

Nottinghamshire Probation Trust

Inspection report

Unique reference number:	57583
Last day of inspection:	29 October 2010
Type of provider:	Probation Trust
Address:	Marina Road Castle Marina Nottingham NG7 1TP
Telephone number:	0115 8406500

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 Nottinghamshire Probation Trust

Nottinghamshire has nine Local Authorities: Nottingham; Broxtowe; Rushcliffe; Gedling; Mansfield; Ashfield; Newark and Sherwood; Bassetlaw; and Nottinghamshire County Council. It has a population of approximately one million people living in diverse communities ranging from affluent to some of the most deprived in the country. White British account for 90.9% of the population. The population within each local authority area varies considerably with ethnic minority communities ranging from 18.4% of the population in the City of Nottingham to 2.6% in Ashfield.

Nottinghamshire Probation Trust (the trust) has main offices are in Nottingham; Worksop; Newark; and Mansfield. There are four prisons in the county: Her Majesty's Prisons Nottingham; Ranby; Lowdham Grange; and Whatton. Nottinghamshire has a higher proportion of offenders under 25 years old than most other probation areas and has particular issues of robbery, violence and burglary across most of Nottinghamshire.

Employment, training and education is delivered through the Access Team and Positive Action for Learning Support team (PALS). An education, training and employment manager and an education manager are based in Nottingham. The Offender Learning and Skills Service provision is contracted through 'Working Links' to the end of December 2010. The trust also commissions voluntary organisations for unpaid work and uses European social funding for the 'REACH' project and for 'Through the Gate' work for those just released from prison

'Dyslexia Action' provides literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes. Probation Service staff screen all offenders with community based orders for their literacy and numeracy skills before sentencing. Offenders are able to use 20% of their time on unpaid work for education training and employment.

Offenders on unpaid work orders complete about 2,500 education, training and employment work hours per year and approximately 1,000 offenders are on community payback schemes at any one time. About 15% of offenders work in lone placements.

Information about the offender learning and employability providers:

Providers	Number of learners on discrete education, training and employment provision in 2009/10	Types of provision
New College Nottingham	261	Literacy, numeracy and vocational training
Castle College	188	Literacy, numeracy, Information technology and vocational training
Working Links Nottinghamshire	1003	Employability skills, job search and vocational training
Dyslexia Action (PALS)	1003	Dyslexia assessments, dyslexia support, literacy, numeracy and ESOL

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

Summary report

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade: Good
Capacity to improve	Grade: Good
Grade descriptor	
Quality of provision	Good
Assessment and sentence planning	
Implementation of interventions	
Achieving and sustaining outcomes	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Equality and diversity	Satisfactory
Safeguarding	Satisfactory

Overall effectiveness, including capacity to improve

Offender referrals to learning and employability skills activities were good. Referrals for low risk offenders on unpaid work orders were effective. Referrals for offenders onto education, training and employment programmes were good. The trust's and providers' arrangements for assessing barriers to learning were good.

Opportunities for unemployed offenders to improve their employment prospects were good. They received good information, advice and guidance and good support in developing job-seeking skills. Offenders had good support to improve their health and life styles. Persistent and other priority offenders received good support. There was good provision of literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes. Offender managers and tutors made good use of individual learning plans and course tutors updated them regularly. Offenders had satisfactory opportunities to improve their learning and employability skills on unpaid work orders.

Offenders' achievements of literacy and numeracy qualifications were good. Attendance at information, advice and guidance and job-seeking skills sessions was satisfactory.

The trust's arrangements to safeguard offenders were satisfactory and equality and diversity were satisfactory. Progress since the previous inspection was satisfactory.

What does Nottinghamshire Probation Trust need to do to improve further?

- Provide offender managers with clear, brief information about current range of education, training and employment interventions.
- Provide accreditation for work skills gained by offenders on unpaid work and provide prompt responses to requests for training.
- Analyse management data to support decision making and to support the evidence base for education, training and employment interventions and their links to reducing local reoffending rates.

Offender perspective - learning and employability skills as confirmed by inspectors.

Offenders found staff very helpful and friendly and thought they received good advice and training to help them find work and improve their education and work skills. Advisers set relevant targets that motivated offenders and helped to address their needs. Offenders enjoyed job-seeking activities carried out at their local probation offices. This allowed them to have appointments with other agencies at the same visit. Staff from the 'Fit for Work' programme for persistent and other priority offenders acted as good role models. Their supportive and helpful attitudes encouraged offenders to change their lives and helped to improve offenders' confidence and self-esteem. Offenders on unpaid work felt that their supervisors treated them with respect and that the public appreciated the work they were doing. Offenders in approved premises felt that they had a good range of learning

opportunities and good support to look for employment opportunities available to them.

Main inspection report

The quality of provision

Grade: Good

Assessment and sentence planning

The trust's referrals of offenders for education, training and employment related activities were good. Good information, advice and guidance sessions referred offenders to either job-seeking skills provision or to the PALS team provider for literacy, numeracy or language support or for vocationally relevant training. Offender managers also referred offenders for specialist dyslexia testing when needed. In 2009/10 a fully qualified dyslexia assessor carried out 104 dyslexia assessments. The assessments helped identify a good range of dyslexic support needs. Due to the large range of education, training and employment interventions available, offender managers do not always have sufficient knowledge of the available education, training and employment interventions. They do not know how to identify those with possible dyslexic tendencies and they currently rely on self declaration or previous identification.

Offenders were aware of the requirements of unpaid work and had been given guidance on attendance and community payback. They were clear about the likely consequences of breaches to the rules. They felt that everyone was integrated into the groups including women and felt that community payback was useful to the community. Supervisors and all staff who had face to face contact with offenders had to attend training on the pathways to reoffending and safeguarding of vulnerable adults.

Satisfactory assessment procedures were in place for education, training and employment. Assessments were consistent and well timed. Trained assessors and tutors carried out thorough diagnostic assessments for those needing greater in depth support. This included additional support for literacy, numeracy, language and dyslexia.

Implementation of interventions

The provision for unemployed offenders to improve their employment prospects was good. Effective job seeking help was available in a range of topics such as preparing curriculum vitae, job search, dealing with the disclosure of criminal records and interview techniques. There was good work to engage with employers. Very good links were developed with a large number of local employers. An employer engagement adviser successfully promoted policies for employers to include offenders in their recruitment. Imaginative methods were used to get job opportunities to offenders speedily. For example the adviser searched the internet to

find local jobs not advertised in the job centre and sent the information to the education, training and employment staff by 8.30 am so that offenders could get the information as soon as possible.

The 'Fit for Work' programme supported offenders with drug or alcohol problems and with prolific or persistent offenders. The course focused on physical fitness and healthy eating, together with work projects to develop team working and personal effectiveness skills. Many offenders had dramatic positive personality changes as a result of the training and overcame many of their problems. Some have progressed to gain employment or gained the confidence to begin other programmes to improve their job prospects. The 'REACH' programme was also very successful in helping offenders build self-esteem, improve confidence, improve motivation etc. Mentors supported the less confident offenders and accompanied them on visits, for example to the doctor or to the local college to enquire about programmes.

The range of programmes was extensive. Language programmes were provided in six areas of the county and evening and weekend provision was provided for employed offenders. Literacy and numeracy programmes helped offenders improve their basic skills. Provision was adapted to different areas of the county. For example, offenders could learn to drive in the north of the county where there is less public transport. Short programmes covered a wide range of topics including healthy eating, budgeting and education for employability.

Good support was available for offenders identified as dyslexic. Two members of the PALS team delivered good individual dyslexia support to offenders on a weekly basis. Offenders were encouraged to have free eye tests to assist with seeing words correctly. Also a diary was given, to offenders who had a poor memory, to help them to remember their appointments. Tutors made excellent use of a variety of materials including card games to help offenders remember vowels and letter sounds.

Good teaching and learning was taking place. Interesting and relevant materials were used to engage learners effectively. The best tutors were well prepared and kept a lively pace. Education, training and employment staff delivered clear and informative presentations on disclosure of offences. Tutors met individual needs well and volunteer help was available in several classes

Unpaid work was undertaken in a wide variety of locations. There were a number of outdoor projects working in parks and churchyards. Individual placements were provided in charity shops and workshops. Indoor projects, such as jewellery recycling, were available for offenders with medical conditions. Offenders were aware of the requirements of unpaid work and were told that 20% of their order could be used for education purposes. Offenders on unpaid work often demonstrated good generic work skills such as regular attendance; punctual time keeping; working well with others; good health and safety awareness; and following instructions. However, improvements in these skills were not accredited or recorded for offenders to show potential employers. Some offenders were frustrated at slow responses to requests for training. Several offenders asked to join English, maths and computer classes but had not had replies from their probation officers. Few of the offenders on unpaid work had taken up education, training and employment opportunities.

Achieving and sustaining outcomes

Grade: Good

Outcomes for learners were good. The qualification achievement target set by the trust's managers was double that of the national targets. In 2009/10, 52% achieved their intended qualification. The targets for employment sustained for four weeks in 2008/09 was 344 and 397 were achieved. In 2009/10 the target increased to 400 and after six months 239 had obtained sustained employment. In 2010/11, between April and September, 48% of offenders had achieved employment on termination of order, exceeding the 40% target.

Offenders' attendance at information, advice and guidance and employability sessions was satisfactory. The overall attendance rate was 70%. This area had improved since the previous inspection when attendance was judged to be poor. Learners reported that they looked forward to attending their programmes and that they were gaining valuable new skills that were helping to change their lives.

Leadership and management

Grade: Good

The trust and provider's staff were highly motivated and committed to helping offenders through advice, guidance, education, training and employment interventions. Offenders benefitted from good working relations between the trust and providers. The majority of provision was delivered on the trust's premises. Communications between the trust and providers were good. Providers kept offender managers regularly updated on each offender's progress, informally and through shared use of computer based offender management information systems.

Safeguarding arrangements to support offenders as vulnerable adults were satisfactory and equality and diversity were satisfactory. The trust worked effectively with providers to complete education, training and employment enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks on all relevant staff. Offender risk assessments were effectively shared with providers and management arrangements put in place. Trust and provider staff had good opportunities for relevant training and updates about safeguarding requirements. Offenders received clear information about their responsibilities to equality and diversity at their induction. Relationships between offenders and staff were respectful and offenders valued the help they received. Offenders working in lone work placements were required to agree to appropriate codes of conduct. Arrangements with providers to monitor offenders' progress, education, training and employment outcomes, and the performance of different groups of offenders, were effective. The fact that most interventions and the provision of services took place on probation premises benefitted offenders. This enabled them to have multiple appointments during the same visit, reducing travel costs and improving access to services for those who lived in more remote areas.

Education, training and employment were given a high strategic priority within the trust. Staff and managers strongly believed them to be very important in helping to

reduce reoffending. The trust however, insufficiently used data to analyse the effectiveness of interventions. Little local analysis was carried out to assess the effectiveness of different interventions on reoffending rates.

Quality improvement issues were satisfactorily discussed and agreed with providers at monthly operational and quarterly strategic meetings. This was leading to improvements in the provision. The trust made use of a wide range of performance targets to measure and track improvement. Individual offender feedback was collected and the trust made sufficient use of the feedback to improve the provision. The trust identified and effectively shared good practice through regular key partner meetings.

Information about the inspection

1. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector assisted by the trust's education, training and employment manager, as co-ordinator, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent development plans, previous inspection reports and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
2. Inspectors use a range of methods to gather the views of learners including group and individual interviews. They looked at questionnaires learners had completed, about education, training and employment, on behalf of the trust. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the main programmes offered to offenders.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404040, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 08456 404040
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk