

Written evidence submitted by City & Guilds

Helping people, organisations and economies develop their skills for growth

For over 140 years we have worked with people, organisations and economies to help them identify and develop the skills they need to thrive. We understand the life changing link between skills development, social mobility, prosperity and success.

We partner with our customers to deliver work-based learning programmes that build competency, to support better prospects for people, organisations and wider society. We create flexible learning pathways that support lifelong employability, because we believe that people deserve the opportunity to (re)train and (re)learn again and again – gaining new skills at every stage of life, regardless of where they start.

We're a Royal Chartered Institute and a registered charity, everything we do is charitable. We invest our surplus into expanding and enhancing our solutions across all of our brands, to meet the changing needs of organisations and industries. And through our City & Guilds Foundation we amplify our purpose by focusing on high impact social investment, recognition and advocacy programmes which remove barriers to getting a job, celebrate best practice on the job and advocate for jobs of the future.

Evidence of our work in the prison sector

We support engagements with the prison sector both through our mainstream work alongside conventional training providers and prison education contract holders and the work of the City & Guilds Foundation

The City & Guilds Foundation amplifies the goals and activities of the wider **City & Guilds** charity, focusing specifically on high-impact social investment, recognition and advocacy programmes.

By removing barriers to training and employment, celebrating where best practice is happening, and advocating for jobs for the future, the Foundation aims to innovate, celebrate and evaluate opportunities that make a real difference in people's lives, supporting everyone to succeed, no matter who they are or where they come from.

How skills development supports rehabilitation

A quote from our CEO – Kirstie Donnelly MBE

“This is not just a social agenda. It’s hard economics. Industries are facing a skills crisis, and there is a huge amount of untapped potential in our prison population. The rewards can be enormous.”

Reoffending costs approximately £18.1bn every year in England, and evidence shows that upskilling prisoners to gain sustainable employment upon release, together with stable accommodation and support, is the most effective way to counter reoffending.

To help prisoners reach their potential and to capitalise on the potential of skills, City & Guilds’ work in prisons spans everything from quality training and recognition services, to collaborating with employers seeking to access new talent, to funding innovative deploying new technology that help prisoners secure skills for future employment.

We were instrumental in lobbying for changes in apprenticeship and employment status so that those coming to the end of sentences could begin engagement with such programmes and transition into employment and completion of their apprenticeships. There is however much more that could be done to promote these options, incentivise employers to consider ex-offenders and ensure that initial transition period into housing and employment support is sufficient.

City & Guilds collaborates with over 120 prisons across England and Wales to equip more than 60,000 learners in the adult and youth prison estates with the knowledge and expertise they require to secure jobs and unleash their potential.

Hospitality and Catering

City & Guilds offer a range of qualifications that meet occupational standards, from food safety to professional chef and food service.

Construction & Building Trade Services

City & Guilds is the leading provider of construction training and qualifications from Entry Level to Level 4, covering everything from basic hand skills, specialist trade occupations and site supervisory and management skills.

Maths and English

From Entry Level to Level 2, these qualifications can be delivered as bite-size or full qualifications.

We provide many additional learning opportunities of value to a wide range of industries including:

- Social, personal development and lifelong skills
- Art & Design and Creative Media qualifications
- Business and enterprise courses
- Vocational skills training across a range of occupations

In England, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) designated us as the exclusive provider of qualifications in prisons for Maths and English, Construction, and Hospitality and Catering from August 2018.

The need for skills development and employment pathways

Education and training has the potential to boost self-confidence, improve mental health, and generate positive behaviours both in prison and on release. When done well, education allows students to engage their imagination and enables them to picture a different future for themselves.

Adult prisoners have typically had a negative experience of education training and employment compared to the general population. This is particularly important in prison education. Prisoners said that finding a sense of meaning through personal development, often through education, work and training was important to them. It gave them a sense of self while in prison and as they prepared for life after release.

With 47% of the prison population lacking any qualifications and 68% being unemployed in the weeks preceding custody, there is a considerable lack of job-readiness. Engagement with education and training has been shown to considerably reduce reoffending.

According to a 2020 study, the one-year reoffending rate among prison learners was 34%, compared to 43% for those who did not engage in any form of learning. However, despite evidence that engagement with skills and education reduces reoffending rates, there remains a gap in high-quality in-prison skills and skills and education programmes.

State of the market

- 141 prisons in the estate and education programmes hit hard by Covid-19 and lockdowns and so must ensure there is investment to recover (staff and resources)
- Demand for more consistent individual learning plans that can be carried across prison institutions to ensure no breaks in learning and improve chances of accredited outcomes
- Despite improvements, there is still a need for more established recruitment and employer links to help offenders gain the skills and capabilities they need to find work and access employment opportunities
- Need for more established infrastructure to provide post-release support, housing, mentoring, etc. to enable transition into sustainable employment

- Need for more high-quality skills education interventions with evidence of employer recognition and job destinations to ensure prisoners have the best chance of success in the workplace
- Need for consistent digital platforms and support to enable tracking of learning and equal access to self-directed learning and simulations

For further information on our work in this sector please follow the links below to see additional evidence of the impact and benefits of this activity, a copy of our recent report 'The power of skills innovation in prisons' and a link to the short video film – 'life beyond bars'. If appropriate we would be happy to meet and discuss our work and explore where further support would be most beneficial

[Prison Impact | City & Guilds Foundation \(cityandguildsfoundation.org\)](https://www.cityandguildsfoundation.org/Prison-Impact)

[The power of skills innovation in prisons \(flowpaper.com\)](https://www.flowpaper.com/the-power-of-skills-innovation-in-prisons)

[Life Beyond Bars | City & Guilds Foundation - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

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