

ADVICE  
RESOURCES

# WORKING IN HM PRISONS

A guide for information, advice  
and guidance practitioners



This guide gives you a general overview of working in a prison and provides the background information you need to work effectively. The CD-ROM overleaf contains a template which you can use to collect and fill in specific information about the prison you work in.

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# INTRODUCTION

As an IAG practitioner, you may come into contact with offenders in the course of your work. If you do, you'll need to prepare for the unique demands working in a prison brings. This guide aims to give you the background knowledge and practical guidelines to enable you to work in a secure environment confidently and effectively.

A good working knowledge of the system is a key starting point, in this handbook you'll find:

- a guide to types of offenders and sentences
- an introduction to the work of NOMS, the National Offenders Management Service
- current strategies for reducing reoffending
- key partnerships between the Prison Service and other bodies.

Working in prisons brings its own particular demands, requiring high standards of professional and personal conduct. The guide outlines these standards, as well as the basic precautions you can take to protect your own safety and security.

# WORKING IN A PRISON

Each prison has its own unique prisoner population, location, culture and history. But some rules of behaviour are common to all secure environments. You need to be aware of them before you start working in a prison.

## **What not to do if you work in a prison**

There are many things you should avoid doing when you enter a prison. Some of them aren't always obvious. Here are some basic instructions you need to follow.

- Don't leave personal possessions and work bags unattended.
- Don't agree to do anything for a prisoner outside the prison, such as make a telephone call, post a letter, make a purchase or visit another prisoner on their behalf.
- Don't accept gifts from prisoners.
- Don't take photographs into prison.
- Don't make promises to prisoners that you cannot keep.

- Don't become over-friendly with a prisoner as they may become attached. If this happens, you should speak to your learning and skills manager.
- All prisons have a 'no touch' policy, which is explained to prisoners at their induction.
- Never ask prisoners or prison staff about a prisoner's offences unless it is directly relevant to your work. Prisoners may choose to divulge information, which you should treat sensitively.
- Never discuss yours or other prison staff's personal circumstances with prisoners. Never give them your home address or telephone number. If an ex-prisoner is moved into accommodation near your home, inform prison security.

### **Dress code**

All staff should wear appropriate clothes when working in a prison. You need to dress smartly and respectfully. Women should avoid excessive make up, perfume or jewellery as it can cause unnecessary and unwanted attention from prisoners.

Think of your personal safety and dress down. Men should wear a shirt, clip-on tie and smart trousers. All staff should wear sensible shoes rather than slip-ons or sandals as you may need to move quickly if there is an incident.

### **Keys and key security**

If you have authorised keys you'll be given a numbered tally disc. The number on the tally corresponds to the position of your keys, which are stored in the key safe. The gatekeeper maintains a list of people who have a tally along with how many and what types of key are on each bunch. If they suspect a key has been tampered with they can check against the list.

Your keys must be kept safe. The following list gives more information about using prison keys and keeping them secure.

- A risk assessment is carried out on each person before they can have keys.
- You receive a belt, key chain and pouch before you are issued with keys. Always check the length of the chain as you can damage your keys if you drop them.

- Never take your keys, pouch or chain outside the prison.
- Always check your keys match the number on your tally.
- You must always secure your keys to a key chain.
- Never carry your keys loose in your pocket or handbag.
- Never leave your keys in a drawer.
- Always keep keys hidden except when opening or closing gates.
- Never lend your keys to anyone else – they are your responsibility.
- Do not leave a key if it breaks in a lock. Wait for a member of prison staff to come and secure the gate. Take your broken key or damaged keys to the security manager with a written explanation of how the damage occurred.
- Never allow a prisoner through a gate unless accompanied by an officer.
- Never allow prisoners to examine, handle or repair your keys.

- Always keep personal belongings safe in your locker.
- If you lose your keys, report them to the security manager or orderly officer immediately.

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All staff must dress appropriately and professionally when working in a secure environment.

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## Taking items into prison

There are many items you can't take into prisons for security reasons. Some of them may not be immediately obvious, so make sure you're aware of the following list.

- illegal drugs
- mobiles phones
- laptop computers
- cameras
- tape recorders
- radios
- walkmans
- videos
- computer discs
- any tools
- pen knives
- chewing gum
- blu-tack
- glue
- sticky tape
- anything sharp
- umbrellas
- syringes
- alcohol
- unauthorised medication
- some high security prisons do not allow wire bound notebooks

There are severe consequences for anyone found trafficking. All staff are made aware of this at their security induction.

## Your identity card

All prison staff must carry a prison service identity card at all times as it gives you authority to enter the prison. You must take reasonable precautions to stop your card being misused, stolen or copied.

Some practical advice when using your identity card:

- leave it somewhere safe on days you're not working
- if you are working in a department outside the prison, don't leave your identity card unattended
- never lend your card to anyone
- do not use your card as a means of identification when outside the prison
- if you know you won't be working in prison for a long period of time, hand your card to the security department

- to get a permanent identity card, you must supply two passport-sized photographs. The security manager can arrange a temporary card in the meantime
- if you lose your identity card, you must report to the security department immediately to prevent any serious breach of security.

# CODES OF CONDUCT AND WORKING WITH OFFENDERS

To work alongside prison service staff and with prisoners, you need to be aware of security issues, safety procedures and codes of conduct. A copy of the standards will be on display in each prison.

## Professional and personal conduct

Prisons are secure establishments and no one should act in a way that compromises the safety and security of those who work and live there. All prison staff must follow standards of professional and personal conduct.

The following list outlines some of the key things you need to remember.

- Deal fairly, openly and humanely with prisoners and those who come into contact with them
- Encourage prisoners to address offending behaviour and respect others
- Be vigilant at all times
- Be aware of offenders who show signs of self harm or suicide

- Always address offenders courteously and politely
- Value and support your colleagues' contribution
- Promote equal opportunities for all and combat discrimination if it occurs
- Work constructively with criminal justice agencies and other organisations
- Obtain best value from the resources available.

### **How to conduct yourself**

There are certain expectations when it comes to working in a prison, particularly with offenders. You must always adhere to the following professional and personal standards of conduct.

- You must carry out your duties loyally, conscientiously, honestly and with integrity. You must take responsibility, and be accountable, for your actions.
- You must be courteous, reasonable and fair when dealing with prisoners and colleagues. You should treat people with decency and respect.

- You must comply with prison service policies and procedures. Managers must ensure that standards of behaviour and conduct are maintained.

## **Relationships with prisoners**

You must take care to make sure your contact with prisoners, former prisoners, their friends and relatives is not open to abuse, misrepresentation or exploitation on either side. Your relationships with prisoners must be professional.

In particular, you must not:

- provoke, use unnecessary, unlawful force or assault a prisoner
- use offensive language to a prisoner
- have any sexual involvement with a prisoner
- give prisoners or ex-prisoners personal or other information about staff, other prisoners or their friends and relatives
- have any unauthorised contact, in or outside work, with prisoners or ex-prisoners
- accept any approach by a prisoner for unauthorised information or favours.

You should report any incidents to security using a Security Incident Report (SIR) form, and to the learning and skills manager, your line manager or mentor.

### **Corruption**

Corrupt behaviour is not acceptable. You must not solicit or accept any advantage, reward or preferential treatment by abusing or misusing your power and authority.

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It's important to respect prisoners' privacy. You should never discuss or divulge information about prisoners or give their names to anyone outside the prison.

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## The Professional Standards Statement (PSO1215 – Professional Standards)

Prison staff and external agencies are expected to meet high standards of professional and personal conduct. You are personally responsible for your conduct and failure to comply with the professional standards statement can lead to disciplinary action, which may include dismissal.

### Dealing with complaints

The prison service is committed to strict codes of conduct and good practice, but there may be occasions when certain behaviour seriously offends decency and fairness. Offensive behaviour can be displayed by, or directed towards, prisoners, prison staff or people working in or visiting a prison.

Organisations or agencies working in this environment will have their own protocols for dealing with these situations. If you have concerns, you should first speak to a senior member of staff in your own organisation. They will have the knowledge and experience to assess the situation and take the most appropriate course of action.

Most matters can be resolved by senior managers of the organisation or agency working with the appropriate prison link member or designated voluntary sector co-ordinator. It's important to preserve the working relationship and protect the integrity and independence of your organisation.

If the matter cannot be satisfactorily resolved in this way, you can follow formal complaint procedures.

# SAFETY AND SECURITY

As an IAG practitioner working in a prison, your safety is extremely important. There are several procedures in place which allow you to work in a safe and secure environment, and plenty of people you can turn to for advice and information.

## Your personal safety

Many non-discipline and civilian staff work in the prison system. For the majority of the time you will be in a very safe, controlled environment where incidents are unusual. However, you should take some basic precautions for your own safety.

Some general advice:

- make sure you have a prison induction
- always tell someone your location if you leave the learning and skills department
- be aware of the prison's hostage taking procedure
- make sure you know how to report worrying incidents or intimidation

- if you're in doubt about security, seek advice from a prison officer, security officer, learning and skills manager or mentor
- never enter a prisoner's cell.

Your prison may provide training in breakaway techniques. This depends on the type of prison you're working in and the role played by the voluntary and community sector.

### What does 'security' mean?

Of course, the key function of a prison is to keep inmates inside. A prison must also manage the entry and exit of people from the outside while keeping prisoners in custody. Security provides the foundation on which all positive regimes are based. By preventing escapes, more resources can be invested in programmes to treat, educate and rehabilitate prisoners.

Security is an all-encompassing term that covers:

- **physical security** – walls, bars, locks and more modern devices such as CCTV
- **procedures** – including roll calls, accounting for prisoners and searching cells

- **assessment** – such as categorising prisoners to keep them in appropriate security conditions
- intelligence gathering.

We can maintain security by:

- diverting prisoners' energy into constructive work and activity
- developing positive relationships with prisoners
- creating good, beneficial regimes and programmes for prisoners.

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You will be given a full security talk as part of your induction, including detailed information about how it affects your work. You'll get a chance to ask any questions you may have.

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### **State of alert**

All prison buildings must take security measures against terrorist attacks and similar threats.

At each entrance, a notice board indicates the current 'state of alert'. This refers to threats from outside the prison only.

There are four states of alert:

- **Black** – a basic level of alert and vigilance
- **Black Special** – increased non-specific external threat
- **Amber** – specific external threat
- **Red** – specific external threat requiring action.

Anyone visiting the prison may face increased security measures depending on the state of alert. Occasionally, visitors may be excluded if there is a temporary ‘shut down’ as a result of internal tensions or problems.

### **Drugs and searches**

Visitors and staff may be subject to searches for drugs, weapons, mobile phones or other inappropriate items. This could be a simple ‘rub down’ or a more thorough search. Most prisons use airport-type x-ray machines and drug detection dogs. Anyone attempting to smuggle drugs into prison will be prosecuted.

Prisoners receive mandatory drug testing through urine samples. Prisoners with positive samples lose privileges and may have days added to their sentence.

## Security Information Reports

If you hear or see anything unusual, such as bullying, racism or a passing of parcels, please fill in a security information report and inform your line manager or mentor. What you've witnessed may provide the missing piece to a current security operation, or even the start of a new one.

### A brief history of security in prisons

#### Categorising prisoners: the Mountbatten Report

Escapes in the mid-1960s by the spy, George Blake, and the Great Train Robber, Ronnie Biggs, led to the commissioning of the Mountbatten Report, which radically altered prison security. It introduced the four-tier categorisation system, which puts prisoners into categories (A, B, C or D) depending on the security threat they pose. It also increased the physical level of security, which has since become increasingly technology-based.

The report recommended all Category A prisoners be kept in a newly-built maximum security prison, but this was opposed by practitioners and academics. Instead, high-risk prisoners are dispersed throughout the prison system in high-security prisons (dispersal prisons).

## **Riots in prison and the Woolf Report**

The most serious prison riot came in 1990 at Strangeways, HMP Manchester. It was followed by the influential Woolf Report, which investigated the cause of the riot and proposed 12 central recommendations, 11 of which were accepted in principle by the Government.

The Report highlighted some of the problems surrounding living conditions in prison. This led to the phasing out of 'slopping out', and to a number of other significant changes, such as the appointment of a prisons ombudsman.

## **Increasing security and changing focus**

The Whitemoor (1994) and Parkhurst (1995) escapes led to reports which placed an even greater emphasis on security, not just for Category A prisoners, but across the whole prison estate. As a result, the number of escapes is minimal and the prison service is able to focus on constructive activities, offending behaviour programmes and resettlement.

# HOW DOES A PRISON OPERATE?

Before you enter a prison, you need to get to grips with each department, its role within the organisation and how it affects your work.

## **The gatehouse**

All staff, prisoners, visitors and contractors enter and leave the prison via the gatehouse. Staff will need to check your ID, so make sure you have it with you.

The security manager can give you your own tally card and set of keys. If you don't have a tally, you must sign in and out of the prison and carry your ID at all times. You can get keys throughout the day, but must return them by 5pm. You should inform the gatehouse if you wish to work beyond this time and under no circumstances take keys out of the prison.

## **Reception**

Everyone must go through reception when they arrive or depart. Reception works closely with the gatehouse to monitor the prison's roll, particularly during roll checks.

## **Healthcare**

The unit responsible for the health and welfare of all prisoners, including making appointments to see the doctor, optician, dentist or other health professionals.

Some prisons provide 24-hour healthcare units, while others only offer primary care without residential facilities. Some prisoners may need treating in hospital with special security provision.

## **Housing blocks/accommodation**

Prisoners live in housing blocks or residential accommodation. It varies from prison to prison, but living areas range from single cells to dormitories and include serveries, showers, recreation areas, telephones, wing offices and a pharmacy.

## **Separation and care unit**

Often referred to as 'The Seg', this unit is for prisoners on a disciplinary charge who are waiting for, or have been seen by the Governor. They would not normally be allowed to mix with other prisoners and may have other privileges removed, such as TV or radio.

The Seg may also have a vulnerable prisoner unit for those in need of protection from other inmates.

### **Recreation areas**

Typically found in housing blocks, prisoners can access TV rooms, pool tables and open spaces where they can mix freely.

### **Workshops**

Prisoners can use workshops to learn skills including contract cleaning, sewing, construction, car maintenance and light engineering. Some prisons have craft shops where prisoners can sell the things they make to raise money for local charities.

### **Gymnasium**

To encourage fitness, all prisons have a gymnasium for prisoners and staff. Some prisons allow inmates to gain a qualification, and staff are on hand to support fitness and well-being.

### **Visitors centre**

Typically, pre-visit checks take place here. You need a Visiting Order to visit a convicted prisoner and all visitors may be subject to a search.

## Learning and skills training

### OLASS

Prisoners can access education and training through the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS).

While many prisoners require basic and key skills tuition, the aim of OLASS is also to provide individuals with the vocational skills they need to help them get access to job opportunities in the area that they are released.

The OLASS provider can offer Skills for Life, vocational qualifications such as NVQs, GCSEs, A levels and other accredited courses. Prisoners may also be able to take English as a Second Language and Information Technology.

## Higher Education

Prescribed higher education is also available. Prisoners can be paid a weekly incentive for enrolling on a course of education. Rates of incentive are explained to each learner during their induction programme.

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# OFFENDERS AND PRISON SENTENCES

There are several kinds of prison sentence. You may be working with a range of prisoners, so it's a good idea to get some background information before you start.

## OASys

All offenders are screened before entering prison. OASys is the most advanced risk assessment system of its kind and provides a full analysis of offenders who've shown cause for concern. Assessments are updated regularly and kept on record throughout an offender's time in prison. Around 7% of offenders are considered 'high risk'.

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OASys uses actuarial and professional assessment to produce a detailed analysis of an offender's potential risk factor.

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## **Life sentences**

A life sentence is mandatory for murder and the maximum penalty for the most serious and violent offences. Offenders spend their entire lives managed by the prison system.

## **Indeterminate sentences**

These sentences don't state a specific release date, but a range of time, such as five-to-ten years. Depending on their risk assessment, offenders can be locked up even if their crime wasn't particularly serious. They'll remain in prison until they can show that they are fit for release and don't pose a threat to the community.

## **Community sentences**

Combining punishment with rehabilitation, these sentences are given to offenders who do not pose a threat to the community. However, they are demanding, increasingly well-enforced and often considered tougher than prison because they require offenders to address their problems seriously.

## **Serious offenders**

High security is paramount for serious offenders. The Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) stops organised criminals controlling activity or building up networks in prison. They also pass on information to help crack down on organised crime outside.

Prisons must meet the needs of various groups of offenders, such as those with drug problems or severe mental illnesses. Special units can deal with particular types of offenders.

## **Parole Board**

This independent panel decides whether prisoners should be given parole. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 allows the Parole Board to make decisions about sentences for public protection, licence recalls and life sentences.

## Probation

Crime is a complex issue demanding comprehensive and complex solutions. The National Probation Service (NPS) plays a major role in reducing crime.

The NPS employs 19,000 staff with support from colleagues in other organisations. They are dedicated to minimising the impact of crime on communities, especially victims of serious violent or sex-related crime. They help rehabilitate offenders serving community sentences and those released from prison by enforcing the conditions of their court orders and release licences. They take whatever steps in their power to protect the public.

## The prison population

### Black and minority groups

Over-represented in every part of the criminal justice system, recent analysis shows black and minority groups are more likely to become victims, be arrested, convicted, and are given tougher sentences.

### Young offenders

There are currently around 2,600 under 18s in custody, with 2,200 of those in prison. The Youth Justice Board says that custody should only be used when there is no other course of action due to the seriousness of the offence, the offender's history or the risk they pose to the public.

### Women in prison

In the last ten years there has been a significant increase in the number of women in prison: a rise of 126% between June 1995 and June 2005, compared to 46% of men. This reflects the fact that women are being locked up more frequently for less serious offences. There is some concern about the increase in using custody for women and the impact it has on their families and children.

## **Foreign nationals**

Foreign nationals can be released for deportation up to 135 days before the end of their sentences. The aim is to increase prisoner transfer agreements, which allows prisoners to serve their sentences in their own countries. In the future, the number of prisoners handled by the early removals system will increase.

# WHAT IS THE NATIONAL OFFENDERS MANAGEMENT SERVICE?

Whether offenders are in prison or in the community, we need to manage them better to stop them re-offending. They need to have the chance to change their offending behaviour.

The National Offenders Management Service (NOMS) commissions and provides the highest quality correctional facilities to reduce re-offending and protect the public.

NOMS is one of the most ambitious change programmes in government. It's designed to deliver the vision set out in Reducing Crime, Changing Lives, the Government response to the Carter Review of Correctional Services.

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People in the criminal justice system have the poorest education and health in the country, making them more likely to re-offend.

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### **Commissioning**

NOMS bridges the divide between custody and community. Through commissioning, it establishes service-level agreements and contracts with a wide range of offender management providers from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. These providers deliver services to punish, support, educate and rehabilitate offenders.

Probation areas are currently separating their provision into offender management and interventions. This will broaden the market and allow many more organisations to use their skills and expertise to help offenders turn away from crime.

## **Regional offender managers (ROMs)**

ROMs are responsible for commissioning and managing services offered by providers. There are nine ROMs in England and a director of offender management in Wales.

Regions are currently separating their provision into offender management and interventions. This broadens the market and allows many more organisations to use their skills and expertise to help offenders turn away from crime.

When designing an offender's individual rehabilitation programme, it's important to consider their previous education, employment potential, previous substance misuse and family make-up.

## **Offender managers**

Offender managers are responsible for making sure offenders are punished and rehabilitated properly. They manage the offender throughout their prison sentence, including time on a community sentence or on license in the community.

NOMS helps offender managers get to know offenders and provide the continuity needed to help their rehabilitation and manage any possible risks. They use assessments to make a plan for each offender. This includes enforcing the punishment as well as helping and supporting them with education, housing and employment.

Offender management started in April 2006 and will cover all offenders by 2008.

## **Resettlement**

Prison and probation services and voluntary agencies help prepare and support prisoners and their families for life after prison. They provide advice about training, education, work experience, preparation for release and entitlements to state benefits.

Resettlement work involves helping prisoners return to a normal life by assisting them in finding a job, accommodation and training. Much of what happens during a prisoner's time in custody is also significant, such as whether they took part in offending behaviour programmes. There are several initiatives in place to help offenders cope with life on their release.

## **National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO)**

NACRO is an independent, voluntary organisation working to prevent crime by developing and implementing effective approaches to dealing with offenders constructively. It manages a wide range of projects throughout England and Wales including housing projects, which accommodate over 3,000 ex-offenders and other homeless and vulnerable people each year. NACRO provides housing advice and helps people develop the skills they need to live independently.

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Helping offenders secure employment or training and accommodation for their release is an important part of resettlement work.

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‘We want to see radical improvements in the delivery of sentences, which focus on how best to tackle each individual’s offending behaviour and set out goals from the outset of the sentence. The end-to-end offender management will enable the custodial and community supervision elements of an offender’s sentence to be managed as a whole.’

**Charles Clarke, former Home Secretary**

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## Achieving successful resettlement

### **Social and family links**

Successful resettlement often relies on an offender's social and family links. They're at the heart of offender management and can help with other problems, including employment and housing. Probation boards are statutory bodies with the right to provide all probation services. The commission model brings benefits to the probation services, from attracting different providers and driving up standards to making probation work more effectively.

### **Education, skills and employment**

There has been significant progress in reducing the number of offenders with poor basic skills. More than 73,000 basic skills awards were handed out in 2004/05 and over 40,000 offenders went on to further education, training or employment on release.

The primary aim of setting up OLASS was to develop a continuous learning experience, both in custody and in the community, that would help offenders find employment and reduce their chances of re-offending. Employers are also involved in the design and delivery of programmes that prepare offenders for real job opportunities. Skills gained from unpaid work while in prison and community service also helps.

# PATHWAYS TO REDUCING RE-OFFENDING

The Home Office aims to reduce re-offending by 10% come 2010. The National Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan outlines their key commitments for achieving this target. The plan is based on eight 'pathways' covering specific areas where good management can make a significant impact.

## **Pathway 1: accommodation**

Having accommodation and appropriate support helps offenders lead more stable lives. It also provides a starting point for them to get and keep a job, access health care and receive drug treatment.

It's important to assess accommodation needs early. Almost all prisons have housing advice workers made up of prison, probation and local authority staff who work alongside voluntary sector partners, and in some cases, peer advisors.

## **Pathway 2: education, training and employment**

Offenders often lack the basic skills needed to find and keep employment. There's a strong correlation between offending and poor literacy, language and numeracy skills.

The Department for Education and Skills Offenders Learning and Skills Unit (OLSU), supported by the Home Office, has led the reform of the learning and skills service for offenders. The Learning and Skills Council has been responsible for the planning and funding of the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service since August 2006 for all offenders in England. It offers a wide range of learning opportunities in prisons and in the community.

The Custody to Work Scheme aims to increase the number of prisoners with education, job or training positions to go to when they're released from prison.

### **Pathway 3: health care**

People in the criminal justice system often experience significant problems gaining access to adequate health, education and social care services. This creates further social exclusion and is likely to lead to re-offending.

Primary Care Trusts are now responsible for healthcare in the majority of prisons. Their aim is to ensure prisoners have access to the same quality and range of health services offered under the National Health Service. They've established 300 specialist places for people suffering from dangerous and severe personality disorders.

#### **Pathway 4: drugs, alcohol and mental health**

Substance misuse is strongly linked with offending, with one survey showing around two-thirds of people arrested testing positive for drugs.

One-third of all problematic drug users in England and Wales are in the care of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). That's half of NOMS total caseload.

The Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) provides early intervention, continuity for offenders still under sentence and post-sentence support.

The Drug Interventions Record (DIR) is used to share information between agencies and track offenders' progress.

## **Pathway 5: finance, benefit and debt**

**Ex-offenders can face particular financial problems, including access to benefits.** OASys assessments for 2005/06 suggested over 23,000 offenders had financial problems linked to their offending.

The National Framework Document (NFD) helps managers of relevant partner agencies to formulate local agreements for their region. This depends on staff responsibilities and resources and aims to create effective synergy between criminal justice and welfare to work agendas.

It's important for ex-offenders to get help to manage their own finances and increase their budget. **Jobcentre Plus issues guidance on social fund loans, and encourages staff to place ex-prisoners on the first cycle for 'signing on', which will trigger a part payment.**

## **Pathway 6: children, families and community support**

Offenders' families can help prevent re-offending by providing stability and support. However, relationships are often broken or fragmented as a result of offending. Families can be left bewildered and unsupported, which increases the possibility of intergenerational offending, mental health problems and financial difficulty.

Some regions have set up pathfinders to:

- help families support an offender's rehabilitation
- develop family support and advice services in local communities
- improve families' ability to keep in contact with and visit prisoners
- provide parenting skills, training, and information on mainstream services.

The green paper, Every Child Matters, was published in 2003 and led to the Children's Act 2004. It's made a significant impact in promoting children's welfare and includes a framework for a programme of reform in children's services, both to safeguard children and to promote their welfare.

## **Pathway 7: attitudes, thinking and behaviour**

NOMS runs many independently-accredited cognitive skills programmes for offenders. They cover general offending behaviour and more specialist interventions such as substance abuse treatment and programmes for sexual and violent offenders.

Progress has also been made on expanding the scope of the 'What Works' agenda. Research has led to an emphasis on an integrated, end-to-end approach to working with offenders, which aims to tackle as full a range of needs as possible.

New systems and technology, such as Interim Accredited Programme Software (IAPS) and OASys, provide data to inform planning, targeting and evaluation.

## Pathway 8: victims of crime, individuals and the community

The Probation boards currently have a number of important statutory duties in which the protection of the public is paramount. One great success in protecting the public has been the advent of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). By law, MAPPA are required to be established by the probation, police and prison services. Each of the 42 probation areas in England and Wales are to improve public safety, protect victims and reduce serious harm caused by sexual and violent offenders.

The remit is to ensure that individuals and communities are properly protected from offenders who pose a high risk of causing harm and that these arrangements are appropriately promoted. Victims of crime are to be made aware of the sentence served by offenders and are able to express their views in all the relevant processes.

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Children and families can play a significant role in supporting an offender to make and sustain changes which reduce re-offending.

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# PARTNERSHIPS

## **Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS)**

OLASS focuses on an early and intense assessment of an offender's learning needs and develops an individual learning plan to establish how those needs will be met. It's designed to allow offenders to continue their learning as they move through the criminal justice system and out into the community.

## **The Offender Learning Journey**

Designed to ensure offenders receive full access to on-going advice and guidance, at an early stage and throughout their sentence. All requests for advice and guidance should be met within seven working days, though contact with offenders subject to statutory supervision in the community must be set within the context of Probation Service National Standards. Offenders can receive up to two hours information, advice and guidance (IAG) during their sentence.

## **Jobcentre Plus**

The Prison Service's partnership with Jobcentre Plus is central to the Custody to Work strategy. A number of activities have been developed to help the Prison Service achieve its resettlement Key Performance Indicator.

## **Fresh Start**

Prisoners who do not have a job or training or education place arranged can attend a Jobseeker's Fresh Start interview at their Jobcentre prior to release. These are designed to speed up prisoners' access to benefits and improve their likelihood of obtaining employment.

## **Employment and benefits surgeries**

On induction, the Jobcentre Plus advisor ensures that benefit claims are addressed appropriately and any outstanding monies paid.

Prior to discharge, a Jobcentre Plus advisor will offer advice primarily aimed at finding suitable employment upon release. Where job opportunities cannot be found, the advisor will explore training and education opportunities, provide assistance in completing benefit claim forms, explain the Fresh Start programme, promote New Deal, and issue a personalised checklist of avenues to follow upon release. The advisor will also provide 'signposting' on accommodation issues.

### **Jobpoints in prisons**

Jobpoints are touch-screen terminals which give prisoners access to up-to-date employment information through the Jobcentre database of live vacancies. They enable prisoners to access information on vacancies in their home areas prior to release.

There are around half a million vacancies advertised at any given time. The prisoners who benefit most are those who will be 'job-ready' within two weeks of being released. This gives scope for Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL) to attend interviews, subject to risk assessment.

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Prior to discharge, a Jobcentre Plus advisor will offer advice primarily aimed at finding suitable employment for the prisoner upon release.

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### **Progress 2 Work and P2W Link-Up**

Progress 2 Work (P2W) is a programme of community-based advice and support, focusing specifically at people with a history of drug misuse who have been through a period of treatment, and whose dependency on drugs is currently stabilised. P2W is designed to help them over the disadvantages they face in the employment market.

P2W Link-Up aims to complement Progress 2 Work by providing additional help for individuals who have multiple barriers to employment. These may include homelessness, alcohol misuse or being in custody. Recovering drug users can be referred to Link-Up, as long as drug misuse is not their main barrier to employment.

## nextstep providers and Connexions

Connexions offer IAG services for young people up to the age of 20, and nextstep providers for individuals over that age. Both organisations have a range of services designed to help prisoners access opportunities in terms of education, employment and life in general. Their aim is to provide individual career advice and information to prisoners, and support them in establishing relevant contacts outside of the prison in order to help them on release, thereby helping to reduce the rate of re-offending. Once a prisoner is released, they are able to access the Connexions or nextstep service in their local area.

Some prisons have an on-site team offering IAG to offenders. Depending on the IAG providers' presence within the institution and the individual's level of need, they may be offered:

- assistance with the resettlement of ex-offenders
- advice on the disclosure of convictions
- help with preparing CVs and job applications
- assistance with Community Care Grant forms
- assistance with completing applications and forms

- advice and guidance on all aspects of job searching
  - a full IAG service with referral to relevant agencies both inside the prison and in the community.
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Connexions or nextstep can help prisoners access a range of opportunities in terms of education, employment and life in general.

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### **Citizens Advice**

Many Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABs) run advice sessions in prison. The majority of enquiries relate to social security, of which disability benefits and Income Support are the largest categories.

Citizens Advice provides confidential, impartial advice and information on many issues including:

- debts
- benefits
- family and relationship problems
- employment issues

- housing issues, eg retention of tenancies, finding rented accommodation, preventing repossession of mortgaged properties
- legal rights, eg accessing family solicitors
- financial skills training
- advising prisoners' families
- access to mediation and counselling
- referral to CAB and CLS (Community Legal Service) post-release.

### **Sycamore Tree**

The Sycamore Tree is an example of the type of support offered to prisoners that focuses on victim awareness and restorative justice. It helps clients to:

- understand the wider impact of crime and personal responsibility
- identify with a victim's experience of crime and the need for forgiveness and reconciliation
- learn about the process of restorative justice and the need for active participation of offenders, victims and the wider community
- identify active steps to address past offending behaviour.

Members of the community who are committed to the principles of restorative justice may participate and share their stories as victims of crime. You will need to find out if similar programmes are offered in your establishment.

### **CARAT Service**

The CARAT service (Counselling, Assessment, Referral, Advice and Throughcare) is a universal drug treatment service, available in every prison establishment across England and Wales. CARAT services are a major element of the Prison Service Drug Strategy.

After receiving a referral, a CARAT worker will contact the prisoner and carry out an initial assessment to help them identify the support needed to address the drug problem. The CARAT worker will offer counselling and referral advice, as appropriate, and work with the prisoner to complete a plan that will list the goals and objectives that will help them move away from drug use and into a healthier, safer lifestyle.

The CARAT worker may help the prisoner to access:

- voluntary drug programmes
- group work programmes
- rehabilitation services
- advice on safer drug use
- relapse prevention advice
- help and support on release.

Prisoners have regular meetings with their CARAT worker to discuss their progress and decide on their next steps. The CARAT Service is confidential and, unless there is an issue relating to safety and security, a CARAT worker will not disclose any details to any other person/service without a prisoner's written consent.

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Prisoners can be assessed by a CARAT worker, given advice about drug misuse and referred to appropriate drug services.

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# NOTES





This document was developed and funded by advice-resources together with Mercia Partnership.

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