in custody. So, too, the skills of Community Justice staff must be developed to improve the quality of unpaid work as part of community-based offender management programmes.*
- *It is important to make people fully aware of this resource and explain the potential benefits it can offer to staff and organisations working within the offender management sector.*
- *To ensure the online resource will be used to its full capacity, consideration needs to be given to the user friendliness of the system, with regard to such issues as: easy access in relation to passwords; service from the helpdesk in relation to response to queries; making sure web links are in working order; and simplifying general navigation around the system.*
- *Respondents requested that the learning materials are not developed for commercial interests outside the offender management sector.*
- *There is strong evidence to suggest the Offender Management Learning Network will help address the skills gaps of Prisons and Community Justice/Probation by sharing each other's expertise at minimal cost.*
- *It is important to make people fully aware of the rules and regulations on taking up membership of the network (e.g. copyright and confidentiality etc).*
- *It has been acknowledged that e-learning and classroom/workshop based learning are the most popular methods to deliver learning and development in the offender management sector. Therefore these methods would be suitable for staff because they are familiar with them.*
- *It is important to ensure that the content and terminology use within the Offender Management Learning Network (OMLN) are regularly updated in line with changes to practice and legislation.*
- *Skills for Justice might want to consider developing a model for the OMLN that embeds the use of National Occupational Standards (NOS) as part of staff competence.*

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