

Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust

Inspection report

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Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

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Inspectors judge the quality of the provision against the common inspection framework for Further Education and Skills from September 2009 and contribute to the inspection frameworks of Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation.

The following text is Ofsted's contribution to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation's OMI 2 report. A copy of the published inspection report can be found on www.inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspect_reports/

Information about the probation area

Durham Tees Valley (DTV) Probation Trust (the trust) was formed in April 2010 by the merger of County Durham and Teesside probation areas. It covers a mixture of rural and urban populations which vary in demographics from affluent to very poor. For the purpose of service delivery DTV is divided into six local delivery units (LDUs): North Durham, South Durham and Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton, and Redcar and Cleveland.

Each LDU is led by a Director of Offender Services who reports to the Chief Executive Officer, who in turn reports to the trust board. DTV serves a population of approximately 920,000 and employs the equivalent of 520 full-time staff who work from 16 community locations and five prisons; HMP Durham, HMYOI Deerbolt, HMP Low Newton, HMP Kirklevington and HMP Holme House. Two approved premises situated within the previous Teesside area are used across the DTV area.

A network of partners, most of whom deliver courses to the local community have offenders referred to their provision to meet their education, training or employment (ETE) needs.

The trust views active engagement with offenders as a fundamental pre-requisite for achieving the desired outcomes of improving individual behaviour, enhancing prospects for positive activity in the community and reducing reoffending. A citizenship programme is provided at the start to address the criminogenic needs assessed by OASys of each offender and then deliver activities which are most likely to enhance the prospect of reduced reoffending.

Lead providers and other subcontractors	Number of learners on discrete provision	Types of provision
CfBT	1199	Next Step information, advice and guidance
Pertemps	1199	Job search, curriculum vitae (CV) writing, interview skills etc.
DISC	90	Support programmes for offenders with substance misuse issues
Learn Direct	123	Literacy and numeracy courses
NETA Training together with various local colleges	437	Industry related courses and qualifications
EASE	741	Employment and motivational training

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade good
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Capacity to improve	Grade good
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Grade descriptor	
Quality of provision Assessment and sentence planning (B4) Implementation of interventions (B1, B2, B3)	good
Achieving and sustaining outcomes (A1 – 5)	good
Leadership and management (C1 - 7) Equality and diversity including aspects of safeguarding	good satisfactory

Overall effectiveness, including capacity to improve

Processes for referring offenders to learning and employability skills provision were good. Good use was made of a citizenship programme before moving onto ETE interventions. Initial assessment of basic skills did not provide any indication of the level or types of additional training required.

Unemployed offenders were given good help to improve their employment prospects. They received good information, advice and guidance and good support to develop their job seeking skills.

ETE programmes were well planned and run although some basic and vocational skills programmes varied in quality. Managers did not measure the quality of the ETE provision through annual self-evaluation reports, data analysis, or assessing the quality of providers' delivery.

The number of offenders finding sustainable employment was particularly good. Some attendance at ETE appointments were poor and wasted valuable staff time.

Partnership working was particularly strong and the merger of the probation areas had benefitted offenders.

What does Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust need to do to improve further?

- Prioritise diagnostic testing for basic skills and learning disabilities.
- Provide more access to courses for offenders to improve their basic skills and utilise the 20% unpaid work rule as an incentive.
- Develop systems to monitor the quality of ETE provision to ensure more consistent delivery of basic and vocational skills.

Offender perspective - learning and employability as confirmed by inspectors

Offenders thought that staff were very supportive and helpful. Staff helped offenders address aspects of their lives that were major barriers to them finding employment and breaking the cycle of reoffending. Advisors set clear achievable targets and motivated offenders to achieve them. Job-seeking activities were very valuable and helped to improve offenders' confidence and self-esteem. Offenders felt that the unpaid work supervisors treated them with respect and helped them to improve their

work skills, knowledge and attitudes. Many thought that the work that they were doing was appreciated and valued by the general public and some had been approached and congratulated on their work by members of the public. Some offenders doing unpaid work were not fully aware that 20% of their time could be spent doing ETE activities. There were no ETE activities taking place during the inspection week of offenders in approved premises.

Main inspection report

The quality of provision (B1 – 4)	Grade good
Assessment and sentence planning (B4)	

Information, advice and guidance provided through Next Step were particularly good. The focus on meeting the offender's individual needs was clear and timely. Advisers were very proactive and looked at arranging a series of different appointments for each offender in many areas such as CV building, job search and attending education. Advisers were well informed about courses available in the community that met the overall and specific learning needs of offenders. Detailed action plans were developed and a copy provided to offenders to show what had been agreed.

DTV ran a citizenship programme that dealt with the behavioural issues each offender had before referring them to ETE. This helped to motivate offenders to engaging positively with ETE interventions once other behavioural and lifestyle issues had been resolved. Community supervisors motivated offenders by holding frequent progress reviews and monitoring offenders' progress after each ETE session. Providers carefully set realistic targets for offenders to motivate them to achieve, and planned interventions so that offenders could mix with mainstream clients, developing their social skills and diversity awareness.

The initial assessment of basic skills, dyslexia and other learning disabilities was not systematic. Referral forms made little reference to the literacy, numeracy and language needs of offenders. Offender managers carried out a very basic initial screening of offenders' literacy and numeracy needs. This did not accurately identify their specific needs, or the level of need. However, for a very small sample of offenders observed, initial assessment and development of basic skills were satisfactory. Advisers viewed addressing serious basic skills needs as a voluntary decision for offenders to make.

Implementation of interventions (B1, B2, B3)	
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The sequencing of ETE interventions to promote offender engagement was good. The trust had appropriately aligned itself to the new national offender managers' targets by focusing on the achievement of training and employment instead of the old focus on qualifications. However, the profile of education, and more specifically, literacy, numeracy and language had decreased. The trust had

recently launched a new model of delivery of sentence orders that focused on the sequencing of interventions and prioritised behavioural, personal and social development before the development of ETE. The approach of citizen first, offender second was taken. However, it was too early for the trust to demonstrate whether the ETE needs of all its offenders had been met.

The trust staff and partners provided a high level of individual support for offenders. Offender managers and partner advisers worked together very effectively to prioritise focused support meetings in order to prepare offenders for job interviews. Next Step and Pertemps advisers helpfully extended meeting time slots to support clients to make progress with CVs and covering letters for job applications. Pertemps provided highly flexible and timely support to promote offenders' success on entry to employment. Examples included equipment, transport costs, interview clothes and living costs until the offender received their pay. Offenders valued the high levels of support.

There was some inconsistent delivery of basic and vocational skills. Some literacy and numeracy learners at one of the providers were being coached by a member of staff who did not have basic skills teaching qualifications. Many offenders were simply practicing literacy and numeracy test papers with little teaching or formal learning of the topics. Teaching resources in the gardening national vocational qualification (NVQ) project were minimal, relying on offenders observing the tutor carrying out a task and repeating it afterwards.

Take up of basic skills courses was insufficient. ETE was no longer used as a mandatory specified sentencing activity by the trust. Approximately, 50% of the offenders seen by CfBT had a literacy or numeracy need. However, there was a high rate of drop outs; for example, in one LDU over 30% of the offenders who were referred to a learning intervention did not complete their course.

Achieving and sustaining outcomes (A1 – 5)	Grade good
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Employment outcomes for offenders were good and sustained. Data indicated that in 2010/11, 343 offenders gained employment which greatly exceeded the regional target. Of those who gained employment 24% were still employed six months later. In-year data for the trust showed that the achievement of employment outcomes had exceeded the current target. Current data indicated that the trust was making satisfactory progress towards their target achievement of ETE awards. Offenders' feedback identified good progress in employability, personal development skills and confidence. Offenders reported that progress towards targets was good with clear gains in motivation.

The citizenship programme was highly effective in challenging offenders' attitudes to their offence and identifying the barriers to their progress. A key strength of the process was that it was a very practical approach that promoted responsibility for the offender to actively take steps to reduce the identified barriers and improve their

situation. Examples reviewed showed good implementation by offender managers with detailed records of the process. One session observed was well-paced with good use of questions by the offender manager to challenge one offender's negativity and attitude. The process was adapted very effectively for the offender's needs, to promote his engagement in activities through pictorial representation of issues and emotions. Clear progress was observed through his very clear identification of the steps needed to gain the life and employment that he aspired to and the motivation to succeed. Another offender reported very clear gains in their self-management of their emotions and offending behaviour following the programme.

Attendance at some Next Step and employability appointments was poor during the inspection. In some instances only one offender out of four turned up for appointments. Managers acknowledged that the non-attendance rates for ETE interventions were approximately 50-60%. However, the advisers had very clear processes in place to communicate with the offender managers and to contact the offender to arrange a further appointment.

Leadership and management (C1 – 7)	Grade good
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Strong partnership working helped to enhance the provision. Key partners worked very well together to provide suitable ETE opportunities for offenders. Mainstream provision was accessed for offenders under the view of 'clients are citizens first and offenders second'. The trust held frequent and regular meetings with their partners to review the contractual arrangements of the provision. These meetings were well attended by heads of learning and skills from the prisons and external providers ensuring offenders received the necessary support from the very early stages of their order.

The trust had developed very good relationships with the key referral and training partners who adopted a very cooperative and non-judgemental attitude towards working with offenders. They carefully set realistic targets for offenders in order to motivate them to achieve and they planned their interventions well.

The recent merger of the two probation areas into a single probation trust had resulted in positive benefits for the ETE provision. Managers reported that there was now greater consistency in the way ETE was being delivered across the 12 local delivery units. In the past, prior to the merger some areas applied different ways of referring offenders to ETE in a systematic way linked to the number of visits by the offender. The process had been standardised and offenders were being referred to ETE according to their identified needs. A further highlighted benefit of the merger was the creation of a bigger pool of resources by amalgamating the services offered by each of the probation areas separately. Good communications existed between different providers who worked well together to meet offenders' needs. Managers believed that since CfBT had taken over the brokerage of the ETE provision through Next Step, the trust had increased the range of ETE offered by taking advantage of CfBT's networking and knowledge of the main stream provision.

Insufficient focus was placed on measuring the quality of the ETE interventions. Managers had no annual self-evaluation to evaluate and measure the quality of the provision. Furthermore, they had no understanding of the standards of quality of the provision being delivered by their external partners. Although many meetings were held with their external partners, the focus on quality of learning was not well developed. The trust made little use of data for offenders' achievement of qualifications to monitor the quality of its ETE partners' provision.

Equality and diversity, and arrangements to support offender vulnerability were satisfactory. Offenders were treated fairly and respectfully by the trust staff and all ETE providers. Three women's centres offered outreach programmes and provided a good range of accredited and leisure courses. This provided very effective support for vulnerable women and an opportunity to engage with other women in a safe environment. Every local delivery unit had a named women's champion to signpost help. Useful research had been carried out by the trust looking at the incidence of learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and Aspergers syndrome in probation clients. It also looked at the impact disabilities could have on gaining employment and on reoffending. The research highlighted the high numbers with some form of learning disability and recommended a better assessment tool to identify the problems. However at the time of the inspection proper assessment was not being carried out and referrals to specialist support were limited.

Information about the inspection

1. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), assisted by the probation trust's Director of Offender Services as coordinator, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of providers' most recent self-assessment reports and development plans, comments from funding bodies and data on offenders achievements.
2. Inspectors used a range of methods to gather the views of learners including group and individual interviews. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from a range of programmes.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)			
Provider Name:	Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust	Inspection No	373021
Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full-time and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including E2E); 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships Blank Column: insert Judicial Services or Nextstep as appropriate			

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall					
Approximate number of enrolled learners	2601					
Overall effectiveness	2					
Capacity to improve	2					
A. Outcomes for learners	2					
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2					
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2					
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	3					
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2					
A3. How safe do learners feel?	3					
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>						
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2					
B. Quality of provision	2					
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2					
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3					
B3. How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2					
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2					
C. Leadership and management	2					
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2					
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>						
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3					
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3					
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2					
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	4					
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2					

*where applicable to the type of provision

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