

# KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Invest in opportunity



## Prison education

## PRISON EDUCATION

Prison education has a demonstrable life-changing capacity. We argue for further funding for offender learning because:

- Offenders who take prison education are three times less likely to reoffend than those who do not.<sup>1</sup>
- A 1 percentage point rise in the proportion of the working-age population with Level 2 qualifications compared with those with no qualifications would cut the costs of crime annually by £320 million, and, to Level 3, £500 million. A 16% rise in those educated to degree level could save the country £1 billion annually.<sup>2</sup>
- It is estimated that investment in prison education could reduce the total cost of reoffending by 25%.<sup>3</sup>
- There is a strong causal link between both unemployment and crime and educational underachievement and crime. A 1% reduction in unemployment or educational underachievement is estimated to lead to a 1% reduction in the crime rate, in relation to property offences.<sup>4</sup>
- 48% of prisoners are at, or below, the level expected of an 11 year old in reading, 65% in numeracy and 82% in writing.<sup>5</sup>
- 47% of prisoners say they have no qualifications. Half of all prisoners do not have the skills required by 96% of jobs and only one in five are able to complete a job application form.<sup>6</sup>
- The educational background of children in custody is poor: 86% of boys and 82% of girls surveyed said they had been excluded from school and around half said they were 14 years or younger when they were last in education.<sup>7</sup>
- The 18-24 group accounts for 26-32% of all registered offences committed annually. Two thirds of male prisoners in the 18-24 age group leaving prison are reconvicted within two years at a cost of £130 million. Over this period, an increasingly large proportion of the general population of the same age is still in education.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2008-09 an average of £1,631 per prisoner per year was spent on education in custody. This is less than half the average cost of secondary school education at £2,590 per student per year, which many prisoners have missed.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> AoC, (2011), College Key Facts, available at <http://www.aoc.co.uk/en/research/college-key-facts.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> John Bynner (2009), Lifelong Learning and Crime: a life-course perspective, IFLL Public Value Paper 4, NIACE, p.11, available at: <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/Public-value-paper-4.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Bynner, J., (2009), Lifelong Learning and Crime: a life-course perspective, IFLL Public Value Paper 4, NIACE, p.9, available at: <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/Public-value-paper-4.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Prince's Trust, (2010), The Cost of Exclusion, available at: [http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/COE\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/COE_full_report.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Prison Reform Trust, (2012), Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, available at: <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/O/Documents/FactfileJune2012.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Prison Reform Trust, (2012), Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, available at: <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/O/Documents/FactfileJune2012.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Summerfield, A. (2011) Children and Young People in Custody, HM Inspectorate of Prisons Youth Justice Board available at: <http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/publications/inspectorate-reports/hmipris/thematic-reports-and-research-publications/children-young-people-2010-11.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Prison Reform Trust, (2012), Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile, available at: <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/Portals/O/Documents/FactfileJune2012.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Hansard HC, 25 October 2010, c38W, available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101025/text/101025w0002.htm#10102519000794>