

Greater Manchester Probation Area

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 57971
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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/

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PROTECT – INSPECTION

Information about the probation area

Greater Manchester Probation Trust (GMPT, the trust) is one of the largest of the 35 probation trusts across England and Wales with a budget of £46.6 million. The trust covers a population of around 2.5 million people and 495 square miles within Greater Manchester, which includes 10 local authorities. Greater Manchester Probation Trust is a key employer currently employing around 1,300 staff at over 40 sites across the area to provide services to manage offenders and deliver interventions. The trust is divided into nine local delivery units providing accommodation for offenders on license in seven approved premises, six for men (including a specialist one for mentally disordered offenders) and one for women. Three prisons are located in the area: Her Majesty's Prisons (HMP) Manchester, Buckley Hall and Forest Bank. The trust supervises around 16,500 offenders at any one time. Of these around 60% receive a community order. Each year the trust's officers produce over 12,000 reports for sentencers in the Magistrates' and Crown Courts and supervise the completion of over 600,000 hours of community payback by offenders in local communities across Greater Manchester.

The area has a wide cultural and ethnic mix and ethnic minority populations vary between 1.3% (Wigan) to 19% (Manchester City) as against a national average of 8.7%. A wide variety of languages are spoken by local populations.

Numerous providers are used throughout the trust to support interventions, with The Manchester College delivering courses in approved premises. The trust benefits from a European Social Fund co-financing project, 'Achieve', with case managers based in each local delivery unit.

Information about the offender learning and employability providers:

Lead providers and other subcontractors	Number of learners on discrete provision	Types of provision
ACHIEVE	623	Employability skills training/literacy numeracy/ vocational
Next Step	40	Information advice and guidance
EASE	15	Employability skills training
Procure plus	variable	Variety of vocational courses
Work solutions	variable	Employability skills
Progress to work	variable	Various vocational courses.
Back on Track	10	Volunteer training employability skills

Other providers (sample)	Number of learners	Type of provision
Salford Womens Foundation	variable	Volunteer training employability skills
Excel	variable	Employability skills
The Manchester College	variable (91 approved premises)	Literacy, numeracy vocational courses
Wigan and Leigh College	variable	Literacy, numeracy vocational courses
Bolton College	variable	Literacy and numeracy
Oldham College	variable	Literacy, numeracy vocational courses
Business in the Community	variable	Employability skills
Bridging The Gap	variable	Mentoring employability skills
Salford Young Fathers project	variable	Advice and guidance.
Jobcentre Plus	variable	Employability
Back to work in Salford	variable	Employability

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade satisfactory
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Capacity to improve	Grade satisfactory
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	Grade descriptor
Quality of provision	good
Assessment and sentence planning	
Implementation of interventions	
Achieving and sustaining outcomes	good
Leadership and management	satisfactory
Equality and diversity including aspects of safeguarding	good

Overall effectiveness, including capacity to improve

Access to, and the quality of, information advice and guidance were good. Assessment of offenders after referral to education training and employment was good with particularly effective planning for offenders' complex needs in approved premises. Offender managers had a good understanding of education training and employment but were kept insufficiently well informed of the range of education activities available in training or unpaid work. Offender managers received insufficient information on offenders' progress after referral. The first moves assessment screening used by offender managers was insufficient to identify offenders' wider learning needs.

Teaching, learning and the planning of sessions were good, with a wide variety of strategies to engage offenders. The range of provision was good with a strong focus on personal development and employability skills. Offenders received good levels of support that met their individual needs. Community payback projects helped offenders develop good employability skills, but these were insufficiently recorded to use as evidence for employers. Offenders' achievements of qualifications were good, particularly in approved premises. Offenders were developing good employability and personal skills

A clear direction for the development of learning and skills was in place, which was well understood by staff. Good and effective partnership links to expand the range of provision had been made. Equality and diversity were good with effective actions to

develop an inclusive provision; arrangements for joint staff training with providers to support offender vulnerability were good.

The trust's capacity to improve was satisfactory. Management restructure had significantly improved the positioning of education training and employment within GMPT; referrals had improved with clear lines of accountability. The processes to assess the overall quality of provision were underdeveloped and no overall self-assessment report was in place. Data were collected but not sufficiently analysed to identify learner progress; an over reliance was placed on contract compliance to judge the learner experience. This was the first inspection for the probation trust with no previous inspection report available.

What does Greater Manchester Probation Trust need to do to improve further?

- Develop and implement self-assessment arrangements to monitor and evaluate the overall effectiveness of the education training and employment provision, using data analysis as an effective tool to measure the progress offenders are making and to monitor the quality of activities.
- Introduce a system to better record and evidence personal skills developed on non-accredited courses to enable offenders to recognise their progress and use as evidence to employers.
- Improve the information provided to offender managers on the range of education training and employment interventions and ensure that intervention providers pass on information about offenders' progress to the offender managers.

Offender perspective - learning and employability as confirmed by inspectors.

A total of 66 offenders were seen and spoken to as part of the inspection process individually or in groups. Offenders appreciated the easily accessible community settings of community payback projects and the flexibility to work additional hours to speed up completion of their orders. Offenders mostly found the work interesting and could recognise the benefits to the community. They liked the way they were treated and felt that there was a good level of mutual respect between them and staff. Few offenders on community payback could recall being told that they could utilise 20% of their sentence for training or education. Many expressed an interest in doing qualifications but had little knowledge on where to find further information. Offenders spoke highly of the personal and employment support they received on their programmes. Offenders on courses liked the way they had improved their confidence and self-esteem.

Main inspection report

The quality of provision

Grade good

Assessment and sentence planning

Referrals to education training and employment interventions had improved and offender managers had a clear understanding of the process. However, the 'first moves' assessment used by offender managers was ineffective to identify wider learning needs. Good links were in place between the 'Achieve' education training and employment workers and offender managers. After a thorough assessment of offenders' needs, referrals were made to provision commissioned by 'Achieve' or an extensive range of other public and private providers. Offender managers had insufficient up to date information on the interventions that were available to offenders within their area. Insufficient feedback from referrals of offenders to education, training and employment interventions was provided for offender managers to use effectively at supervision or review meetings with offenders.

Offenders received good comprehensive careers information and guidance from a range of providers throughout the GMPT area. Access was good for all offenders. Actions plans were detailed with measurable and realistic targets. Barriers to employment or training were explored in detail. Staff had a good understanding of local employment opportunities. Different providers worked well together to ensure specialist advice was available where needed. Drop in sessions for advice and guidance were available at many of the providers.

The assessment and planning of offenders' complex needs in approved premises was good. Very effective joint work took place linking occupational therapists, mental health specialists and education training and employment workers. Tutors were well aware of the preferred learning styles of each resident and how to deal with any special health circumstances that might affect progress. A thorough assessment of offenders' independent living skills took place and individual courses were developed to address these needs.

Implementation of interventions

Teaching and learning were generally good. In most sessions a good variety of short activities were being used to ensure that learners remained engaged and interested in their subject. Sessions were well planned with clear objectives. Tutors managed the classroom particularly well, handling behaviour issues firmly but friendly. A high level of mutual respect was in place. Individual support was good and tutors were skilled at ensuring all learners participated in learning.

Offenders in approved premises benefited from the well-paced learning sessions in a variety of subjects, which interested and motivated them. A joint programme 'first weeks out', developed jointly with The Manchester College, was well planned and very effective at meeting the needs of offenders released on licence.

A wide range of provision was available throughout the GMPT area, which catered for offenders who were job ready to those who lacked confidence and self esteem and required significant amounts of individual support. Access to learning and skills provision was good and facilitated using an extensive variety of interventions from a balanced range of large and smaller community-based organisations to meet the needs of particularly hard to reach offenders. Providers had good knowledge of partner organisations' areas of expertise and cross referrals were often made. A strong emphasis was placed on improving the employment prospects for offenders. A range of courses, provided by a variety of specialist providers such as 'Work Solutions' and 'Procure Plus', prepared offenders well for the labour market. Offenders had good access to a job club, which focused on developing job search skills and preparing offenders for employment. GMPT regularly arranged well attended job fairs, which enabled offenders to meet with employers who were prepared to offer work experience.

The range of education training and employment courses available at approved premises was good. The majority of the training delivered was accredited. Courses were flexible to be able to meet the very specialised individual needs of offenders released on licence. Literacy and numeracy were well integrated into courses which included curriculum vitae (CV) building and the development of skills in job interviews, communication, and team work. Additionally, courses were available that focused on developing independent living skills such as cooking, health and nutrition, personal hygiene, budgeting and gardening. The range of provision in the women's approved premise was equally good. A wide range of accredited courses provided qualifications in literacy and numeracy up to level 2. A wide range of additional courses were accredited by the National Open College Network.

Greater Manchester Probation Trust provided a good variety of community payback projects with a clear focus on improving employability skills. Community payback projects provided a range of opportunities for offenders to develop work skills and provided meaningful work in group and single placements. Women sentenced to community payback had the opportunity to work in women only groups. Offenders recognised the value of their work to their local communities and most offenders enjoyed their activities. Accreditation was available for some of the work undertaken on community payback. However, where no accreditation was in place the good personal and employability skills developed by offenders were insufficiently recorded to enable offenders to recognise their progress and how this could be used to improve employment prospects. This was recognised by GMPT who were considering ways to record the progress made by offenders. Not all offenders were clear about how they could convert part of their community payback sentence to an education or training course. During 2010 around 4,722 hours of community payback were converted to education or training courses.

GMPT had developed good partnerships links to help improve offenders' employability prospects. Through 'Procure Plus' offenders were provided with good opportunities to work with employers in social housing and construction projects, gaining valuable work experience and becoming job ready. Opportunities for employment were good, and offenders were supported with CV writing, job applications and mock interviews. Partnerships with 'Work Solutions' provided targeted support through the intensive alternative to custody (IAC) for young offenders aged 18 to 25. Offenders were well prepared through a range of employability courses to develop skills to access the labour market successfully. Staff provided the right balance of support and challenge to offenders enabling them to develop independent job search skills.

Achieving and sustaining outcomes

Grade good

Success rates on most accredited courses were good. In approved premises 55% of learners who were able to complete their course achieved a full qualification and 75% left with partial accreditation. Most offenders were successful at achieving their planned personal development goals on 'Achieve' projects. Achievement on short courses such, as 'Goals' was good. Offenders who utilised some of their community payback for education training and employment courses such as 'Ease' were mostly successful. Eighty-one percent of offenders who were engaged with the 'Back on Track' mentoring scheme were successful in gaining a positive outcome in either employment or training.

Offenders developed good personal and employability skills on a range of community payback projects and education training and employment courses. Offenders could recognise their improved confidence and self esteem and how this improved their employment prospects. Offenders improved their ability to work in group activities and engage with meaningful discussion. Offenders gained confidence in job search skills. Feedback from offender surveys indicated that a significant number valued the skills they developed and could recognise how this could improve their employment prospects. Standards of behaviour were good; attendance was overall satisfactory but good in approved premises.

Referrals to education training and employment had improved and targets were being met. However, too few referrals resulted in offenders commencing courses.

Leadership and management

Grade satisfactory

GMPT had taken good actions to strengthen the provision of education training and employment and raise its profile throughout the trust. The management structure had been changed with a key person now responsible for the development of education training and employment within each local delivery unit. Lines of communication had improved with better accountability for the development and

quality of the provision. Much work had taken place to develop the understanding of education training and employment using key partners to provide an in-depth understanding of their services for key managers. Opportunities for key education training and employment managers to meet had been improved. However, these meetings were not used sufficiently well to share good practice within the trust. The process for offender managers to refer to education training and employment had been much improved.

Senior managers set a clear direction for the development of the learning and skills provision throughout the trust. They had anticipated the changes to funding and had planned well to maintain levels of provision. Existing links with partner agencies had been successfully developed to extend and maximise the available provision throughout the trust. GMPT facilitated regular provider meetings which enabled good joint working between providers and partners to avoid duplicated provision. The trust had recognised the need to recruit and appoint an education, training and employment co-ordinator, to further develop the operational aspects of the provision. The provision for community payback was managed well and planned activities rarely cancelled.

Equality, diversity and arrangements to support offender vulnerability were good. A single equality scheme and action plan were in place. Initiatives to engage offenders with a range of diverse needs had been successful. Specialised provision through the 'Achieve' project had been developed to support the wider needs of offenders with a focus on disability, young offenders, minority ethnic groups and older offenders. GMPT have worked effectively with their partners to provide education training and employment interventions meeting the needs of women offenders. Programmes such as 'First Weeks Out' and 'Stepping Out', helped offenders adjust to being released on licence and provided very effective support helping them to develop independent living skills. High levels of mutual respect were in place between offenders, tutors and supervisors. Standards of behaviour were generally good and inappropriate behaviour was successfully challenged. Provision was available at a range of sites, such as community venues and probation premises, in addition to main college locations. Mentoring services were in place to support and encourage less confident learners. Community payback projects took place at times to accommodate employed offenders.

Safeguarding arrangements to support offender vulnerability were good. Policies and guidance were clear and supported managers and staff well in their work. A separate policy was in place for the promotion of safeguarding and the welfare of children. All staff had received appropriate training. The trust worked with providers in ensuring that their staff could recognise vulnerable offenders and were clear about what actions to take. Providers felt well supported by the trust in their work with offenders. GMPT had a strong focus on risk assessment and safe working environments.

Quality assurance systems were insufficiently developed and relied largely on informal systems to judge the quality of each programme. Providers working with the trust had their own quality assurance systems which were not sufficiently scrutinised by GMPT to ensure that all offenders received a good experience. A needs analysis at

local delivery unit level had not taken place to ensure that curriculum development was correctly meeting the needs of all learners. Systems for self-assessment and formalised processes for quality improvement were not sufficiently well developed.

Data were available from a range of providers. Some were sufficiently robust and analytical to provide information on the progress and achievement offenders were making. However, GMPT did not collate data throughout the area to identify how offenders were progressing overall. Data were collected and analysed by GMPT but the trust placed an over reliance on contract performance data to judge the quality of programmes.

Information about the inspection

1. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the Greater Manchester Probation Trust's assistant chief executive as co-ordinator, 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:	Greater Manchester probation Trust	Inspection No	366112
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	800					
Overall effectiveness	3					
Capacity to improve (No previous inspection)	3					
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?	2					
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2					
A3. How safe do learners feel?	2					
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2					
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?	2					
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	3					
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>	na					
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2					
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2					
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3					
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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