

Hampshire Probation Trust

Inspection report

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Type of provider: Probation Trust

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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 area

Hampshire Probation Trust (the Trust) covers the unitary authorities of Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight plus the two-tier authority of Hampshire County Council which comprises 11 district local authorities. Population density is high in the two cities of Portsmouth (196,300) and Southampton (228,600), followed by Basingstoke (158,000), whilst the Isle of Wight is relatively small (130,000). By contrast, large areas of north Hampshire and the New Forest are rural. There are areas of significant deprivation, particularly in urban areas. In some schools in Havant and Portsmouth only 8% of children achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* - C.

The Trust has an education, training and employment team spread throughout the county, working in the community. Probation staff are also seconded to the Isle of Wight cluster. Two other prison establishments are on the mainland, at Winchester and Kingston (Portsmouth). The offender profile across the Hampshire shows particularly high levels of need for education, training and employment. Fifty-five percent of offenders across the region are unemployed. Thirty-four percent have no qualifications and 65% are recorded as having significant problems with employment history.

The Trust's team is part of the newly formed Interventions Directorate and provides a range of interventions including the provision of essential skills and qualifications to offenders through the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS). A consortium of local colleges led by Totton College delivers the provision. In 2009/10, the Trust also commissioned Women's Wisdom to provide empowerment programmes to women offenders. From April 2010, the Trust's provision was enhanced with a National Offender Management Service/ European Social Fund contract awarded to Serco and subcontracted to Creating Futures.

Information about the offender learning and employability providers:

Lead providers and their subcontractors	Number of learners on discrete provision	Types of provision
Totton College (Lead)	182	Information, advice and guidance, Construction site certification scheme (CSCS) card; Essential skills
Portsmouth College	65	Information, advice and guidance; Essential skills
Isle of Wight College	29	Essential skills
Fareham College	26	Information, advice and guidance; Essential skills
Basingstoke College of Technology	32	Essential skills
Learning Links	47	Information, advice and guidance
Barton Peveril College	91	Information, advice and guidance; Essential skills
Careers Enterprise (VT)	187	Information, advice and guidance
Other providers	Number of learners	Types of provision
Learning links	13	CSCS card
City Limits	121	Confidence building
Shaw Trust	6	Employability support
Maximus	Data not recorded	Employability support
Jobcentre Plus	Data not recorded	Employability support
Creating Futures	118	Employability support; Information, advice and guidance
Probation	967	Information, advice and guidance; Confidence building; Employability support

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: satisfactory
Capacity to improve	Grade: satisfactory
	Grade descriptor
Quality of provision	satisfactory
Assessment and sentence planning	
Implementation of interventions	
Achieving and sustaining outcomes	satisfactory
Leadership and management	satisfactory
Equality and diversity	good
Safeguarding	satisfactory

Overall effectiveness, including capacity to improve

Offenders' learning and skills support needs were thoroughly assessed at induction and prior to engagement in learning activities. Arrangements for induction into unpaid work and community payback projects were good. The range of literacy and numeracy provision and employability training was also good, but waiting lists for courses were too long in some areas. Achievement rates for offenders into sustained employment were high but, although many offenders made good progress on literacy and numeracy programmes, achievement rates of qualifications were very low. Teaching and learning overall were satisfactory with some good aspects.

Offenders had benefited from the Trust's use of innovative projects and initiatives. The Trust's strategic planning for offender learning and employability was clear. Communications within the probation area on a day to day operational basis were very effective and staff worked well together to share good practice, particularly relating to unpaid work projects. The Trust's commitment to equality and diversity was good and its obligations towards offenders as vulnerable adults were satisfactory.

The Trust's capacity to make and sustain improvements and maintain high standards was satisfactory. The range and quality of unpaid work placements had significantly improved and despite unclear and unhelpful OLASS contracting arrangements the essential skills provision had improved. Quality improvement and the Trust's self assessment arrangements required further development. Lead providers' self-

assessment processes were thorough; however, the recent changes and developments in the collection and use of data hampered the target setting process.

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

- Clarify contractual arrangements for the provision of information, advice and guidance and essential skills across the area to promote a well-managed and coordinated process that supports prompt referrals and starts for literacy and numeracy tuition and increases completion and success rates.
- Increase the quantity of accredited training and arrangements to recognise and record non-accredited learning, to ensure that all offenders receive recognition for skills gained on unpaid work projects.
- Implement self-assessment arrangements and use data to support target setting, as effective tools to measure and further improve the quality of education, training and employment provision.

Offender perspective - learning and employability as confirmed by inspectors.

A total of 58 offenders were interviewed as part of the inspection process, individually or in groups. Many offenders felt that learning and employability skills interventions helped improve their prospects for employment and their confidence. Most offenders appreciated the advice given to them by education, training and employment officers about applying for jobs and dealing with disclosure. Those offenders on unpaid work felt very well supported and valued the chance to pay back to the community. Those on Skills for Life programmes appreciated the encouragement tutors provided and many felt they had made good progress. Some offenders commented that access to essential skills programmes was poor. Many offenders on unpaid work felt that there were good opportunities to improve their skills. However, they commented that they received little training on some projects. Offenders in approved premises felt that there were too few education and employment related training opportunities. Some offenders felt they had to travel too far to see staff about training and jobs. Many of those interviewed welcomed the opportunity of using the provision of 20% of unpaid work for education, training or employment related activities. However, some had not had their hours recorded and taken into account.

Main inspection report

The quality of provision

Grade: Satisfactory

Assessment and sentence planning

Education, training and employment related information, advice and guidance provision was good. Education, training and employment officers offered good and prompt support for offenders seeking work and/or training and informed offenders about the available information, advice and guidance at their induction session. Relationships between officers and offenders were productive and purposeful in finding helpful ways to overcome barriers to employment. Links with voluntary sector and other support agencies to tackle barriers to work were good and a comprehensive range of training course leaflets and information was made available to offenders.

Initial assessment was thorough, evaluated and disseminated promptly to relevant education, training and employment staff. Initial screening was completed at pre-sentence assessment followed by diagnostic assessments at induction. Initial assessment findings were used well to develop learning plans. Referral processes for Skills for Life training were clear and appropriate records completed. Generally, all involved in education, training and employment, including key workers at approved premises were aware of specified actions within the sentence plan. Approved premises staff received pre-release referral forms, from multi-agency public protection assessment teams, providing comprehensive information that was used effectively to develop appropriate action plans. In most cases, relevant information was exchanged promptly between offender managers and education, training and employment officers.

Learning and employability related induction arrangements were well developed. Unpaid work managers and staff provided a comprehensive induction into unpaid work projects. Offenders were fully aware of health and safety requirements and used personal and protective equipment appropriately. All projects were checked well before acceptance and well supervised.

Offender managers' promotion of education, training and employment was inconsistent and many of them placed insufficient importance to it as an activity. Whilst some offender managers were keen and supportive, many made no referrals and its use as a specified activity was very low. However, it was rarely used as a requirement following breach of order.

Links between external information, advice and guidance and Skills for Life tutors were poor. Waiting lists for offenders to attend Skills for Life sessions in some areas were too long. Offenders were required to receive an information, advice and guidance session for referral before they could start a course. With these long delays, Skills for Life tutors often had too few learners. In some areas essential skills provision was insufficient.

Implementation of interventions

Employability skills training and experience provided through unpaid work was good. A good understanding of pro-social modelling was clearly demonstrated by supervisors and placement providers. Offenders demonstrated good vocational skills including the use of tools and equipment. They worked well together, were aware of the need for punctuality and demonstrated responsibility to the beneficiary. Offenders confidently followed instructions given by placement supervisors.

The range of unpaid work activities was good. Placements provided a wide range of experiences for offenders and many were located with well established voluntary organisations with considerable experience of the client group. The very supportive beneficiary organisations offered considerable practical support, were flexible in managing offenders, and recognised the valuable contribution they made to their causes.

Good, personalised Skills for Life tuition was provided. Where offenders were accessing literacy and numeracy support, tutors carefully planned teaching and learning to meet their individual needs; progress and achievements were clearly recorded. Offenders made good progress, particularly where sessions took place on probation premises. Tutors created an environment conducive to learning and providing access to good resources, including the internet. The experienced and well-qualified tutors related well to offenders.

Visiting education, training and employment officers provided particularly good support for residents in approved premises. Their essential service to residents, included information, advice and guidance across a wide range of matters, including disclosure, job search skills, referral to support agencies and help with skills training, such as for the CSCS card. Education, training and employment officers in the Trust's offices provided a good service within constraints imposed by shortage of time and resources. Offenders particularly valued the one to one meetings with the officers.

Liaison and partnership working with a range of organisations, support agencies and local learning providers, as part of a multi-agency approach to interventions, was good. Good links with a range of organisations has enabled education, training and employment officers to make appropriate referrals when specialist advice and support was required, or required programmes did not lie within the Trust's scope. Offenders with drugs misuse problems were referred to The Bridge or the Drugs Intervention Project. The Wheatsheaf Project was used to provide offenders with opportunities to attend workshops providing employability skills, such as job applications and CVs etc.

Insufficient recognition and recording of employability skills, developed through unpaid work projects, was given. Offenders developed good employment related skills, and gained confidence and self esteem in many of the unpaid work placements. In a few placements, the beneficiary accredited skills through

recognised training. In most cases however, offenders' progress and development were not being recognised or recorded.

The level of education, training and employment service in some areas was poor. In north east Hampshire, there was only one officer covering a wide geographical area; officers who left in Winchester and Farnborough were not replaced. This placed additional pressure on the single officer and disadvantaged offenders living in areas with no officer. Employment support courses at Havant were in jeopardy because funding was being withdrawn at the end of July; no contingency to ensure continuation of these services was in place.

Achieving and sustaining outcomes

Grade: Satisfactory

Job outcomes were good. Data showed that approximately 50% of offenders referred to education, training and employment obtained employment. The progression of offenders into sustained employment was very good at 79%.

Opportunities for offenders to achieve literacy and numeracy qualifications were good in many areas. Courses focused on progressing learners through rising levels of skills by enabling them to sit tests and achieve qualifications and gain in confidence and motivation.

Insufficient accredited training was available. Although offenders on unpaid work were developing good vocational and employability skills, their competence was not formally accredited or recognised. Very few accredited training courses were available alongside the unpaid work activities. Good initiatives and good use of partnerships have been put in place by education, training and employment officers to arrange CSCS card tuition and testing.

Qualification achievement rates were low. Data showed that only approximately 5% of those referred for training achieved their learning aim. The majority of offenders referred either did not start training, left before completing a qualification or were awaiting a start date for training. Figures showed that 168 offenders referred in April 2009 were still waiting for a start date for training in March 2010. Some individual providers were able to supply data showing satisfactory achievement. The central data collection system was relatively new and was not able to provide sufficient and accurate data trends over time.

Leadership and management

Grade: Satisfactory

Education, training and employment officers were well qualified and experienced. Eligible officers were invited to complete information, advice and guidance qualifications at level 4, and had started this training. They accessed and appreciated the wide range of further training available, such as healthy and safety, equality and diversity and managing challenging behaviour. Many officers had been in post a number of years and were confident and able in working with the client group.

Unpaid work provision was well managed. Communication between unpaid work managers, placement managers and supervisors was very good. Links with beneficiaries and the public to improve the profile of unpaid work was particularly effective. Productive partnerships maximised training and job opportunities for offenders, particularly joint work with local councils. Individual placements were managed well and provided very good skills development and employment prospects.

Particularly good specialist programmes had been developed to meet the needs of women offenders. The development of well planned and implemented women offender only projects supported them very effectively. Good support services, including childcare, were available. Well researched policies and implementation plans were clearly underpinned by legislative and wider procedural principles, including equality impact assessments. The management of the programme was good. Very effective and productive links with essential skills tutors and the external information, advice and guidance provider worked well and women offenders were able to access well-coordinated provision with all activities located together. The women made good progress and applied useful strategies, learnt on the programme, to their home and community relationships.

The promotion of equality and diversity was good on some on unpaid work placements. Supervisors and employers/placement providers were sensitive to the needs of offenders and ensured that they understood the needs of the public and the tasks they were asked to complete. Respect for others was strong. The reinforcement of equality and diversity and its impact on offenders on unpaid work was good. Offenders felt safe on unpaid work placements.

Equality and diversity were good and safeguarding arrangements to support offenders, as vulnerable adults, were satisfactory. In most cases, offender managers ensured that all relevant staff were effectively aware of offenders' diversity needs. Offenders felt safe and generally respected. All providers completed an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check for relevant staff. Appropriate policies were in place and staff had received training on risk assessments.

Statistical data collected and used to inform management decisions and set targets for information, advice and guidance referral and job entry rates, was confusing and unhelpful. There was a lack of clarity about the value and accuracy of data collected.

Arrangements for the contracting and delivery of external information, advice and guidance provision, were unsatisfactory. Contracting arrangements to provide external information, advice and guidance and initial assessment leading to Skills for Life provision were unhelpful and hampered referral processes. There was no sense of an overall management of the process which resulted in delays in referrals and starts for literacy and numeracy tuition. Current funding arrangements for provision were short term and lacked continuity to enable providers to recruit or retain suitable staff.

Quality improvement arrangements were underdeveloped. Self-assessment had been put on hold during the changes to Trust status and related strategic structural management changes. The staffing structure was clearly defined and placed a definite focus on education, training and employment and learning and skills within the Trust's reducing reoffending agenda. Plans were in place to introduce partnership meetings and support employer engagement work. The Trust had yet to introduce processes to monitor the quality of education, training and employment provision and fully establish target setting for improvement across the area.

Information about the inspection

1. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) assisted by the Hampshire Probation Trust's Director of Interventions as co-ordinator, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of self-assessment reports and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, previous inspection reports, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on learners and their achievement.
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 programmes offered.

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