



Name: Prison Education and Library Services for Adult Prisons in England Policy Framework

Reference: N/A

Re-Issue Date: 15 October 2026

Implementation Date: 01 April 2019

Introduces amendments to the following documents:

The education related elements of the following Prison Service Instructions and Output 2 from the Prisoner Employment, Training & Skills Service Specification no longer apply to prisons in England – please note that they do still apply in Wales and the elements not related to education, e.g. employment, are still applicable in England and Wales:

Prison Service Instruction 06-2012 - Prisoner Employment, Training and Skills

Prison Service Instruction 02-2015 - Prison Library Service Wales

Action required by:

☐	HMPPS HQ	☒	Governors
☒	Public Sector Prisons and over 18s Young Offender Institutions in England	☒	Heads of Group
☒	Contracted Prisons in England	☐	HMPPS-run Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs)
☐	National Probation Service	☐	Youth Custody Estate
☐	HMPPS Rehabilitation Contract Services Team	☒	Women's Estate
☐	Other providers of Probation and Community Services		

Mandatory Actions: All groups referenced above must adhere to the Requirements section of this Policy Framework, which contains all mandatory actions.

For Information:

The aim of this Policy Framework is to detail the minimum mandatory requirements which are needed to deliver education and library services in adult prisons in England.

The Policy Framework supports the implementation of reforms which gave Governors¹ greater control of education within their prisons and the ability to set the strategic vision for their establishment's education programme, ensuring this is delivered in the best way for their prisoners.

¹ The term Governor also applies to Directors of Contracted Prisons in English prisons. Where appropriate, it may mean the Governor's authorised representative, the Learning and Skills representative (or the equivalent person who has responsibility for education or libraries in the establishment).

Governors must ensure that any new local policies that they develop because of this Policy Framework are compliant with relevant legislation, including the Public-Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act, 2010), the Human Rights Act 1999, the European Convention on Human Rights and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016.

All other Prison Service Instructions/Prison Service Orders, specifications and Policy Frameworks should also be followed, many of which will require action on behalf of the prison when working with their education and library providers (for example safety and security protocols, data sharing requirements etc).

How will this Policy Framework be audited or monitored?

Governors are accountable for ensuring compliance with the mandatory actions set out in this Policy Framework. Education Group will undertake some monitoring activity to ensure that the providers are complying with education/library contracts and are performing as expected.

Resource Impact: The processes and requirements contained within the Policy Framework are deliverable within the existing resource allocation for education in prisons and do not need further resources.

Contact: prison_education@justice.gov.uk

Deputy/Group Director sign-off: Senior Responsible Owner Board

Approved by OPS for re-publication: Helen Judge, Chair of the Operational Policy Sub-Board, September 2026

Revisions:

Date	Changes
September 2026	The section regarding distance learning has been removed and can now be found in its own Policy Framework. A dedicated section about CIAG has been added. Removal of the outdated list of CAOs, updated language around ALNs, updated information for screening and assessment and library provision.

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1. **Purpose**

1.1 Education

- 1.1.1 There is a statutory duty to provide education in prisons. Education should support rehabilitation by giving individuals the skills they need to unlock their potential, gain employment and become assets to their communities. Education can also improve the wellbeing of prisoners during their time in prison and once released.

1.2 Prison Library

- 1.2.1 There is a statutory duty to provide a library in every prison. The prison library aims to provide an accessible service with a focus on supporting learning, improving literacy and addressing other barriers to effective resettlement. It should promote reading as a source of pleasure and provide prisoners with opportunities for wider cultural engagement.

1.3 Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG)

- 1.3.1 The purpose of CIAG Services is to:

- (i) empower prisoners to set SMART career goals, to support them to navigate the education, skills and work landscape within the prison; and
- (ii) to provide a person-centred and flexible service to support the holistic needs of an individual and their aspirations.

2. **Evidence**

- 2.1 Participation in any form of prison education is proven to reduce reoffending by up to 9 percentage points and increase the likelihood of P45 employment².

3. **Outcomes**

- 3.1 The high-level service outcomes for this Policy Framework are:

- 3.1.1 Prisons offer learning provision that is appropriate to the needs and aspirations of their prisoners, taking account of the prisoner cohort. Prisons are responsive to the evolving employment markets in the areas into which prisoners will be released.

- 3.1.2 Prisoners are engaged and supported - from their arrival in prison to their release (where relevant) - to access learning and education that best meets their needs, aligns to attain their personal, learning and employment goals, and enhances their ability to get and keep employment on release.

- 3.1.3 Prisoners are able and encouraged to develop in a way that will:

- build social capital;
- improve their employability;
- improve their life skills and wellbeing (both in and outside of prison);
- support a reduction in reoffending³.

² Ministry of Justice, Evaluation of prisoner learning: initial impacts and delivery, published 24 May 2018 (GOV.UK) and Ministry of Justice and Department for Education, Exploring the outcomes of prisoner learners: analysis of linked offender records from the Police National Computer and Individualised Learner Records, published 27 July 2017 (GOV.UK)

³ See also the National Framework for Interventions for information on activities which should not be delivered by prison education

- 3.1.4 All prisoners are regularly able to access appropriately stocked libraries that support them in their learning and personal development; and are encouraged to undertake reading for pleasure and improve literacy skills.

4. Requirements

Education - Legal Requirements

- 4.1 Section 86 of the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009⁴ provides that the Secretary of State must secure the provision of such education and training facilities as considered appropriate for education and training suitable to the requirements of persons who are subject to adult detention. Adult detention applies to persons subject to a detention order, aged 19 or over, or aged under 19 and detained in a prison or a YOI, or part of a YOI, used wholly or mainly for those aged over 18, for example persons sentenced to prison and those on remand in custody.
- 4.2 Under Rule 32 of the Prison Rules 1999⁵:
- (1) Every prisoner able to profit from the education facilities provided at a prison shall be encouraged to do so.
 - (2) Educational classes shall be arranged at every prison and, subject to any directions of the Secretary of State, reasonable facilities shall be afforded to prisoners who wish to do so to improve their education by training by distance learning, private study and recreational classes, in their spare time.
 - (3) Special attention shall be paid to the education and training of prisoners with special educational needs, and if necessary, they shall be taught within the hours normally allotted to work.
 - (4) In the case of a prisoner of compulsory school age as defined in section 8 of the Education Act 1996(8), arrangements shall be made for his participation in education or training courses for at least 15 hours a week within the normal working week.
- 4.3 Under Rule 38 of the Young Offender Institution Rules 2000⁶:
- (1) Provision shall be made at a young offender institution for the education of inmates by means of programmes of class teaching or private study within the normal working week and, so far as practicable, programmes of evening and weekend educational classes or private study. The educational activities shall, so far as practicable, be such as will foster personal responsibility and an inmate's interests and skills and help him to prepare for his return to the community.
 - (2) In the case of an inmate of compulsory school age, arrangements shall be made for his participation in education or training courses for at least 15 hours a week within the normal working week.
 - (3) In the case of an inmate aged 17 or over who has special educational needs, arrangements shall be made for education appropriate to his needs, if necessary, within the normal working week.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/22/section/86>

⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/728/made>

⁶ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2000/3371/article/38/made>

- (4) In the case of a female inmate aged 21 or over who is serving a sentence of imprisonment or who has been committed to prison for default and who is detained in a young offender institution instead of a prison, reasonable facilities shall be afforded if she wishes to improve her education, by class teaching or private study.

4.4 Under Rule 39 of the Young Offender Institution Rules 2000⁷.

- (1) Provision shall be made at a young offender institution for the training of inmates by means of training courses, in accordance with directions of the Secretary of State.
- (2) Training courses shall be such as will foster personal responsibility and an inmate's interests and skills and improve his prospects of finding suitable employment after release.
- (3) Training courses shall, so far as practicable, be such as to enable inmates to acquire suitable qualifications.

4.5 The Governor is responsible for ensuring that the structure and fabric of the training environment, together with the impact of prison operations on education activity, meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974⁸ and its associated statutory instruments. The education provider is responsible for ensuring that education equipment and activities also comply.

4.6 *For requirements for tuition fees, higher and further education please see the Distance Learning Framework.*

Prison Library Services – Legal Requirements

4.7 The Prison Rules 1999⁹, and Young Offender Institution Rules 2000¹⁰, as amended, place on the Secretary of State the responsibility for ensuring that each Prison Service Establishment has a library, and that, subject to any directions of the Secretary of State, the prisoners of those establishments have facilities to use and exchange books.

4.8 Governors must ensure - as a minimum - that a prisoner's statutory entitlement to library provision is met.

4.9 Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights includes the requirement that individuals must be afforded enough time and facilities to prepare their defence.

Mandatory Publications

4.10 The following publications must be made available in prison libraries:

- Archbold's Criminal Pleading, Evidence and Practice
- The Civil Procedure Rules
- Extant Prison Service Instructions (PSIs) and Prison Service Orders (PSOs), Policy Frameworks (when published) excluding those that have restrictions placed on them.

⁷ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukqi/2000/3371/article/38/made

⁸ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/section/2

⁹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukqi/1999/728/article/33/made

¹⁰ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukqi/2000/3371/article/26/made

Education – Other Requirements

- 4.11 Governors must ensure that the curriculum delivered in their prison is informed by the needs of prisoners. It is expected that this includes a core curriculum of English and maths, plus English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), digital skills, life skills, vocational subjects, self-employment support, distance learning and higher education support where a need has been identified locally. This is likely to be primarily delivered by the priority education provider but could be delivered through a variety of routes across the prison. All other services that will make up their education offer must meet the definition (purpose) of education as set out in paragraph 1.1. The National Framework for Interventions clearly sets out the activities that should not be delivered by education.
- 4.12 Governors must comply with the 14 mandations set out in paragraphs 4.13 – 4.26. These requirements apply to learning delivered anywhere in the prison.
- 4.13 Governors must ensure that prisoners¹¹ have an assessment of their functional skills, ESOL, and reading levels on first entry to prison.
- Output: Assessment results provide an understanding of needs and inform the personal learning plan goals that seek to progress the learner to at least Level 2.
 - Output: Prison level data is available to enable progress to be measured, comparing prisoners' attainment in functional skills on release/transfer with those at reception into prison.
- 4.14 Governors must ensure that prisoners are screened for additional learning needs, including neurodiversity, on first entry to prison.
- Output: Clear and detailed results and reports are produced and used to inform the additional needs support plans to ensure the learner can achieve and progress in education, skills and work.
- 4.15 Governors must ensure that functional skills, reading and ESOL assessment results and additional learning needs screening results are recorded on a central system so that data is stored for future use and available across the estate.
- Output: A single record is created for prisoners, reducing the risk of duplicating data and information and can be used to inform sentence planning and allocation.
 - Output: Staff across the prison have access to key information on a prisoner's abilities and additional needs.
 - Output: Prisoner data can be accessed by all establishments, reducing the chances of prisoners being unnecessarily assessed on subsequent receptions or transfers because data does not follow them around the estate.
- 4.16 Governors must ensure that all prisoners have personal learning plans in place that specifies the educational activity that should be undertaken during their time in custody, supporting their rehabilitation journey and any employment aspirations. Plans should record important information such as education screening and assessment outcomes and required additional learning support identified via additional learning needs screening. This plan must be subject to regular review, and be sequenced with the sentence plan, and shared with key partners such as the Offender Management Unit and key workers.

¹¹ Wherever the term prisoner is used in these mandations, we also, by extension, mean those on remand who will be engaging with education, and it is for Governors to decide how to approach education with remand prisoners.

- Output: Personal learning plans are in place for prisoners and set out their educational journey, providing clear aims and objectives to support their rehabilitation.
- 4.17 Governors must ensure that personal learning plans are recorded on a central system, creating a single truth for each prisoner that provides consistency for them in their journey through the prison system and informs future CIAG conversations, sequencing and allocations. The system must work in a way that captures data from plans to support the development performance measures.
- Output: Plans can be accessed by all relevant parties, such as CIAG advisors and key workers. When a prisoner moves between establishments, the receiving prison can access the plan and continue to support the education journey of that prisoner.
- 4.18 Governors must ensure that education providers, and prison staff who deliver learning, record learning against the personal learning plan.
- Output: An accurate and up to date personal learning plan is in place which enables proper monitoring and management of individual learner progression and enables production of summary and individual level data on system performance.
- 4.19 Governors must ensure that maths and English delivery is adjusted to the needs of the establishment's learners and focused on progression to at least Level 2.
- Output: Learning provision is available to raise prisoners' levels of maths and English attainment towards at least Level 2.
- 4.20 Governors must ensure that education providers, and prison staff who deliver qualifications, use the relevant Common Awarding Organisations in specified subject areas.
- Output: Prisoners who transfer to a different prison part-way through a course in any of the specified subject areas mentioned above are able to bank and build on their progress, helping to ensure consistency in the learning journey.
- 4.21 Governors must ensure that education providers including those who deliver CIAG, those who deliver education commissioned via Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) providers, and prison staff who deliver learning, submit monthly data on the education delivered using the Authority's systems and processes.
- Output: Management information is available on the prison education services being delivered and it can be used to assess quality and manage performance both locally and nationally.
- 4.22 Governors must ensure that education providers' staff including those who deliver CIAG, those who deliver education commissioned via DPS and those prison staff who deliver learning, are appropriately trained and qualified to develop and meet the additional support needs of prisoners with additional learning needs including, neurodivergent needs.
- Output: A prisoner will have sufficient, focused and professional support that will enable them to achieve their full potential and achieve against milestones in their personal learning plan.

- 4.23 Governors must ensure that education providers' staff, CIAG staff and those prison staff who deliver learning, receive high quality Continuing Professional Development.
- Output: teaching staff continually improve their knowledge and skills, which will support the raising of education standards.
- 4.24 Governors must ensure that all prison information, forms and digital systems are accessible and/or designed with suitable adaptations to support those with additional needs including dyslexia and low literacy and that all education skills and work opportunities are delivered in environments that are supportive of prisoners with additional learning needs including neurodivergent needs.
- Output: Prison learners with additional learning needs will be able to access materials and information which has been designed or adapted to support their specific needs and enable them to achieve their full potential and progress against milestones in their personal learning plan.
 - Output: Education, skills and work opportunities across the prisons have appropriate adaptations in place to ensure that they are inclusive and supportive of a range of neurodivergent needs including consideration of the prison environment and provision of neurodiversity supportive resources.
- 4.25 Governors must ensure that reading is promoted within their prison and that they have a reading strategy in place.
- Output: Reading provision is better integrated into rehabilitative processes, enabling prisoners to make effective progress towards meaningful outcomes in custody and on release.
- 4.26 Governors must ensure they enable attendance where prisoners have been allocated onto an educational course and take steps to allocate prisoners to all available places that support their learning journey. Where necessary and appropriate, suitable alternative arrangements should be facilitated to ensure inclusion and continued access to the educational offer.
- Output: Prison learners are able to engage in education, helping them to fulfil their potential while in custody.
 - Output: This improves value for money and increases the number of purposeful activity places used.

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

- 4.27 Impartial and high-quality careers information advice and guidance will be provided that will help prisoners to realise their career aspirations, and to map individual Pathways to equip prisoners with skills in numeracy and literacy and to improve their skills for jobs on release. The CIAG Service will be accessed from induction throughout release into the community where it is expected that a prisoner's personal learning plan will be handed over to Probation.
- 4.28 Frequency:
- 4.28.1 All eligible prisoners will complete an induction and at least one follow up review session after their initial session has taken place, this could include a pre-release plan. Review frequency will be determined by time left to serve.

- 4.28.2 It should be noted that the above is a minimum, and frequency can be increased if Prison need demands it.
- 4.29 Governors must ensure that prisoners have access to CIAG that is delivered by suitably qualified staff, from reception to release, uses nationally accredited standards, is aligned and flexible to the unique needs of prisoners and utilises labour market information to map individual Pathways to improve employment outcomes on release.
- 4.30 Governors must ensure that CIAG provision is of the expected standard and ensure quality improvement and assurance processes are maintained.
- Output: Prisoners will be supported to move into education, training or employment opportunities that match their skills, interests, and aspirations and to align with the increased focus on CIAG. Prisoners will receive relevant and high quality CIAG support throughout their time in prison to realise their career aspirations and improve employment outcomes on release.

Prison Library Service

- 4.31 Expectations around library provision includes the following:
- Library provision should be widely promoted around the prison e.g. using posters and other materials. This should outline the benefits of using a library, what resources and help is available during a visit, the process for borrowing items and what times the library is open.
 - The benefits of using the library facility should also be promoted as part of education, skills and work training within the prison. There should be collaboration between education providers and libraries so that libraries are seen by prisoners as supporting their learning and using the library becomes a normal part of everyday life.
 - Prisoners should be encouraged to link their learning with the resources available within the library so that they have a reason to visit the library. Prisoners should be given a list of available resources which will support their learning.
 - Libraries should provide the widest range of materials possible within the resources available including books, DVDs and CDs which cater for the needs of all prisoners. With stock being refreshed regularly.
 - When prisoners visit the library staff should actively engage with them so that they feel welcome and at ease. Library staff should ask prisoners what they are looking for and offer to help. They should also make suggestions as to what else may be of interest.

Legal Requirements that apply to both education and the Prison Library Service

- 4.32 Governors must ensure that relevant impact assessments are in place to support the local policy, including monitoring against protected characteristics. Governors must undertake an Equality Analysis, and ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.33 **Handing and sending in books:** Governors must allow books to be handed and sent in as long as they meet with the standards laid out in section 6.13 of the Prison Public Protection Policy Framework, and there are procedures in place to check the books for illicit enclosures. Books can also be ordered from approved retailers. Annex A provides further guidance and a list of approved retailers.

Accounting process for education funded by the prisoner or from third parties.

- 4.34 External donations (from relatives, charities etc.) received for individual prisoners specifically for the purpose of their education course fees must be ring-fenced and paid into a special fund account within the Special Fund Control Account code 2617902093 using an appropriate analysis code.
- 4.35 Should the prisoner move to another public sector establishment, the transferring establishment must move any residual amount via Inter Unit Charge (IUC) to the receiving establishment. The IUC transfer must be accompanied with full details. See the [HMPPS Finance Manual Policy Framework](#) and Manual for further guidance.
- 4.36 If a prisoner transfers to or from a private sector establishment, the transferring establishment must send a manual cheque to the receiving prison with a breakdown of the figures and the receiving prison must arrange for their offender management and accounting systems to be updated to reflect the credit.
- 4.37 If the prisoner is to be released and there is still residue funding, arrangements must be made for any remaining element of the funding prior to their release as follows:
- a) Funding from prisoners – the residue funding must be credited to the prisoner's account and returned to the prisoner on their release.
 - b) Funding from a third party – the residue funding must be returned to the original fund-provider with a note giving full details and reasons, unless specific action has been agreed in advance with the fund provider.
- 4.38 For further guidance contact your finance business partner.

5. Supporting guidance

- 5.1 [Inspecting education, skills training and work in prisons and YOIs: toolkit, operating guide and information \(Ofsted\)](#)
- 5.2 [Expectations: Criteria for assessing the treatment of and conditions for men in prison](#)
- 5.3 [Unlocking Potential: A review of education in prison by Dame Sally Coates;](#)
- 5.4 [The Interventions Framework](#)
- 5.5 [Info on Charitable Trusts \(prisonreformtrust.org.uk\)](#)
- 5.6 [Education, Skills and Work Community Page - Guidance-on-the-Prison-Library-Service-in-English-prisons.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- 5.7 [Excellence framework for prison libraries \(Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals\)](#)
- 5.8 [Not just another brick in the wall: why prisoners need an education to climb the ladder of opportunity: Government response to the Committee's First Report \(parliament.uk\) 2022](#)

Annex A

Handing and sending in books to prisoners.

Ordering books via approved retailers

Since 31 January 2015, friends and families of prisoners have been allowed to order books from approved retailers, which source and send the books on to prisoners. The current approved retailers are:

- Blackwell's
- Foyles
- Mr B's Emporium of Reading Delights (added 1 September 2015)
- Waterstones
- WH Smith
- Wordery (added 1 September 2015)

Three additional approved retailers have been added from 4 November 2019.

- Housmans
- Incentive Plus
- Prisons Org UK

Should a prisoner decide not to accept a book that has been sent in via an approved retailer (or is not permitted to have it in possession) and wishes to return it so that the sender can be refunded, the package should be returned to the person who ordered it. This will be at the prisoner's expense.

If the prisoner does not wish to pay for the book to be returned, they should be asked whether they want the book to be sent out (at their own expense) or kept in their stored property.

If the book is suitable, prisoners should have the option to offer the book to the prison library as a donation. [Prisoners' Property Policy Framework](#) sets out further information on how to handle property and the options available to Governors when excess property is received.

Sending and handing in of books directly by families and friends

From 1 September 2015, families and friends are allowed to send or hand in books to prisoners irrespective of whether or not there are exceptional circumstances. Visitors will not be allowed to hand books directly to prisoners; they will need to be left with staff to process.

Amount of books permitted in-cell

From 1 September 2015, there is no longer be a numerical limit on the number of books which prisoners can have in their cells. The number of books permitted is subject only to the overarching volumetric control limits on property.

Further important points

- All books received must be searched before being passed to prisoners.
- Prisoners will continue to be allowed to order books through existing arrangements in place in prisons.
- The sending or handing in of audio books, whether via an approved retailer or (from 1 September 2015) directly from families and friends, is permitted in cassette or CD format.

- Audio books will form part of the overall general limits on the number of books that can be held in-cell. For the purposes of the standardised facilities list, such items are categorised as books, rather than CDs or cassettes.
- Restrictions on the books which prisoners are allowed to have access to remains unchanged.

The [Prison Public Protection Policy Framework](#) sets out the books that no prisoner can have access to (section 7.13 – Banned and controlled material), and Governors can extend this list if the nature of the particular prison's population requires it. In addition, Governors can decide whether an individual prisoner should have a particular book, taking into account the prisoner's offending behaviour.

These arrangements apply to books only. The sending and handing in of other items, including items which might be available from the approved retailers, remain subject to the restrictions set out in the [Incentives Policy Framework](#).