

SPRING 2015

Welcome



This will be a key factor in both motivating our learners, who may never have experienced any formal achievement before, and supporting them in finding real employment opportunities on release. A real success.

And we have achieved this in a number of ways - by reviewing our curriculum so it better meets the needs of our learners, and the employers they wish to work for, and also by supporting our teaching staff to improve the quality of their teaching and learning. I'm very pleased to share that 9% of our teaching staff achieved an outstanding teaching observation last year, and that through coaching, support, and overall hard work, our overall teaching and learning profile improved by 13 percentage points across the year.

It is important to appreciate that this improvement has been achieved whilst managing and delivering the OLASS contract, with its host of challenging funding rules. And again, it's many thanks to ALL staff, delivery and non-delivery, for making this happen.

In year three, we are keeping our foot on the pedal... We have developed the new Employment Academy model, in partnership with employers, specialist providers, NOMS,

and G4S. We now have academies at HMPs Brinsford, Oakwood and Sudbury, and more will be coming on board across the 3 regions in the near future. We are working to establish partnerships with the new Transforming Rehabilitation Companies, who will be starting to offer *Through The Gate* services from January 2015. These partnerships will ensure our offender learning provision dovetails with the TR programmes and pathways, so supporting positive learner outcomes.

A special 'well done' to HMP Oakwood, for escaping the shackles of a grade 4 and moving robustly into grade 3 territory - well done to Sue and all the team!

A sad farewell to HMPs Lincoln, North Sea Camp and Onley, who will transfer over to The Manchester College on the 1st February.

A warm welcome to HMP Coldingley, who will be joining us at the same time.

Thanks for taking the time to read this, and I would like to share with you through this newsletter some of our achievements over the last few months.

Sally

'TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH LEARNING'

Welcome to 2015. I would just like to take the opportunity to reflect on where we are, celebrate some of our achievements and focus on how we are moving forward.

I want to start by focussing on what we are all about - our learners. Over the last 2 years we have seen a strong improvement in the success of our learners, and this is fantastic news! This is reflected in our success rates, which last year had increased to 80% overall, with 15 of our prisons achieving over 80%, which is a great achievement.



Launch of 3 new Employment Academies

Milton Keynes College has been providing Offender Learning to prisons in England for over 20 years. The College is one of the largest providers of Offender Learning, working across thirty prisons in the East and West Midlands and the South Central region. We work to assist in supporting offenders to access real work opportunities in these prisons and to re-enter the employment market upon release.

This year the College has launched:

- A Recycling Employment Academy at HMYOI Brinsford
- A Furniture Making Employment Academy at HMP Sudbury
- A Hospitality & Catering Employment Academy at HMP Oakwood

OLASS Marketing materials

OLASS Marketing materials in the form of:

- Posters
- Flyers
- Mouse mats
- Bookmarks

have been rolled out across our prisons and have been very well received. Course posters and options flyers will be available to all prisons in due course.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE REGIONS



Offender Learning Director welcomes Shadow Minister to MK College

Dan Jarvis MP, MBE and Shadow Minister for Justice alongside Andrew Pakes met with Jason Mansell, Director: Offender Learning and Maxine Bennett, Deputy Director of Offender Learning: Innovation and Development, to discuss the strategic impact that Milton Keynes College has on the Offender Learning sector and its success in delivering outcomes to meet offenders' needs.

Maxine Bennett outlined the College's innovative Employment Academy model and how this supports the development of offenders' skills to support realistic employment options post release. Maxine stated 'The success of this model is that we have identified employers, in skills shortage areas, to work with us on the development of differentiated Academies in prisons supporting offender's progression into employment post release.'

Jason Mansell stated 'The College's success in OLASS has been contingent on the strong partnership built with HM Prison Service and other stakeholders, and recognising and responding to changes in the strategic landscape. The College is working to engage with the new Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) to support the introduction of Transforming Rehabilitation and has recently met with The Right Honourable Simon Hughes MP to discuss developments in the National Curriculum for Women Offenders, and how the College can work strategically with other OLASS providers.'



EMPLOYMENT

Milton Keynes College and Greggs providing employment opportunities for offenders



Milton Keynes College, through its Offender Learning and Skills Service, and Greggs are working in partnership to create education opportunities that help to secure employment for the offenders at HMP YOI Drake Hall through its Employment Academy. The Academy is a partnership between the Prison, MK College and Greggs and enables participants to gain a qualification whilst gaining hands on work experience.

The Employment Academy enables learners to obtain qualifications covering health and safety, food hygiene, manual handling and first aid, as well a full induction to working with Greggs. Upon successful completion of the course Greggs provide comprehensive training and work experience at one of their stores. All successful Employment Academy learners are guaranteed an interview upon release with Greggs and one student - Amanda Woods - has already secured employment with Greggs upon release.

Amanda Woods joined the Employment Academy at Drake Hall on the 14th July 2014. After successfully completing the course, and 3 weeks of work experience with Greggs, Amanda was offered a job with Greggs which she started on the 4th October 2014.

Amanda said: 'I cannot praise Greggs enough for the opportunity given to me both through the Academy and the work placement. To be able to leave prison with the skills and confidence needed to find employment is amazing. I have been lucky enough to be offered employment with Greggs that will be transferred to my home town on release, and I cannot be more happy about that. The skills acquired in the academy could be transferred to any industry, manual handling, food safety, customer service, first aid, health and safety, person centred skills and team building. The Greggs ethos is very warm and welcoming. Team work and customer service is at the heart of their business success and as part of 'the Greggs Family' it isn't hard to embrace and become part of that too. The Academy in partnership with Milton Keynes College was the stepping stone to my successful employment opportunity...thank you.'

Beckie Rowland, Recruitment Advisor for Community Placement said "We are pleased to be working with Milton Keynes College in addressing the resettlement needs of female offenders who with our support will improve their employability skills and develop a better understanding of Greggs. Our values commit us to being enthusiastic and supportive in all that we do, open, honest and appreciative, treating everyone with fairness, consideration and respect."

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE REGIONS



City & Guilds donate books to prisons

City & Guilds, the global leader in skills development, has kindly donated over 500 books to a number of prisons Milton Keynes College works with through its Offender Learning and Skills Service provision.

The donation of additional books will see offenders benefit from extra vocational textbooks and log books which will aid learners with the completion of courses. City & Guilds has historically worked closely with the Government to support offenders through both Offender Learning and National Offender Management Service (NOMS) providers.

Kevin Wilkinson, Business Manager at City & Guilds, says: *"We are pleased to be working in partnership with Milton Keynes College to provide books to local prisons. I've seen how proud the offenders are when they complete a City & Guilds course and these books will remove one more barrier to achieving that. It's fantastic to work with Milton Keynes College to help offenders change their lives through skills."*

EDUCATION
&
SKILLS
DEVELOPMENT



Equipping learners with the skills for employment - a catering case study

Jarrold Spence, arriving at HMP Spring Hill with limited catering experience, embraced the opportunity to learn and develop a potential catering career through one of Milton Keynes College's offender learning programmes.

Joining the on-site 'Spring's' Training Restaurant as a trainee chef, Jarrold took on many challenges as he learnt new skills, assisted other chefs and had oversight of the bookings and preparations for the busy Christmas period in 2013.

In January 2014, Jarrold was making rapid progress and began studying a Level 2 Professional Cookery qualification. As a result of embarking on the programme, along with his wider experience in the 'Spring's' restaurant environment, Jarrold's confidence grew and, over time, he was able to demonstrate he was capable of leading in the kitchen, becoming Senior Chef in April 2014. Jarrold completed his Level 2 Professional Cookery NVQ in September 2014. He remained working in 'Spring's' as a mentor until his release on 24 October 2014. Jarrold aspires to run his own café/coffee shop and, consequently, worked with the Bright Ideas Trust to secure funding for this future venture. Since his release, Jarrold has been working as a chef and he plans to continue with this until the funding from the Bright Ideas Trust materialises.

emsi

Tailoring qualifications to meet skills gaps for offenders

Milton Keynes College is pioneering the use of government data sources to equip offenders with the relevant skills needed for employment post release, by utilising data contained in EMSI's Analyst Tool.

Analyst enables users to see which industries are growing or declining in a particular area, and even more crucially, to see which occupations within those industries are growing or declining. For Milton Keynes College this is crucial as it provides information on the needs of businesses in the area in which a prison is located, enabling training to be tailored to the skills gap in the local and regional economy.

Working closely with employers at the curriculum planning stage enables greater employer engagement. As a result, a number of employers guarantee offenders an interview at the end of the completed course. For learners, it provides a network of support from custody through the gate, equipping them with the skills and the opportunities previously unavailable to them. This has a huge impact on improving the local economy and crucially, reduces reoffending rates.

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE REGIONS



Offenders to exhibit artwork at MK Gallery

Milton Keynes College's Offender Learning and Skills team have partnered with MK Gallery to launch an exciting new initiative to display offenders artwork in an exhibition named, "Transformation" which will launch in April.

The month long exhibition will provide an opportunity for learners at HMP Woodhill, and a number of other prisons served regionally by the College, to produce artwork which will hang on the walls of one of the UK's leading public galleries in the heart of Milton Keynes. Every exhibit will tell a different story about a journey showing how one object goes from being a raw material to finished product, but more importantly, the exhibition shows the benefit of how engaging in creative work can help prisoners change their lives.

Dr Julie Mills, Principal and CEO of MK College says "Our creative provision is a very important element of the work that we do with our students whilst they are in custody, and to give them the focus of a public exhibition will really motivate, stretch and challenge them. I am thrilled that we are working with MK Gallery to launch the exhibition. As a college, we work closely with offenders to ensure they are as well prepared to make meaningful contributions to society upon their release as possible and this initiative is a fantastic example of prisons working at their best."

MK College judged Employer Award category for NoOffence! Redemption and Justice Awards

Milton Keynes College sponsored the prestigious NoOffence! Redemption and Justice Awards in October last year. In addition, Sally Alexander, Executive Director of Offender Learning at Milton Keynes College, judged the Employer Award Category. The award recognised UK employers who provide employment for people with convictions or small grass roots organisations that support people with convictions into employment.

The evening was a celebration of both the people who changed and the people who helped to make change possible, from across every sector of criminal justice, highlighting success stories so often forgotten and the people who have turned their lives around and made a positive difference in their community.



Inspiration Day

Managers from across the Offender Learning and Skills Service team at Milton Keynes College joined forces to take part in an "Inspiration Day", in order to share ideas, spread knowledge and discuss the challenges that leadership within the sector can present.

Deputy Principal of the College, Nick Isles chaired an exciting day which saw Pete Winkelman, Chairman of the MK Dons Football Club, lead with a keynote question and answer session. Mr Winkelman led a highly motivational and passionate talk on his own leadership journey and what it takes to be an inspirational leader. Having raised the profile of sport in Milton Keynes, Pete recognised the challenges faced by the Offender Learning team and commented on employees' aspirations to bring wider educational and employment opportunities to local communities in the 30 prisons currently supported by Milton Keynes College.