

Learner engagement in quality improvement

Learner feedback has been used successfully for some time to improve provision. Learner voice is an invaluable source of information.

Observations of teaching and learning are a well-established performance measurement.

LSIS have been involved in supporting a peer review and development group, lead by HMP Hewell with the successful initiative of bringing together these two activities.

Within this resource:

- Evaluation of provision within the common inspection framework and within the revised expectations used by Ofsted and HMIP.
- Case study from HMP Hewell on successful learner engagement in quality improvement.

Common inspection framework – Inspection handbook

Leaders and managers evaluate the quality of provision through robust self-assessment, taking account of users' views, and use the findings to promote and develop capacity for sustained improvement.

To make this judgement, inspectors will consider:

- there are effective arrangements for quality assurance that maintain high standards and identify and tackle underperformance
- the provider's self-assessment process is rigorous and the subsequent evaluations are appropriately detailed and accurate
- learners are fully engaged in reviewing, reflecting on and improving provision

Expectations

Outcomes for prisoners are improved by effective management of learning and skills and work. Strategic planning is clear, realistic and promotes high standards. Provision is well coordinated and efficient.

Indicators References

Self assessment of learning and skills and work is timely and accurate, and reports are suitably inclusive of the views of prisoners, staff, partners and stakeholders.

Case study

HMP Hewell

Offender Learners Improving Performance (OLIP)

The aim

To achieve the greater involvement of learners in the evaluation of standards of teaching and learning leading to quality improvement.

Through development, training and skills this PRD project aimed to break down barriers and perceptions of the limited contribution offender learners can make to quality improvement and self assessment creating self-evaluation of learning and skills provision in HM Prisons with offender learners judging the quality of work of others.

Who was involved

The prisons involved were HMP Hewell and category B and D establishments holding 1200 adult male prisoners. HMP Long Lartin, a High Security prison and HMP Foston Hall holding female prisoners were also involved. The decision was to work across 3 establishments to ascertain if this concept could be implemented in most prison environments. In addition, collaboration with OLASS contractors was undertaken.

The approach

The PRD Group set out to improve the quality of teaching and learning in a range of environments. Following the LSIS publication – “Self-assessment and Improvement Planning - A User Guide for Learning and Skills Providers,” it was agreed amongst the group that the primary purpose of self-assessment and improvement planning is to improve the quality of the learning experience and the outcomes for all learners.

The project was named Offender Learners Improving Performance. (OLIP)

At HMP Hewell the concept was promoted and 4 prisoner/learners recruited with at least 18 months left to serve. There was a minimum requirement of Level 2 ability in literacy and numeracy.

HMP Hewell worked with the OLASS provider and the LSIS PRD Adviser to develop some specific ‘Lesson Observation’ training. This training also involved Quality Improvement training.

Basic job descriptions were devised for Peer Reviewers and Learning Mentors and T Shirts for easy recognition.

Specific training for Peer Mentors was undertaken. Offender learners were fully involved in developing bespoke paperwork that links to the new Common Inspection Framework and ultimately the Self Assessment Report.

Outcome and impact of the work

Reviews have been successfully carried out by a team of trained offender learners/observers.

The outcomes and findings have been analysed.

A number of improvement initiatives are in the process of being introduced including:

- Greater access to the virtual campus.
- Greater awareness and recognition of the value of transferable skills being developed in the workshop.
- Better promotion and prison wide use of the 'Passport to employment.'

Other benefits and outcomes of OLIP included:

- Provide immediate support in the classroom/learning environment.
- Learners responded well to peers.
- Staff were open to the concept and offender learners/observers were welcomed.
- Increased self esteem for the Offender learners/observers.

Next steps

A second cohort of learners has now been appointed, training and support was given by the current team to add sustainability. Further succession planning is now being undergone with the third team in the process of being recruited. As yet HMP Hewell is the only prison within the PRD group to reach this stage.

Resources

OLIP assessment/observation sheet