

# HMP Risley

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 52323

**Name of lead inspector:** Jai Sharda, Ofsted Inspector

**Inspection dates:** 26 to 28 September 2022

**Type of provider:** Adult male

**Address:** Warrington Road  
Risley  
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

The purpose of the visit is to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in rectifying the weaknesses identified at the most recent visit by Ofsted. This could be an inspection or a progress monitoring visit. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of the arrangements outlined in the 'Handbook for inspecting education, skills and work activities in prisons and young offender institutions' especially the section entitled 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of this visit is on the themes set out below. Ofsted undertook this monitoring visit in its own right, without accompanying His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP).

### Themes

#### **What actions have leaders and managers taken to monitor rigorously and improve the quality of education, in particular the provision of vocational training and work? Reasonable progress**

Prison managers have strengthened the establishment's quality improvement group to ensure that it identifies accurately the quality of education and implements promptly the required actions to tackle areas for improvement. The prison's learning and skills manager ensures that meetings of the group are well attended by staff from the learning and skills provider (Novus) and by those responsible for allocations to activities in prison industries and workshops. Prison and Novus managers now work together more effectively to monitor and improve the quality of education.

Prison and Novus managers have carried out focused curriculum reviews on the quality of education, particularly vocational training, delivered by Novus staff. They have also participated in joint learning walks to monitor the quality of education. Managers use the outcomes of these activities to maintain the good standard of education identified at the last inspection. However, they have not yet fully extended these quality improvement initiatives to include the quality of work carried out by prisoners engaged in prison employment.

Novus's managers make effective use of local and regional labour market information to ensure that vocational training provision meets the needs of prisoners, particularly those who are nearing their release date. For example, in response to regional job vacancy data, managers have adapted and reconfigured existing accommodation to significantly increase the number of activity places on vocational training courses in construction, painting and decorating and industrial cleaning.

Managers recently introduced qualifications in warehousing and customer service for prisoners employed in the establishment's commercial textiles, desktop publishing and recycling workshops. Though enrolling on one of these qualifications is not

mandatory, achievement rates for those prisoners who do enrol are high. However, these are generic courses that do not provide prisoners with a subject-specific qualification in textiles, desktop publishing or recycling to support their prospects of employment upon release.

**What actions have leaders and managers taken to ensure that all prisoners who need it can access vocational training and engage in challenging work that develops their skills and enables them to achieve the appropriate qualifications? Reasonable progress**

Novus offers an effective range of vocational training opportunities. Prisoners can study qualifications at level 1 and 2 in barista training, painting and decorating, construction, and hospitality and catering. Prison managers ensure that all prisoners who need it, including vulnerable prisoners, can access vocational training, and that they are not unfairly disadvantaged during the process of allocating prisoners to purposeful activity.

Teachers and instructors ensure that prisoners participating in vocational training and prison employment engage in challenging work that develops appropriate personal and social skills alongside technical and work skills. As a result, prisoners are respectful towards each other and prison and Novus staff. Teachers and instructors promptly challenge prisoners on the rare occasions when they use inappropriate language.

Prison managers have significantly reduced the number and range of activity places identified during the previous inspection as mundane and repetitive. Prison staff ensure that prisoners allocated to work and industries are purposefully occupied during their working hours. As a result, prisoners are highly motivated, achieve qualifications, complete tasks to a high standard and take pride in their work.

Prison and Novus managers ensure that vocational training and commercial workshop areas are resourced appropriately and replicate commercial standards. Prisoners' attendance at work is high. As a result, they develop relevant and appropriate work-related skills and achieve the appropriate qualifications, which particularly benefit the 80 or so prisoners released each month into the community.

In order to provide a record of prisoners' technical and work skills, including any qualification achievements, prison managers introduced a progress booklet for them to complete and then share with prospective employers upon release. However, few prisoners complete these booklets to the expected standard, despite managers' attempts to ensure that they do so.

**What actions have leaders and managers taken to ensure that all teachers plan lessons effectively, making good use of initial assessments and integrating mathematics and English in lessons? Reasonable progress**

Lesson planning has improved and is now effective. Teachers use Novus's well-designed and accessible lesson plan format to plan sessions. They identify clear opportunities for prisoners to practise and rehearse what they have learned and to develop wider skills in English and mathematics, where possible. Scrutiny of completed lesson plans, supported by classroom visits, indicates that these aims have largely been achieved.

Teachers now make better use of initial assessment to plan learning. All prisoners complete an initial assessment in English and mathematics, and for those who require it a detailed assessment of additional learning needs. Teachers provide suitable adaptations and in-class support for prisoners with special educational needs. As a result, these prisoners progress and achieve in line with their peers.

Teachers have received suitable training to help them integrate English and mathematics in lessons, especially in vocational training. Prisoners on Novus's painting and decorating, barista training and construction programmes receive structured support that develops their mathematical and English language skills in appropriately contextualised settings. Teachers take care to incorporate specialist language and correct commonly misspelled words during learning sessions.

Novus's managers now offer a qualification in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) to meet the needs of the increasing population of foreign national prisoners. They have also very recently devised an improved initial assessment and diagnostic tool for these prisoners to ensure that they are allocated to an ESOL course at a suitable level. It is too soon to determine the impact of this initiative.

Prison managers have been slow to respond to the need to develop the English and mathematical skills of prisoners working in the commercial workshops and for those engaged in prison work. Consequently, these prisoners do not improve their skills in these important subjects, which reduces their prospects of employment upon their release.

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