

# Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	57638
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<b>Last day of inspection:</b>	18 February 2011
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Probation Trust
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The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) works in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prison and Probation and inspects the management and provision of learning and skills for offenders across the whole range of custodial establishments and probation areas. Inspections may include those serving whole or part of their sentence in the community.

Inspectors judge the quality of the provision against the *Common Inspection Framework* for further education and skills 2009 (*Common Inspection Framework* 2009) and contribute to the inspection frameworks of Her Majesty's Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation.

## Information about the probation trust and its providers

The Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust (DCPT, the trust) covers 13 local authority areas, with a population of just over 1.5 million inhabitants which doubles during peak tourist seasons. The trust has 10 offices including a head office at Exeter and operational offices in Barnstaple, Exeter, Torquay, Plymouth, Liskeard, St Austell, Truro, Camborne and Penzance. It has two approved premises in Plymouth and Camborne and serves Her Majesty's Prisons; Dartmoor, Exeter and Channings Wood. The trust's current caseload is 4028 offenders. Of these, approximately 93% are White and over 90% are men. The unemployment rates in Devon and Cornwall vary between 5.6% in Cornwall and 5.8% in Devon to 7.9% in Torbay and Plymouth against a national average of 7.9%.

The education, training and employment services has a Gateway team within each of its four local delivery units (LDUs): Cornwall; Plymouth; north and east Devon and south Devon. Staff report to assistant chief officers (ACOs) who are responsible for all areas of operational delivery across their LDUs. In turn the ACOs report directly to the trust's Chief Executive.

In total, the team comprises of four full-time equivalent probation support officers and four case managers. They are based in offices at Exeter; Torquay; Plymouth and St Austell. In addition, an assistant chief officer is responsible for the education, training and employment performance and development. This officer is supported by the trust's business development manager across the four units.

The Probation Area became a trust in April 2010.

### Information about the offender learning and employability providers:

Lead providers and their subcontractors	Number of learners on discrete provision 2009-2010	Types of provision
Petroc – Stepping Stones	25	Life skills; Skills for Life, mentoring support; access to main stream courses – this was not a discrete provision – access to all members of the community.
Petroc – Skills for Life	486	Skills for Life; catering; induction.
Workways – Mental Health/disability support	3	Support with training and into work for those with disability or mental health issues.

Lead providers and their subcontractors	Number of learners on discrete provision 2009-2010	Types of provision
Maximus – Progress 2 Work	30	Into work/training support for anyone who has current/previous drug use.
Bicton	97	Skills for Life and vocational courses.
St Loyes	1	Work-based training opportunities for those with disability/disadvantaged situation.
BTCV	3	Conservation & horticulture Projects – allotment/Woodbury Common.
Devon Works – linked with Shaw Trust	3	Help for workless parents – support with training and pre-work skills as well as job development.
Shekinah	10	Re: construct NOCN level 1 award.
SRTS	38	ITSSAR FLT Counterbalance and rough terrain telescopic.
Progress to Work at Working Links	19	CSCS card; Food hygiene; Food safety.
City College Plymouth Inc Adult Learning Centre	7	Introduction to counselling; barbering; bookkeeping; wood occupations; electrical engineering; first aid at work.
Train to Gain	3	Environmental conservation.

<b>Other providers</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Types of provision</b>
Nobel	1	Asbestos removal.
Citizens Advice	1	Budgeting skills.
Business Link	4	Business awareness.
Groundworks SW	1	Football coaching.
Netherfield College Plympton	1	Food manufacturing.
Cornwall College	500	Information, advice and guidance and vocational training.
Cornwall Adult Education	618	Skills for Life & preparation for employment.
CPR	15	Forklift training, IAPs driving.
CMT	89	Construction site safety certificate.
15 Cornwall	3	NVQ2 catering.
Devon & Cornwall Probation Trust	20	The Fireworks programme. Accredited NOCN training.
Gwelheans	30	Pathways to Work programme.
Kernow Training	3	Chainsaw certificate.
Link into Learning	20	ASDAN.
Pentreath	10	Support to training for those with learning disability.
Response to Redundancy programme	40	IT skills.
Riviera Lodge	1	NVQ2 motor mechanic.
St Austell Brewery training centre	2	Door supervisors' certificate.
Lynher Training	6	Tractor, dump truck, swing shovel training.
Truro College	3	Vocational courses.

The following text is Ofsted's contribution to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation's offender management inspection.

## Summary report

### Overall effectiveness, including capacity to improve

The trust delivered a satisfactory Gateway service for education, training and employment to offenders, who received an adequate assessment of their needs when they were referred by their offender managers. However, the education, training and employment service had too low a profile within the trust. The use of education, training and employment as a specified activity by the courts was poor and many offender managers had little understanding of the offer available. The sharing of information across partners was poor in some cases.

The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall but tutors made insufficient use of learning plans to manage individual learning. Offenders benefitted from a wide range of learning and skills provision and there were some good examples of projects in Plymouth and Torbay that had directly contributed to a reduction in re-offending. Most offenders accessed good unpaid work projects that allowed them to improve their personal and vocational skills while gaining external accreditation. The good multi-agency work developed by the trust ensured that offenders received very good support on a wide range of individual needs.

The trust had met and exceeded all the nationally set targets in relation to referrals to education and obtaining and sustaining employment. The number of offenders attending a literacy or numeracy course had decreased but they all achieved the relevant qualification. Offenders developed some good employability skills; they benefitted from the strong emphasis the trust placed on health and safety by acquiring a recognised qualification and adhering to safe working practices, most of the time. However, attendance to certain interventions was low.

The four local delivery units worked well together to meet the local, individual, needs of their offenders. Although they had good support from the senior management team, there was no clear strategy for the education, training and employment provision highlighting its prioritised objectives. The very good links with external agencies and other probation trusts had brought many benefits to the trust and offenders. The trust worked hard to widen access to its interventions to all offenders, as part of its commitment towards equality of opportunity, and had met the government's requirements towards safeguarding.

DCPT had demonstrated that it had satisfactory capacity to improve. It had exceeded all its National Offender Management Service (NOMS) targets since the previous inspection and now had an extensive education and training offer that met the needs of the majority of its offenders. The processes of self-assessment and quality improvement planning were particularly well embedded and the trust had produced an accurate and highly evaluative self-assessment report. DCPT had begun to gather and analyse offenders' feedback but the majority of its quality assurance processes required further development. The trust had well advanced plans in place to address this.

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade: satisfactory</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade: satisfactory</b>
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	<b>Grade descriptor</b>
Quality of provision Assessment and sentence planning	satisfactory
Implementation of interventions	
Achieving and sustaining outcomes	satisfactory
Leadership and management	satisfactory
Equality and diversity including arrangements to support vulnerability	satisfactory

### **What does the Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust need to do to improve further?**

- Develop an effective strategy that clearly sets out how education, training and employment will work to address the prioritised needs of offenders, both in each local unit and as a trust.
- Raise the profile of education, training and employment amongst the offender managers to ensure offenders receive timely assessment of their needs and fully benefit from the service.
- Improve the arrangements of sharing information by the relevant key workers and partners to ensure that the implementation of education, training and employment interventions is fully co-ordinated and effective.
- Fully implement a quality assurance framework that provides regular monitoring of the learning and skills provision delivered across the trust to inform the managerial decisions.

### **Offender perspective - learning and employability as confirmed by inspectors**

Offenders who were taking a qualification appreciated the opportunity to do so and they were aware of the progress they were making. Offenders undertaking unpaid work were pleased to have taken a health and safety course and obtained the qualification. They saw this as beneficial when applying for employment. Most

learners valued learning new skills, which some thought that they would be able to use to secure employment or, as in the case of horticulture and painting and decorating skills, to improve their lives more generally. Some offenders with well-developed skills, such as welding, said their skills were not being used effectively to benefit communities.

A small number felt that the one full day induction process was too long. Many offenders valued the support and guidance they received from education, training and employment workers, placement supervisors and training staff. Unpaid work enabled them to develop good work ethics and to have structure in their lives which, in some cases, had previously been chaotic. They found that many placement supervisors treated them with respect and they enjoyed meeting new people. However, in some parts of the region learners commented on the narrow range of opportunities for unpaid work, particularly for female offenders. Several offenders also highlighted that they would like to receive more timely and constructive support from their offender manager.

## **Main inspection report**

### **The quality of provision**

**Grade:  
satisfactory**

#### Assessment and sentence planning

The trust was providing a satisfactory Gateway service to education, training and employment. Offenders' educational and employment needs were adequately assessed when referrals were received from offender managers. Management of offenders' access to the provision was satisfactory and offender managers received periodic reports on their progress and achievements.

The use of education, training and employment as an specified activity was poor. Those responsible for sentencing offenders made very little use of education, training and employment related court orders. A minority of offenders were required to attend learning and skills programmes as part of a supervision requirement and the majority participated on a voluntary basis. This arrangement did not sufficiently ensure that offenders effectively tackled their most significant needs. In one case identified by inspectors, the offender was working on their level 2 numeracy, but not on their literacy need which was assessed at entry level 2.

Many managers had little understanding of the education and training offer available in their geographical area. Some offenders did not receive a timely assessment of their needs as they were not always referred at the start of their sentence but when determined by their offender manager. These arrangements did not ensure that offenders received a full assessment of need in time to effectively inform their sentence plan. Some offenders with low levels of literacy and numeracy were not initially and diagnostically assessed. The trust paid insufficient attention to

diagnosing the extent of dyslexia when it was disclosed by offenders or identified by trainers.

The trust appropriately assessed the numeracy and literacy needs of all offenders undertaking unpaid work as a part of their induction. Those with a need for training were directed to other providers. For most offenders, this training was optional and staff did not sufficiently emphasise the importance of these skills to offenders and the take-up was low.

Arrangements to share information across some partners were poor. Information, advice and guidance advisers received few details about the offender's offending behaviour, assessments or barriers to learning to guide offenders appropriately. The outcome of these interviews or changes to their action plans were insufficiently shared with the Gateway team or the offender's manager. Records of licensed offenders' education, training and employment history in prison were seldom available. Some providers were unnecessarily repeating literacy and numeracy assessments and advice and guidance interviews.

#### Implementation of interventions

Teaching and learning were satisfactory overall. In the better sessions teaching was lively, engaging and enjoyable. Tutors paced the lessons well and adjusted their delivery to meet the needs of the offenders promoting an atmosphere of mutual respect between tutors and offenders. In these sessions, offenders made good progress and learnt useful new skills. Some sessions, however, had too few changes of activity and some offenders became bored with the subject material. Teaching accommodation was of variable quality. The training room at the Barnfield Road centre was too cramped for the number of offenders in the class and in Plymouth there were no training workshops providing a teaching or work practice environment.

Tutors made insufficient use of individual learning plans to support learning and help offenders understand what they needed to do to achieve their targets. Although tutors usually recorded the work completed, they paid too little attention to planning offenders' work at the start of learning sessions. They did not set targets to guide learning and to measure the offenders' progress.

Learning plans were used on most of the unpaid work, where a qualification was offered, but were not an appropriate document to plan the offender's learning. All learners in a group had an identical plan with no target completion date. Learning aims focused only on the completion of the qualification. Supervisors did not use short term targets to motivate the offenders.

Offenders had access to a wide range of learning and skills provision. In Cornwall, Skills for Life provision was available at five locations spread across the county. A wide range of providers, including DCPT provided offenders with good support to develop their job seeking skills. Offenders had good opportunities to continue to access learning and skills provision beyond the termination of their sentence. The



trust used well specialist provision, such as Fire Works and Chrysalis, to target offenders who would benefit. In some areas, the trust had developed the use of volunteers well.

In Plymouth, the education and employment provision for offenders who had a history of drugs misuse was good and those participating had experienced a reduction in re-offending. Offenders in this area also benefitted from good training opportunities in construction, personal enrichment, and Skills for Life. In Torbay, some very innovative projects were having a significant impact on offenders. For example, 51 offenders had developed a very good range of horticultural and personal skills in the 'Growing for Life' project. The 'Family Intervention' project was a very intensive intervention for women based on a holistic approach that resulted in no-one in the group re-offending.

The majority of offenders accessed good unpaid work placements that provided them with many opportunities to improve their skills. Staff effectively promoted the opportunity for offenders to use part of their unpaid work order for education, training and employment related activities. In north Devon there was a wide range of different placements from one offering work in office administration at a local charity through to environmental work with the National Trust. However, offenders in the Tiverton area had a more limited choice. The well delivered projects enabled offenders to gain a qualification and they valued the opportunity to further develop their skills. More recently, the trust had begun to record the acquisition and development of these employability skills.

The good multi-agency work developed by the trust supported individual offender needs particularly well. Offenders benefitted from support that allowed them to overcome barriers to learning, housing, mental health and drug dependency. DCPT worked effectively with volunteers who further assisted offenders with very specific individual needs. Support for the achievement of short vocational qualifications was generally good. However, opportunities for some offenders undertaking community payback to obtain accredited qualifications in Plymouth were insufficient.

## **Achieving and sustaining outcomes**

**Grade:  
satisfactory**

DCPT had met and exceeded its nationally set targets since the previous inspection, in 2007. The trust had met and largely exceeded its NOMS targets in relation to referrals to education and achieving and sustaining employment for four weeks at the point of termination of their order. Success rates for short vocational qualifications were also good. For example, in south Devon, 76% of the offenders attending employment training obtained at least one qualification. All offenders completing unpaid work gained a useful, level 1 health and safety certificate.

Achievement rates for the few offenders who started a Skills for Life qualification were also good. Since April 2010, 67% of offenders who joined the programme achieved a qualification. The Skills for Life programme had too low a profile. The

number of offenders improving their literacy and numeracy skills had declined in the last year and was low.

The trust placed good emphasis on promoting health and safety to offenders in most regional areas. Thorough and regular risk assessments ensured that health and safety was prioritised in the unpaid work placements. Supervisors were well trained and challenged offenders on the few occasions when they did not follow safe working practices. However, offenders in Cornwall were not always effectively reminded of their responsibility to wear appropriate personal and protective equipment.

Offenders developed some good employability skills such as team working, problem solving skills and a good attitude to work. Similarly, they also developed vocational skills such as those related to catering or horticulture. Overall, they made satisfactory progress through their order and produced work of satisfactory standards. However, attendance to information, advice and guidance sessions was low across the trust at 60%. During the inspection week, several offenders failed to attend to their appointments. Attendance at Skills for Life sessions in Cornwall was better at approximately 80%.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade:  
satisfactory**

The four local delivery units had worked well to manage the operational delivery of education, training and employment in their areas and to achieve their nationally set targets. They had a good focus on meeting the local needs of offenders and functioned well independently. There was good teamwork between each of the four units and they worked effectively with the senior management team culminating in frequent meetings where operational challenges were discussed and resolved.

However, the trust did not have sufficiently robust strategic and business planning for the education, training and employment provision. The three year plan was vague and outdated; it failed to reflect the changes the area had undergone to become a trust and the way it managed the changes in funding. Although each of the four delivery units' annual plans contained prioritised objectives and targets for the coming year, there was no overall business plan for the education provision highlighting their common aims and objectives. There were no equality of opportunity and safeguarding written strategies with regards to the delivery of education, training and employment.

The trust had developed very good links with external key partners that had brought significant benefits to offenders. Good working partnerships also existed with other probation trusts ensuring the timely sharing of best practice on common processes and approaches to securing funding. In particular, communication between the local units and their partners was prompt and frequent. However, the trust did not provide sufficient opportunities for key partners to meet to share best practice across their services.

Staff qualifications were variable but satisfactory overall. Some staff had good graduate qualifications and other relevant awards. However, some unpaid work supervisors were insufficiently qualified and experienced in the industry in which they were supervising.

Many quality assurance processes were under developed. The trust had only recently begun to gather and analyse learner feedback. The education, training and employment team did not use and analyse data to focus on quality outcomes with regards to the achievement of qualifications and the use of data had been irregular and unsystematic across the four local delivery units. Data were not utilised in improvement and delivery plans sufficiently well to provide targets and measure the progress made on each objective. The trust had not developed its quality assurance processes sufficiently to allow senior managers to monitor the consistency of delivery across the local units and to benefit from the formal sharing of best practice. There were no developed processes to evaluate the quality of training delivered by the trust's external partners.

The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity by the trust was satisfactory. Good travel arrangements in very rural and disperse areas widened access to the community payback and learning and skills activities to all offenders. However, in some areas of the trust, provision was not equally available and there was no delivery of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. The trust had a very comprehensive equality and diversity policy for both staff and offenders and in many areas, the trust had provided courses aimed at meeting the specific needs of certain offender groups such as women. DCPT regularly discussed health and safety, equality of opportunity and safeguarding at the frequent management meetings and agreed actions to further develop these topics. Staff had received the adequate training on equality and diversity and the trust had recently started to monitor the involvement of specific groups of offenders in each delivery unit to ensure equitable participation.

The trust had a comprehensive safeguarding policy although this was mostly related to children's protection. Agency protocols correctly set the guidelines on managing and reducing risk. Offenders participating in unpaid work activities said they feel safe. Staff had been appropriately checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.

The process of self-assessment was good and well embedded. Each local delivery carried out a thorough self-assessment of their services which contributed to the creation of the overall self-assessment report for the education, training and employment provision in the trust. College providers provided a comprehensive evaluative report focused on the specific provision they delivered for the trust. The self-assessment process was well aligned to evaluating the quality of the provision of the trust as an education and training provider. The quality improvement plan correctly reflected the identified strengths and areas for improvement in the report; however, it did not make good use of targets to highlight the progress the trust made on these issues.

### **Information about the inspection**

1. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the business development manager at the Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust as co-ordinator, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of provider's most recent development plans, comments from the local Skills Funding Agency or other funding bodies, previous inspection reports, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
2. Inspectors used a range of methods to gather the views of learners including group and individual interviews. They also visited learning and information, advice and guidance sessions. Inspectors collected evidence from the programmes the trust offers.

<b>Record of Main Findings (RMF)</b>			
<b>Provider Name:</b>	Devon and Cornwall Probation Trust	Inspection No	57638
<p><b>Learning types: 14 – 16:</b> Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; <b>16-18 Learner responsive:</b> FE full-time and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including E2E); <b>19+ responsive:</b> FE full- and part-time courses; <b>Employer responsive:</b> Train to Gain, apprenticeships <b>Blank Column:</b> insert Judicial Services or Nextstep as appropriate</p>			

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall					
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>	136					
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>					
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	3					
<b>A. Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>					
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3					
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3					
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	3					
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3					
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>						
<b>B. Quality of provision</b>	<b>3</b>					
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3					
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?	3					
<b>C. Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>					
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3					
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?	4					
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3					
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3					

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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