

LEARNING & SKILLS STRATEGY

The aim of learning and skills provision in West Midlands Prisons is to assist in reducing re-offending by enabling offenders to develop their skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed for success in employment and personal effectiveness in society after release.

In support of this aim, our strategy is to -

- Ensure that all offenders are assessed to identify their learning needs, and that these assessments inform allocation to activities.
- Operate a regime which ensures that all offenders achieve at least Level 1 in Functional Skills (FS) Maths and English, unless they are unable to benefit from this provision. (For example because they are foreign nationals or have learning disabilities, or are serving a sentence too short to enable this qualification to be achieved).
- Offer the opportunity to progress to level 2 Functional Skills to all offenders who are capable of achieving it, alongside work or other regime activities.
- Offer pre-entry provision in all prisons, with access to additional support where necessary, for those unable to participate in Functional Skills at Level 1.
- Provide vocational courses in subjects which are informed by Labour Market Information (derived from the National Careers Service).
- Ensure that the regime allows all offenders whose sentence plan includes vocational training to work towards vocational qualifications at levels 1 and 2 alongside work or other regime activities, before they are released
- Provide courses which improve the personal skills needed in order to function effectively in society.
- To embed sustainability through the planning and delivery of curriculum, as part of professional development and as a core feature of the prison's work with the wider community.
- To promote the understanding of sustainability, its relevance and potential across the prison population
- Provide guidance and support through the partnership with the National Careers Service to all offenders, enabling them to make realistic career choices and develop a Skills Action Plan linked to their Lifelong Learning Account.
- Provide all prisoners with an Individual Learning Plan, with objectives linked to the Skills Action Plan and ensuring that the offenders' sentence plan takes account of learning needs and supports progress towards the targets in their Individual Learning Plan and Skills Action Plan.
- Ensure that all offenders are issued with a Unique Learner Number (ULN) where appropriate and have their progress recorded on the Learner Records Service, so that Offender Managers and Learning & Skills staff can provide continuity of learning for prisoners transferred between establishments and released into the community.
- Support the learning and skills process through regimes which incentivise attendance and achievement, and through effective quality assurance.
- Review all courses annually, in the light of learner feedback, success rates, Labour Market Information and the outcomes of quality assurance procedures.
- Carefully monitor the delivery of programmes in each establishment, to ensure that funding is effectively and fully utilised.
- Develop E-Learning opportunities for all prisoners, through access to the Virtual Campus.
- Ensure effective progression routes to sustainable employment are fully embedded.