Intensive English and maths provision in prisons

Evaluation report of pilots

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January
2013
Working for more and different adult learners

NIACE (The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, England and Wales). A company limited by guarantee registered no. 2603322 and registered charity no. 1002775,
About NIACE

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is an independent charity which promotes adult learning across England and Wales. Through its research, development, publications, events, outreach and advocacy activity, NIACE works to improve the quality and breadth of opportunities available for all adults so they can benefit from learning throughout their lives.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the staff and learners at each of the pilot sites, and Pat Walker from The Manchester College, for their contribution to this evaluation study.

We would also like to thank Dr Jane Hurry, Centre for Education in the Criminal Justice System, Institute of Education.
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Foreword

For several years now, the British Army has used an intensive method of teaching and learning, for those recruits who are not at the level required to do their job. A longitudinal study, completed in 2012, showed how effective this intensive 'immersion' in English and maths was. The Department asked NIACE to test out the possibility of engaging offenders in prison, with poor literacy and numeracy, in provision that was delivered intensively. This 8 month pilot, working with six prisons, tested an intensive delivery model, and collected qualitative and quantitative evidence to assess whether a more intensive burst of provision would engage and retain learners and improve their English and maths skills.

The project had to deal with the issues and difficulties inherent in delivering learning in prison but there was robust evidence to show that an intensive method improved measurable maths skills and attitudes to maths; the evidence for English is less clear. This may be because of the nature of maths, building on and refreshing concepts and skills. We found intensive provision fostered a sense of working as a group, supported peer learning and enabled teachers to get to know learners more closely.

Our evidence thus far suggests that working intensively is particularly useful for learners in prison who are on short term sentences, and where the learning is prioritised by the prison, and for those learners getting ready for release, or who are highly motivated to learn. It is not, we suggest, a panacea for all ills. There appear to be a significant number of learners for whom this is not necessarily the most effective method of teaching and learning. Our report also highlights the value to be gained from prisons seeing English and maths learning as essential elements of the reducing re-offending agenda.

There is much to learn from this work, and much to build on - it underlines what we have always known about working with adults: adults, particularly those with very poor skills need a range of methods available to them to engage, learn and progress. This is one method that should be made available more widely for offenders serving sentences on prison.

Carol Taylor, Director of Research and Development, Feb 2013
1. Background and introduction

In 2012 the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) commissioned the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) to conduct a feasibility study into intensive delivery of English and maths in custodial settings.

NIACE is the leading non-government organisation in England and Wales for all types of adult learning and is committed to supporting an increase in the numbers of adults engaged in formal and informal learning and to widening access to learning opportunities to those who do not traditionally take part in education and training.

This report sets out the results of the feasibility study of intensive delivery of English and maths. The pilot programme was conducted in six prisons in the north west of England.

Rationale

The aim of the pilot in prisons was to explore the effectiveness of an intensive delivery model in enabling offenders to improve their English and maths skills. There are a number of existing delivery models for English and maths programmes in prisons. The advantage of the intensive model over the more common ‘roll on roll off’ model and embedded delivery model is that it has the potential to address the needs of prisoners early on in their sentence. It may be of particular value in addressing the functional skills needs of prisoners on short term sentences and address disruption caused to English and maths learning for prisoners who are moved around the prison system.

The case for the pilot was articulated in the recent Review of Offender Learning as follows:

We will (continue)…to identify those with a basic skills need early in their sentence so that we can address it. We will extend the use of intensive literacy and numeracy provision as a means of having an immediate impact in addressing functional skills needs of those with shorter sentences, but with a long term benefit that lasts well beyond custody.2

Unavoidable prisoner movement… still means many are unable to pursue their learning to a point of qualification. It means too that the establishment of that important relationship between teacher and learner which so often underpins

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1 The majority of prisoners serve sentences of 12 months or less. There is a ‘revolving door’ where prisoners come in and out of prison. The justice system is seeking to ensure prisoners on short term sentences get specific support to enhance employability with a view to reducing re-offending.

The rationale for the intensive English and maths pilot in prisons developed out of the Armed Forces Basic Skills Longitudinal Study. This study, which was conducted by NIACE and the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC), identified a range of factors central to the success of the Armed Forces delivery model for English and maths, including discrete intensive approaches. The success of the Armed Forces model encouraged BIS, in conjunction with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) in 2011, to seek to explore the transferability of specific elements of the model to the secure estate.

The Armed Forces model

The success factors of the Armed Forces model of delivering basic skills include:

- top level commitment to learning; a culture of training and development and an ethos that generates high expectations of success;
- timely provision and a delivery model which fits in with the different organisational contexts and which includes an intensive delivery for some recruits (e.g. 35 hours full time in one week);
- making English and maths relevant to learners’ lives, and especially their immediate job and workplace;
- provision which leads to qualifications and skills which are reinforced on the job;
- strong incentives to learn: progress in the organisation is dependent on successful completion of English and maths qualifications.

Similarities and differences between the two contexts

It is accepted that there are similarities and also differences between the Armed Forces and prison contexts. In terms of similarities, both have significant proportions of people entering their respective systems with low level English and maths skills. For example, in the Army around 40 per cent of its 9500 recruits in 2011 were below level 1 in English and the same in maths. We know that in prison the number of people who struggle with some or many aspects of English and maths are likely to be of a similar or higher order. There are also obvious differences, the chief one being that Army personnel have chosen to enter the establishments in which they receive their training.

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3 Ibid, pp.5-6
4 BIS Research paper no 80 June 2012; http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/a/12-886-armed-forces-basic-skills-executive-summary.pdf.
5 Ibid
6 The Social Exclusion Unit Report 2002 states that ‘48% of prisoners are at or below (Level 1) in reading, 65% in numeracy and 82% in writing’ (Social Exclusion Unit; July 2002; Reducing re-offending by ex-prisoners, HMG Cabinet Office).
The pilot intensive model in prisons

Although some prisons already offer a form of intensive provision, this pilot sought to explore whether one broadly similar model would be replicable across different prison contexts. It was decided that a one week model would not be readily transferable to the current regime in all the participating prisons. To introduce a full time model would have involved a complete change to the prison operating regime. Since a core feature of the Armed Forces model is that delivery adapts to meet the organisational context, it was agreed to extend and re-fashion the Army model to meet prison contexts more effectively. The model adopted was a three week part time model (three hours a day for five days a week) with the potential to deliver 45 guided learning hours for functional skills as recommended by Awarding Organisations and confirmed by Ofqual.

The pilot was carried out in six prisons in the north west of England as part of the provision of The Manchester College. Six prisons were chosen representing a range of prison contexts: a Young Offenders’ Institution (YOI), a women’s prison, a private prison, a local prison, a Category B, and a Category D prison.

The evaluation was undertaken by NIACE in conjunction with the Centre for Education in the Criminal Justice System, Institute of Education.
2. Methodology
The research comprised an eight month investigation into the effectiveness of the intensive English and maths programme in a sample of six prisons. A mixed methods approach was adopted, combining the collection of quantitative data from learners with qualitative data from learners and a range of stakeholders.

In taking this approach, the evaluation sought to provide robust statistical data to demonstrate the extent to which the intensive programme impacted upon learners across all participating pilot sites. To complement this, qualitative data collected provided a detailed examination of both the impact of the programme and the processes through which this impact was realised, thereby providing a holistic perspective on the overall effectiveness of the programme.

In triangulating different types and sources of data we have been able to develop a picture of the pilot’s role in developing the attitudes, skills and practices of those who took part and of the factors which contributed to successful implementation.

Copies of research instruments can be found at Appendix 1.

Quantitative data
Quantitative data relating to learners’ skills levels and attitudes towards learning were collected from all learners participating in the programme.

To establish a baseline of learners’ skills levels, learners completed BKSB\(^7\) English (reading and writing) and maths assessments before commencing the course. Learners completed the same assessment at the end of the course in order that changes in skills levels could be explored. While learners at Entry level 3 and Level 1 were eligible for the course, all but one of the learners were assessed at the start of the course at Level 1.

All learners involved in the pilot, irrespective of whether they were taught English or maths, were expected to complete both BKSB assessments before and after the course. This would ensure there was a control sample for each cohort: English learners would act as a control for maths learners and vice versa.

Scores on the BKSB assessments have been converted to percentage scores to make them easier to interpret and compare.

Learners also completed a short questionnaire (see Appendices 1a and 1b) before and after their course, in order that changes in attitudes towards learning could be

\(^7\)BKSB assessments are very widely used to assess functional skills throughout England though there is no technical information available on reliability and validity. In this study they showed good internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = .88 for English and = .95 for maths).
assessed. The questionnaire was adapted from the MLSQ subscales for self-efficacy and task value (how valuable learners judge the course to be).\textsuperscript{8}

Table 1 below summarises the quantitative data included in the analysis, by site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BKSB assessment</th>
<th>Attitude questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Maths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altcourse</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkham</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Farms</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Styal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garth</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tutors were requested to share attendance records with the evaluation team. It was expected that the records would include the length of each lesson, learners in attendance and reasons for any absences. In addition, we asked tutors to provide reasons for any dropouts from the course.

All quantitative data were entered into SPSS\textsuperscript{9} for analysis. Within our analysis, significance testing has been undertaken and differences in the data that have been found to be statistically significant have been highlighted.

\textsuperscript{8} The MLSQ, devised by Pintrich is a widely used measure of attitudes towards learning, of proven reliability and validity (Duncan, T.G. and McKeachie, W. (2005). The Making of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, Educational Psychologist, 40, 117-128). In this study, both the overall scale and the two subscales had good internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = .98 overall, self efficacy = .85, task value = .93).

\textsuperscript{9} SPSS is a software package used for statistical analysis.
Qualitative data

Qualitative data were collected from a range of stakeholders involved in the pilots, including learners, tutors, education managers at The Manchester College, and Heads of Learning and Skills (HoLS)/Heads of Reducing Re-Offending.

Tutors were invited to take part in a focus group midway through the pilot programme. Discussion topics included: approaches taken to setting up and delivering the learning programme; how the intensive model differed from their existing one; what worked well; the challenges they faced; and what impact (if any) the pilots had already had on learners, staff and the prison. In addition, the evaluation team observed one English and one maths lesson, providing further insight into how the intensive model was delivered in practice.

Semi-structured interviews with HoLS, at the pilot sites and with managers at The Manchester College, explored many of the same topics as the tutors’ focus group. In addition, HoLS were asked how the results of the pilots might impact upon their English and maths provision in the future.

Two focus groups were conducted with learners, towards the end of their course. Learners were asked to reflect on the difference the course had made to them, or how it might impact upon them in the future. Learners were also invited to comment on the running of the course: what worked well and how it might be improved.

All data were written up in order to carry out thematic analysis. The analytic framework was predetermined prior to data analysis, in accordance with the data collection tools. The broad themes comprising the analytic framework were: differences between intensive model and previous models; impact of the intensive model; how the model could be improved; and the transferability of the model to other learners and prisons. Taking one broad theme at a time, data were explored. In most cases sub-themes were identified to group cross-cutting findings that could be evidenced across sites or stakeholders in order to reflect on the data set as a whole, as well as to identify distinctive features that were particularly pertinent to an individual site or group of stakeholders. Where appropriate, qualitative and quantitative findings have been triangulated, enhancing the validity of findings.

Limitations of the evaluation

Identifying the impact of the programme is complex and it is important to be clear about what this evaluation can and cannot claim to show. At this stage it is possible to be clear only about outcomes which are the immediate effects of participation in the programme, such as changes in learners’ skills levels and attitudes, and staff or manager’s stated intentions to do things differently. It is too early to identify the overall consequences and longer term effects of the programme. However, by capturing evidence which demonstrates the ways in which learning and experiences
from the programme is being or will be applied we can identify where change might be expected to occur.

**Scope**

Effective practice involves a mix of pedagogical and organisational considerations. The scope of this study focussed mainly on organisational factors, specifically an intensive model. The methodology for this evaluation tried to limit the range of potential variables impacting on learning, by focussing the pilot in sites which had received favourable OFSTED grades\(^{10}\), however it has not been wholly possible to control for a wide range of factors other than intensive delivery: including difference in teaching style, and resources used.

**Sample sizes**

The original evaluation strategy anticipated that 40 learners from each site would participate in the programme, making a total of 240 learners, half of which would be English learners and half would be maths learners. A sample of this size was desirable to increase the likelihood of data having sufficient statistical power. As Table 1 above demonstrates, this sample size was not achieved for a number of reasons, with the main reason being high dropout rates.

The control sample was intended to be the same size as the cohort of learners; however, control data were not collected by all sites. The sample was boosted by individuals not engaged in English or maths learning but who were at the appropriate skills level at prisons across the north west of England. They completed the BKSB assessments and again after a three week interval. Even with this boost, only 37 English and 43 maths results could be used in the analysis. In addition, the individuals who completed the assessments for the control sample scored differently, further limiting the analysis carried out to compare the two samples.

Due to the limited sample sizes, quantitative data for sub-groups are reported in numbers or approximate proportions rather than percentages, and these should be treated with some caution.

**Comparative data**

While the research can evaluate the effectiveness of the intensive model, without comparative data it is not possible for us to assess whether or not it is more or less effective than other models.

The Manchester College supplied data sets for their overall Skills for Life programmes at the six pilot sites for the year 2010/11. While not directly comparable the figures provide insights into comparative performance.

\(^{10}\) OFSTED grades level 2 and above for English and maths. However this was not achieved in all cases.
Context

The research took place at a time of change. Prisons were undergoing a restructure including changes to those holding posts as HoLS. The funding structure was changing from OLASS 3 to OLASS 4 with more emphasis on achievement and retention. Functional skills qualifications were being introduced, so as well as trialling the intensive model, most sites were introducing the new functional skills approach. Since functional skills qualifications were only just being introduced during the piloting of the intensive model it was not possible to include achievement of a qualification as part of the study. Where sites have subsequently entered learners for functional skills exams, the results are included in the analysis.
3. Attendance and retention
A total of 23 pilots took place: 12 English courses and 11 maths courses.

Retention

Shorter course length such as that being piloted in the intensive model could be expected to improve retention somewhat as the chance of being moved or released mid course is reduced.

As Table 2 below shows, a total of 218 learners were enrolled onto a pilot course: 111 learners were enrolled onto an English course and 107 were enrolled onto a maths course. The sites achieved an overall retention rate of between 50 per cent and 100 per cent. A total of 85 (77 per cent) English learners and 77 (72 per cent) maths learners completed their course.

Reasons provided for learner drop out include behaviour issues (eight), illness (six), transfer to another prison (five), release from prison (five), security issues (four), learner refused to attend (four), and transfer to another course (two). Reasons were not provided for the remaining 22 learner dropouts.

As Table 2 shows, the intensive course improved retention at four out of the six sites, in comparison with the year 2010/11. Due to the small sample and the shorter timescale of the pilot, it is not possible to say with confidence whether or not the intensive programme improves retention. The variation between the sites may reflect the different implementation issues they faced.
Table 2: Number of learners and retention rate, by site and subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pilot site</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number of courses</th>
<th>Total number of learners at start</th>
<th>Total number of learners at end</th>
<th>Retention rate (%)</th>
<th>Retention from 10/11(%)(^{11})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altcourse</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkham</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Farms</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maths</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Styal</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Garth</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maths</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>217</strong></td>
<td><strong>162</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance

Learners that completed their course participated in between 22 and 51 hours of learning, with the average (mean) number of hours being 38\(^{12}\). As Figure 1 below shows, the majority (89 per cent) of all learners that completed their course participated in at least 31 hours of learning. One fifth (20 per cent) of learners took part in the full 45 guided learning hours.

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\(^{11}\) Retention data supplied by The Manchester College and adapted to ensure it is comparable

\(^{12}\) Standard deviation=6.3
The majority (83 per cent) of learners that completed their course were absent for at least one session, or part of a session. The data received from pilot sites show that there were a total of 476 instances of absence\textsuperscript{13}.

Reasons for absences have been divided into four categories: avoidable, unavoidable, other and unknown by provider. Avoidable absences include appointments, visits, classrooms booked for other purposes, workshops and cell moves. Unavoidable absences include behavioural issues, illness and religious services. As Figure 2 below shows, 64 per cent of absences are known to be avoidable, while only seven per cent of absences were unavoidable. A fifth (21 per cent) of absences were for a reason unknown by the provider.

\textsuperscript{13} Four of the six providers supplied data on reasons for absence
Figure 2: Reasons for absence

Base: All explained absences=341
4. Impact on attainment

This section presents evidence on the difference the intensive programme made to learners’ English and maths skills. The discussion is informed by the quantitative data collected before and after the course through BKSB assessments. Data relating to English and maths learners have been analysed separately.

English

Learner starting points

Learners completed a BKSB assessment before commencing the course. All but one of the learners scored at least 50 per cent on the assessment, with approximately half (30) achieving a mark over 80 per cent. Learners’ average (mean) score was 77 per cent.\(^{14}\)

While individuals in the control group (n=37) scored on a similar level on average to the learners (their mean score was 76 per cent\(^{15}\)), there was greater variation in their scores, with some scoring quite low and approximately one quarter achieving a score of more than 90 per cent.

Changes in attainment

Learners completed the same BKSB assessment once they had finished the course. Their average (mean) score improved to 83 per cent\(^{16}\); see Figure 3 below. As the graph shows, approximately four fifths (46) of learners had achieved a higher mark by the end of the course. The majority (29) of these learners made an improvement of between one and 10 percentage points, with the other 17 learners improving their results by 11 to 22 percentage points. However, not all learners improved their original result: 12 learners made no improvement.

\(^{14}\) Standard deviation=11.7
\(^{15}\) Standard deviation=16.6
\(^{16}\) Standard deviation=11.8
Figure 3: Learners’ English BKSB assessment scores before and after the course

![Bar chart showing learners' English BKSB assessment scores before and after the course.]

Base: all English learners=58

Like the learners, individuals providing control data completed the same BKSB assessment three weeks after their first assessment; the results are displayed in Figure 4 below, alongside the initial scores. The majority (25) made an improvement of between one and 18 percentage points. Twelve individuals providing control data made no improvement to their original result.

Figure 4: Control English BKSB assessment scores before and after

![Bar chart showing control English BKSB assessment scores before and after.]

Base: all English controls=37
A small improvement in attainment was observed in the results from the control sample, probably due to repetition of the assessment (average score on second assessment was 80 per cent\textsuperscript{17}).

The learner group on average made somewhat greater gains in their English scores (mean improvement of 6 per cent as opposed to 4 per cent in the control group). This trend did not quite reach conventional levels of statistical significance\textsuperscript{18}.

**Maths**

*Learner starting points*

Learners enrolled on the maths course completed a BKSB assessment before the course started. Like those learning English, the majority (40 out of 49) of maths learners achieved a mark over 50 per cent. However, there was greater differentiation in the maths assessments, with almost two fifths (19) achieving a score above 80 per cent and almost one fifth (9) scoring less than 50 per cent. Learners’ average (mean) score was 69 per cent\textsuperscript{19}.

Individuals in the control group (n=43) achieved higher scores on average to the learners with a mean score of 77 per cent\textsuperscript{20}. All but three achieved a score of more than 50 per cent, with approximately two thirds (29) achieving a score of more than 70 per cent.

*Changes in attainment*

Learners completed the same BKSB assessment at the end of the programme; the results are displayed in Figure 5 below, alongside the original scores. There was a marked overall improvement in the scores, with an average (mean) score of 87 per cent\textsuperscript{21}. All but four learners achieved a higher mark in their assessment at the end of the course. The majority (29) of learners that gained a higher score, made an improvement of between 1 and 20 percentage points. Some learners made improvements of as much as 53 and 67 percentage points. Like the cohort of English learners, not all maths learners improved their original result: four learners gained a lower mark in their second assessment.

\textsuperscript{17} Standard deviation=16.4
\textsuperscript{18} After course differences between the control and learner groups on BKSB English were tested using linear regression, controlling for before course levels on BKSB English ($\beta=.079$, $p>.083$).
\textsuperscript{19} Standard deviation=19.6
\textsuperscript{20} Standard deviation=15.3
\textsuperscript{21} Standard deviation=11.3
Figure 5: Learners’ maths BKSB assessment scores before and after the course

Base: all maths learners=49

The maths control data are displayed in Figure 6 below, with the results to the first and second assessment displayed together. The improvement in this group was much less dramatic (mean score 81 per cent\(^{22}\)). Less than half (20) of individuals that provided maths control data made an improvement of between one and 33 percentage points, while 23 made no improvement to their original result.

Figure 6: Control maths BKSB assessment scores before and after

Base: all maths controls=43

\(^{22}\) Standard deviation=14.1
As for the English control sample, a small improvement in attainment was evident amongst the maths control group. However, the learner group on average made substantially greater gains in their maths scores (mean improvement of 18 per cent as opposed to 3 per cent in the control group). This was highly statistical significant and can be considered a large effect.

**Overview of impact on attainment**

The quantitative data show that the intensive programme made a significant improvement in learners’ attainment in maths. While English learners made improvements, this did not reach a statistically significant level.

One possible explanation of the less marked improvement in English could be due to a ceiling effect within the tests: learner starting points were high and so progress likely to be more limited as measured by the tests. Another explanation is that at Level 1 English, learners are working on reading comprehension skills and fluency in writing. The tests may be less successful in picking up small improvements in these skills. However, Hurry, Brazier and Wilson also found some indication that formal numeracy instruction made a greater difference to offender learners than formal literacy instruction. They also remarked that in school contexts, educational factors have been found to be more important for mathematics than reading.

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23 After course differences between the control and learner groups on BKS B Maths were tested using linear regression, controlling for before course levels on BKS B Maths ($\beta = 5.185$, $p > .001$, Cohen' $d = .79$).


5. Impact on attitude

This section presents evidence on the difference the intensive programme made to learners’ attitudes towards learning and the importance of English or maths skills in their lives. The discussion is informed by the quantitative data collected before and after the course through learner questionnaires (see Appendices 1a and 1b), which required learners to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements, on a seven point scale. The statements in the questionnaire can be divided into two categories: statements that relate to confidence and statements that relate to the value of learning. Responses to each statement were given a score: a score of six was given where a learner ‘strongly agreed’ with a statement and a score of zero was given where a learner ‘strongly disagreed’ with a statement. Therefore, we would wish to see an increase in the score between the two time points if the intensive course positively improved attitudes. Scores are reported as percentages of the possible total (i.e. maximum score=100).

Data relating to English and maths learners have been analysed separately.

English

Learner starting points

In response to the initial questionnaire learners scored between three and 100 per cent, with the average (mean) score being 70 per cent\(^{26}\). In relation to statements about the value of learning, learners scored between two and 100 per cent and the mean score was 70 per cent\(^{27}\). Learners were more likely to agree with statements related to confidence, scoring between 20 and 100 per cent. The mean score was 74 per cent\(^{28}\). These learners had fairly positive attitudes towards learning at the start of the course.

Changes in attitude

Responses to the second questionnaire show that learners’ overall attitude had improved somewhat, scoring an average of 74 per cent\(^{29}\); see Figure 7 below. Learners’ attitude towards the value of learning improved slightly (mean score 72 per cent\(^{30}\)). However, neither of these improvements in attitude reached statistical significance. There was no change in learners’ overall mean score in response to statements related to confidence.

\(^{26}\) Standard deviation=22.4
\(^{27}\) Standard deviation=26.0
\(^{28}\) Standard deviation=19.7
\(^{29}\) Standard deviation=24.9
\(^{30}\) Standard deviation=14.3
There were some significant differences in the way learners responded to some statements. Data show that there is a positive, statistically significant difference, between learners’ attitude towards their previous English learning and the intensive course\(^{31}\). Further, learners were more likely to agree that the course would help them to manage their life\(^ {32}\).

**Maths**

*Learner starting points*

In response to the initial questionnaire learners scored between 23 and 100 per cent, with the average (mean) score being 67 per cent\(^{33}\). In relation to statements about the value of learning, learners scored between nine and 100 per cent and the mean score was 66\(^{34}\). Learners were more likely to agree with statements related to confidence, scoring between 29 and 100 per cent. The mean score was 71 per cent\(^{35}\).

\(^{31}\) p<0.001 (Wilcoxon matched pairs T test)

\(^{32}\) p<0.048 (Wilcoxon matched pairs T test)

\(^{33}\) Standard deviation=21.2

\(^{34}\) Standard deviation=25.0

\(^{35}\) Standard deviation=19.2
Changes in attitude

Responses to the second questionnaire show that learners’ overall attitude had improved a lot, scoring an average 84 per cent\(^{36}\); see Figure 8 below. Looking at the sub scales, learners’ attitude towards the value of learning improved, with a mean score of 84 per cent\(^{37}\). There was also an improvement to learners’ overall mean score in response to statements related to confidence, mean score 83 per cent\(^{38}\). All of these improvements were highly statistically significant\(^{39}\).

Figure 8: Maths learners’ mean scores to attitude questionnaire, before and after course

![Bar chart showing mean scores for all statements, value of learning, and confidence before and after the course.](chart.png)

Base: all maths learners=57

When comparing learners’ responses to the questionnaire before and after the intensive course, we can see that there are a lot of significant improvements in learners’ attitudes. Firstly, like the English learners, maths learners were significantly more positive about the intensive course than previous courses\(^{40}\). Learners also responded more positively to the statements about how maths learning may benefit them in their everyday life and responses show that learners have raised expectations of their ability for their next course\(^{41}\).

Learners’ changes in attitudes towards English and maths after experiencing the intensive course mirror the results on their attainment. Some improvement in

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\(^{36}\) Standard deviation=19.6
\(^{37}\) Standard deviation=18.5
\(^{38}\) Standard deviation=21.5
\(^{39}\) p<0.001 for each set of repeated measures (Wilcoxon matched pairs T test)
\(^{40}\) p<0.001 (Wilcoxon matched pairs T test)
\(^{41}\) p<0.001 (Wilcoxon matched pairs T test)
attitudes towards English was observed, but this did not reach statistical significance. Quite large and highly statistically significant improvements were observed in maths. This adds another layer of information around the speculation that there may be something different about the way people respond to formal English and maths classes, with maths being potentially particularly suited to intensive, formal tuition. It could be argued that maths requires a more clearly sequential approach to the building of skills at these levels and is more of a closed system.
6. How it worked in different contexts
The intensive model of delivery had variable success in the different prison contexts.

Summary site report

**Category D prison / HMP Kirkham**

The most positive pilot in terms of improved retention and enthusiasm for the model was in the Category D prison. At this establishment, learning is already considered as part of the sentence plan: where English and maths skills are identified as a requirement for progression, attendance at an appropriate learning programme is compulsory. It is easier to incentivise learning at the end of someone’s sentence where there is a greater link to release and employment. Prisoners see there is value to achieving in a short period of time in order to progress more quickly.

Learner retention rates in the intensive approach increased compared to the previous roll on roll off model. Tutors suggested a contributory factor to improved retention was the same start and end date which encouraged peer support. There was little change in learners’ achievement rates which were already strong. Results from the functional skills exams compare favourably with the success rates for previous Skills for Life tests.

Following their experience of the pilot, the improved retention rates, and the preference for using a model with the same start and end dates, Kirkham are adopting the model for future delivery of functional skills English and maths.

**Local Prison / HMP Manchester**

Whilst the first pilot at this site had a high dropout rate, following the commitment of the Head of Reducing Re-offending to support learner attendance, there was better retention in the second pilot. A key finding at the local prison is that when offender managers supported the learning, the intensive delivery model was successful.

Tutors and learners liked the same start and end date, which offered stability within the learner group, and it was felt, contributed to increased peer learner support, and an improved tutor-learner relationship.

In addition, the HoLS felt the intensive model is better for many of the men on short sentences:

> We don’t want them to do half a course before they move on. We want them to have something to show for their learning and to get a qualification. If we can finish it sooner before they move on that is a good thing… When prisoners first enter the prison they can often learn and progress to the next
level very quickly, however they can reach a plateau and further progress takes longer to achieve.

The HoLS believed there was value in learners completing a functional skills qualification in a short space in order that they can then go on to do other courses which need a particular level of English and maths.

Participating in the pilot enabled the education staff to reflect on their curriculum offer.

**Local Prison (contracted)/ HMP Altcourse**

The intensive model was a different way of working at the private prison where English and maths is normally delivered in one to one or small groups on the wings. The experience of the tutors was that the classroom based model was better suited to effective teaching and learning, and achievement rates and attitudes of the learners were positive.

*For the learners… there was such a difference in their attitude and their thirst for knowledge.*

Tutors reported that most learners achieved their targets, and some surpassed them. They reported that learners also completed functional skills sample assessments with ‘excellent’ results. It was intended to enter all the learners for the English and maths functional skills exams in December. However the results of the exams are not yet available.

Retention and attendance was an issue in the first pilot at the local contracted prison. This was attributed to a range of reasons not related to the course, including learners moving on to other prisons before finishing the course. It appeared that learning was not as high a priority for the regime as other considerations. The second pilot had better retention rates.

Experience at this site confirms the importance of senior management support to maintain effective retention of learners, and therefore achievement.

**Category B / HMP Garth**

The Category B prison found it difficult to recruit learners at the appropriate level within the time frame available to make the pilot a success. At the time of the pilot the majority of men in the prison were above Level 1. A characteristic of the Category B prison is that the men are not at the beginning of their sentence and at this prison few are released into the community (60-70 released a year): there is a low turnover of prisoners. It was suggested that at prisons like Garth they have fewer
prisoners coming in with a level 1 need as their learning needs have already been addressed\textsuperscript{42}. A decision was taken not to continue with further pilots.

The intensive pilot worked well at the Category B site for those learners recruited who were motivated. It did not work well for those with more complex needs, for example prisoners on indeterminate sentences for public protection (IPPS).

Tutors were concerned that if there was only an intensive learning model operating at the beginning of prisoners’ sentences there would be a lack of opportunity to consolidate and refresh skills during the rest of the sentence. Tutors felt a mixed model is essential in this type of prison.

Another concern at this site was that the number of guided learning hours being trialled was insufficient for some learners to achieve a qualification. Tutors felt that 45 guided learning hours may be suitable for people starting their course who were already near to the skills level required for achieving their target qualification. However, their experience suggested 45 guided learning hours are not sufficient for learners who may have been disengaged from education for a significant amount of time, or who have learning needs or have large gaps in knowledge. This sentiment was echoed by tutors from all the sites.

There appears to be less need or urgency for intensive model of provision for those in Category B prisons serving longer sentences: as one tutor said,

\textit{If you’re doing 20 years in Garth, where’s your incentive to learn?}

However, the Head of Reducing Re-Offending at this prison believed that in many cases it is best to address English and maths as people arrive at the prison. If the men have English and maths issues it can impact on how they access other programmes – offender behaviour programmes and some vocational programme:

\textit{If the men get engaged in education programmes early on and get on with them, then it can make it easier for the prison and for the men later. If they don’t get involved at the beginning then it can be hard to get them back into education later on.}

Garth already has an education offer that is half time. The Head of Reducing Re-Offending felt that the clear start and end date, which is a feature of the pilot intensive model, could work for the prison regime as a nice package, and therefore might be a consideration in delivery as part of OLASS 4.

The pilot supported discussion in the cluster about what works best education wise in a Category B prison.

\textsuperscript{42} However this is in contradiction to the situation at the Category D prison where prisoners were close to release but still having skills needs which needed to be addressed.
There was variable success in the three pilots completed at the YOI, an establishment holding young men aged 18-21. The first pilot did not work: there was difficulty finding a cohort of learners who could fit in the guided learning hours who were not already allocated to provision within the initial timeframe of the pilot. The decision was taken to recruit young men to the pilot who were working in waste management, prior to their release. The learning was not contextualised and attendees felt they were on an artificial exercise. No learners completed the first pilot: either because they had moved out of the prison or because they did not see the point of the learning and did not stay in the classroom. The figures for this pilot were discounted in the statistical analysis but the experience of this and the second pilot course is informative.

For the second pilot, attempts were made to ensure the course recruited people who were staying in the prison for the duration of the pilot programme. They recruited young men from the ‘art pathway’. The courses involved a total of three hours maths or three hours English, alternating with three hours of art a day over a three week period. This worked better but again retention was not high. The English and maths were not contextualised and the young men were resentful as their hours on art were reduced. They did not want to do the English and maths and some refused because of the change to their pathway. Some were removed due to disruptive behaviour. In the previous model the college would have moved them to a different class but there was not another intensive course to transfer them to.

The YOI has adopted the intensive model for the delivery of the new functional skills. This provides the context for the third pilot. The new model involves a four week course (half time English and half time maths) for anyone at Entry Level 3 or Level 1 prior to them beginning a vocational pathway, with the potential for 60 guided learning hours in each subject. In practice it is expected that learners will have between 45-50 hours tuition allowing for absences. Learners were entered for the Functional Skills qualification at the end of the course. The results of the qualification tests for the first cohort compare favourably with the previous success rates.

There is increased commitment from the provider and prison to the intensive model in the third pilot. Referrals are only made to the Functional Skills courses for people who can complete the course and take the exam before their day of release. The YOI pilot site found the same start and end date helpful in terms of the new funding model. Another benefit is that if they start a course each week after induction then if a learner has a problem in one class they can move them to another and they finish after five weeks.

The HoLS commented that for many learners in YOIs with a poor experience of learning, especially the short term prisoners - compliance comes from contextualising the learning. If offenders in YOIs have recently left school and have
had a poor first experience of English and maths, they may transfer negativity to classroom and the culture can easily become negative towards learning. Functional Skills and the emphasis on problem solving should require a contextualised approach.

The HoLS felt an intensive model may be best for those on medium to longer sentences. There were particular challenges for young people on very short sentences who tend to be disruptive and it is not easy to engage them in educational activity. However he felt that if they could get the pedagogy right then it could be extended to those on short sentences. Short contextualised English and maths modules where the focus is on gaining proficiency qualifications may be one approach for those on very short sentences.

A primary aim for many young offenders is finding employment, and courses that improve their chances of getting a job are favoured. The previous model in the YOI participating in the pilot offered a form of embedded English and maths in vocational training which involved separate English and maths sessions during the course of vocational training. Studies suggest learners on embedded courses have better staying-on rates than those on non-embedded courses, more positive attitudes to the value of literacy/numeracy study and were more likely to gain a qualification.

Some tutors suggested there may be advantages to an intensive front loaded approach which is embedded in a vocational pathway:

*The lads here don’t ever see the value of English and maths. No one wants to do English and maths in any format so an advantage of the intensive model is that we can sell it as they can get it over and out of the way quickly.*

The suggestion was that even in the model where English and maths was integrated and run alongside vocational pathways, learners still did not see the value of English and maths. In this scenario there may be a case to introduce Functional Skills at the start of the sentence, enable learners to get a qualification, and consolidate skills in the vocational training pathway. One tutor’s experience of the intensive functional skills pilot was that:

*The corridors appear a lot quieter and learners appear more engaged in the new model. Learners know the end is in sight. Previously they could have been there for months. The approach is to hit them hard and hit them fast.*

There is also the argument that whilst younger learners may not see the value of studying English and maths at the start of their course, once on course and in contact with tutors they may develop their interest.

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44 This is discussed further in chapter 8
In summary, for many young people who have not had a successful initial experience of school the thought of being back in a classroom for English and maths for four weeks may not be attractive. The YOI felt that a clear rationale for learning needs to be conveyed to the learners so that they are made aware that English and maths are part of a clear learning pathway. The YOI felt that a front loaded model where functional English and maths are embedded in a vocational pathway was a viable model under OLASS 4. The result of the pilot indicates that, for young people, an intensive model may be less successful where introduced into a non vocational pathway. Shorter proficiency modules may be a better approach for learners taking a vocational pathway.

**Women’s Prison / HMP Styal**

The women’s prison in the study has a transient population with the majority on short term sentences. Many of the women have emotional and mental health issues. There has been mixed success in the two pilots run at this prison. The first pilot course was successful: the women wanted to be there; there was low drop out and good success. However, there was significant drop out in the second pilot: learners were volunteers but the course was not what they really wanted.

At the tutor focus group, the tutor from the women’s prison reflected on the difficulties that the women experienced in engaging with the learning programme so soon after first arriving in prison. The women had a number of issues, including anxieties related to separation from children, health and addiction. The tutor felt that the timing of the course was a consideration and that the women needed settling-in time before going on an intensive course. However, another member of staff at the prison explained that the women were keen to take part in the first pilot and that the college’s issue in the second pilot was finding enough learners at the right level. The issue in the latter course was about appropriate allocation. Other models of learning may have been preferable for some of the learners on the second pilot.

The intensive model is a suitable model for women’s prisons, providing women have dealt with other primary concerns sufficiently to be able to engage meaningfully with learning. Appropriate allocation is a critical concern. There is a need for a strategic approach, involving offender management and learning provider, to identify which learners are best suited to this model and where in their sentence the intervention is best placed.

Although there were difficulties in recruiting the correct number and level of learners in the time span of the pilot, the education manager at the site believed as a method of assisting learners to make progress the intensive model could suit some learner styles more than others and they could consider running an intensive model periodically throughout the year.

**Overview**
The pilot found that intensive provision works in some situations and for some learners, when supported by offender managers. In an intensive model, where learning is focussed into a short time frame, achievement will be more critically affected by any absences: if a learner misses a session it is more difficult to catch up. The pilot demonstrated that in some establishments it has been possible to prioritise learning and support retention of learners for their course of study.

The intensive model is a useful approach as part of a mixed curriculum offer. The benefits of intensive provision vary across prisons and learner groups: prisons are complex places and prisoners have complex needs. Some learners will respond better to less intensive, embedded or one to one approaches. The intensive model does not offer a simple solution for English and maths provision for all prisoners.

The pilot suggests the intensive model works best:

- in Local prisons for learners on short term sentences when appropriate allocation to courses and attendance is supported by prison management;
- when learners are highly motivated: these learners enjoy the pace and the opportunity to focus on making progress with their skills;
- where English and maths are part of a clear rationale for learning e.g. in YOIs as part of a vocational pathway;
- in the Category D prisons where learners are working towards release. Prisoners see there is more value to achieving in a short period of time in order to progress more quickly.

The pilot suggests an intensive model will have less success:

- for prisoners with mental health issues or complex needs, for example prisoners on IPPS; women who are concerned what is happening to their children on the outside; and those who have issues related to health and addiction;
- where there is not enough throughput of prisoners at the right level to make the model viable in numerical and financial terms;
- for young people who are given no clear rationale for learning English and maths;
- where learners are on very short sentences of less than six weeks, especially young offenders. Short term courses possibly involving proficiency qualifications may be more appropriate;
- as the only model for long term prisoners who need ongoing reinforcement to retain their skills.
7. Benefits and disadvantages of the intensive model

The main features of the intensive model which distinguish it from previous approaches at the pilot sites are the number of hours of learning a week within a three to four week time frame, and running a course with the same start and end date and therefore the same cohort of learners at the same level. These features are discussed in more detail in this section.

Intensivity

There was a clear view from all the interviewees, including learners, that the pace and intensity of learning should not be too fast. Prisons can be volatile environments, and approaches that add to stress levels are not helpful. However there was no one view of whether the three or four week half time model was too intensive. Indeed some argued that what counts as intensive is subjective for each learner.

Learner perspective

From the learner perspective there were mixed views about the three week intensive approach.

The majority of learners in the focus groups really enjoyed the chance to focus on their learning:

- Three hours every day gave us time to really focus on a subject.
- Ideally I would like even more time each day.
- The format of learning is a good one. You can pick it up quick.
- The course was good. It was hard work but I've learned a lot over the last four weeks.
- A very helpful course. I have learnt to use punctuation properly now…. I think it was more beneficial being in a classroom than in a dining area with people pester ing me while trying to work.

However some felt that not all the sessions managed to hold everyone’s interest:

- Sometimes the subject matter is not interesting enough for three hours in one session. But that varies for each person.

This view was most forcibly expressed by learners in the YOI: they believed strongly that the learning didn't manage to hold their interest throughout the three hours of the class.
Other learners felt that three weeks was not enough to consolidate their learning:

- Three weeks is not enough time.
- We need more time.
- The pace is fast: we have to fit everything in to three weeks. Once the topic is completed we have to move on. There is no time to absorb the information. There is no time for revision.
- There was no time to catch up if we missed a session.
- Three weeks is too short. There’s too much information, too much to take in.
- Three weeks – are people able to take in all the learning? Will you still retain the information?
- There’s a lot on our minds. It makes it hard to concentrate sometimes. If we had longer time on the course it would give us time to clear our heads.
- If we had three weeks without disruptions it might be possible – but on this course only three of the men have been able to attend every session.

Overall the learner view indicates that the intensive model will only be successful if the majority of sessions are attended. It suggests that learning will need to be reinforced further down the line for those people on longer sentences and that 45 guided learning hours may be too short to address the Functional Skills needs of those who are not already close to achieving a qualification.

**Tutor perspective**

From the tutor perspective there were also mixed views about intensive delivery. Some tutors commented that they had not taught for as long as three hours in one session before, and at times found it challenging to keep learners going. Some tutors explained that they themselves have often ‘reached the end of their tether’ by the end of each session as well. However some felt that learners got into the routine of the sessions within the first week. While some tutors felt that three hour learning sessions are too long for learners, other tutors felt this was not an issue. One tutor explained that three hour learning sessions do work at their prison and helps the learners retain information: “I can reinforce learning because I’ve got them for three hours.”

Some tutors felt it was down to the tutor to make learning in three hour blocks engaging for learners:

- Learners can cope with three hours – even six – which some of them do.
- Even learners at lower levels can cope with that amount if tutors are skilled at breaking learning into chunks.
Some tutors recognised that some learners enjoyed the opportunity to focus on English and maths and work quickly towards a qualification:

*The higher entry 3 learners appreciated the opportunity to be ‘fast tracked.’ They went on to stay in education and begin another course. They deemed it as a positive experience and a good opportunity.*

Many tutors were concerned that the intensive model can result in ‘information overload’ for learners, and this may impact on ability to absorb information in the long term. Learners move onto a different topic each day and they do not have time to consolidate the learning from the day before.

*They have to take in so much information, they forget it.*

Tutors expressed concern that the intensive model doesn’t address the issue, particularly pertinent for prisoners on longer sentences, about the constant need to reinforce skills. Some felt there weren’t the same opportunities to practice their skills in prison and therefore to consolidate their learning outside of session times, as prisoners are not exposed to the same stimuli as in the outside community.

*We wouldn’t want to lose models where they can learn in a workshop. This outreach approach helps consolidate/practice skills.*

Tutors felt that learners serving longer sentences needed ongoing support. This view was reinforced by the experience of one HoLS:

*After one year on the outside or even inside if they are not practising their skills, we have found men can regress in their skills levels.*

Some tutors felt that the intensive programme did not allow enough time to support learners to develop ‘softer’ skills, such as communication, confidence and team work.

*Many learners have been disengaged with education for long periods of their life and to be put through such an intensive programme can be a daunting experience, the softer skills such as open communication, team work and building self esteem and confidence can be neglected due to the lack of time allowed.*

Functional Skills and the recommended 45 Guided Learning Hours

Most of the tutors interviewed during this pilot study believed that the recommended 45 guided learning hours were insufficient for learners to achieve a Functional Skills qualification, if they were not already close to achieving the target level.
This view appears to be corroborated by available research, which suggests the greatest skills gains are associated with 100+ hours learning\(^\text{45}\). Since the Functional Skills qualification has only recently been introduced, it is not yet clear whether the recommended 45 guided learning hours is adequate.

Feedback from the two pilot sites that were able to send in Functional Skills test results suggests the qualification is achievable for some learners within the recommended 45 guided learning hours. Their initial test results compare reasonably with the overall success rates for the Skills for Life qualification at each site, despite the more demanding requirements that Functional Skills provision, assessment and qualifications place upon the learner (and tutor).

In the Functional Skills tests, learners are required to demonstrate not only a mastery of English and maths skills at the appropriate level but also the ability to apply them effectively to solve practical, realistic problems. Problem solving is a critical dimension of Functional Skills teaching and learning. This extended curriculum demands additional time and/or smarter approaches to teaching/learning. At the same time, assessment of Functional (English) Skills extends the previous Skills for Life regime to include the separate and more rigorous assessment of reading, writing and speaking & listening. The use of externally set and externally marked assessment at Levels 1 and 2 has contributed to this additional rigour but the availability of set assessment windows and marking times (imposed by the Awarding Organisations across both English & maths assessments) provide operational constraints on learners, tutors and provider organisations alike.

Initial low scores for the speaking and listening tests at one of the sites are likely to be due to initial implementation issues regarding the tests. Tutors believe that offering tests at set time periods impacts on achievement: learners who sit exams at the end of the course are far more likely to pass, than those who finished three weeks previously and have to return to education to sit their exams after a break. Further under OLASS 3 Skills for Life qualifications were not tied to guided learning hours: learners sat tests only when ready for the test.

Tutors reflected on the multiple issues that women face when they come into prison and that their experience can be very different to the experience of men, especially when they first arrive. Some women drop out of the course due to mental health issues or the medication they are taking. For this reason, they suggested that women in this situation might need more than 60 guided learning hours to achieve a qualification.

\(^{45}\) [http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/r/11-1418-review-research-on-improving-adult-skills.pdf](http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/further-education-skills/docs/r/11-1418-review-research-on-improving-adult-skills.pdf)
Although, the intensive model of 45 guided learning hours over 3-4 weeks will support some learners to achieve a Functional Skills qualification in a short time, for other learners it appears likely that there will be need for additional support such as pre course workshops, additional learning support assistants, one to one support, or longer programmes of study.

**Adaptations**

A number of sites made adaptations to the three week model to fit in with local conditions.

At the local prison the first pilot was delivered full time over two weeks. The learners found this very intensive. The second pilot ran half time (three hours x five days) over three weeks and was more successful. Both had a total of 45 hours.

At the YOI there were a number of adaptations. The third model ran over four weeks full time with learners studying English for one part of the day and maths for the other half of the day, with the potential to study 60 guided learning hours on both subjects prior to taking an assessment to achieve a Functional Skills qualification.

At the private local prison the second pilot ran for 45 guided learning hours but was changed from three hours a day for three weeks to run over four weeks. This was felt to suit the tutors, learners and establishment better.

**Courses with same start and end date and same cohort of learners**

A common approach to English and maths delivery in the participating pilots was a ‘roll on roll off’ model. Many learners and tutors commented that the same start and end date which is a feature of the intensive model brought some benefits.

Many learners in the focus group commented how learning as a group enhanced peer support:

> We help each other out. We’ve got the bond thing going on.

> We have a good teacher and a good understanding with each other.

Tutors agreed that the group approach is important in building confidence and improving attitudes. They identified how learners that are positive about the course can explain why learning is a good idea and encourage those who may start off with a more negative attitude.

> 90 per cent of them don’t want to be there... Once they start, they tell each other it’ll be okay.

Many felt the intensive model with its feature of the same start and end date, as opposed to a roll on roll off model, enhanced motivation through the development of mutual support between peers.
Some tutors felt the intensive model offers structure - prisoners know what they are doing and when they are doing it. This may have the additional benefits of mirroring stable work patterns in the ‘outside world’.

*It is good for prisoners to experience starting and finishing something, and this is something that they can then repeat throughout life.*

Some tutors felt the intensive delivery model creates more buy in. There is a need for greater up front recruitment and the time between information, advice and guidance (IAG)/ contact and referral onto provision were minimal: learners know why they are learning and this leads to better ownership of the learning process.

A benefit of the intensive model is that staff enjoy the stability of a group and working with that group for a finite time. Few other learning environments have such a lack of stability in their learning groups as prisons. In one site in the previous drop in model, the Skills for Life tutors could have a case load of 80 learners: in this model they had a more stable caseload of 12. Therefore tutors found they could build up a stronger picture of each learner and to offer appropriate support.

The intensive model is more conducive to learners working with the same tutor. The shorter style courses can be designed around staff blocks of time. Having the same tutor was identified as important by a number of sites as essential in building a rapport with the learners.

The intensive model can support efficient use of resources where supported by the prison. Some of the HoLS commented that having an end date for a course was perceived as an advantage over open ended study:

*Enabling learners to stay on course for as long as they want blocks places for others.*

*The biggest benefit is that it improves retention. Before, we were motivated by ‘bums on seats’ to keep classes full but with the improved retention in this model it means we can come away from roll-on, roll-off.*

**Teaching and learning**

An intensive delivery model can provide rich opportunities for teaching and learning. Some tutors found they could support learners to progress and develop ideas and themes and develop speaking and listening skills in ways which would be less possible in shorter bursts of study. Some tutors found there were opportunities to reinforce learning points which might otherwise be forgotten when learners only study once or twice a week. However developing high quality learning schemes and resources takes time and requires opportunities for tutor reflection of their effectiveness.

**A summary of the benefits and disadvantages**
Benefits

- Learners find it is beneficial to be part of a group going on a learning journey together. It fosters peer learning and peer support, and a stronger tutor learner relationship.
- Learners can focus on English and maths. For those less interested but who know they are required to learn, the intensive course has the merit of getting the learning over with more quickly. For those who are interested it enables them to really concentrate on their learning.
- The intensive model offers structure – prisoners know what they are doing and when they are doing it.
- Learners know why they are learning. It creates better ownership.
- The model enables tutors to build up a stronger picture of each learner and to offer appropriate support.
- There may be advantages in the new OLASS 4 funding model: retention may be enhanced given the right prison support; and finite blocks of learning time may help management of learning within the prison regime.

Disadvantages

- The intensive model is not for everyone, in every prison, at every stage of learning: some learners may find the pace and pressure overwhelming.
- For some learners, especially those with an antipathy to classroom learning, a discrete contextualised English and maths model may be less motivational than learning delivered in a workshop and/or embedded in a vocational course.
- The intensive model does not address the issue about the constant need to reinforce skills. This is a particular issue for prisoners on longer sentences.

Points for consideration

On the basis of these findings we suggest:

- Governors working with their education providers should review forms of English and maths delivery and consider where an intensive learning offer may bring benefits to learners as part of a mixed model of support for Functional Skills for those at Entry Level 3, and Level 1. It is essential that discussions take place in the context of the overall provision available in each
prison cluster. The intensive model should be considered particularly for prisoners on short term sentences (below 12 months) at Entry Level 3/ Level 1 or, for younger prisoners in particular, as a preparation for vocational training.

- Intensive approaches may be of value for learners operating at Entry Level 1 and 2, as part of a longer course of study beyond 45 guided learning hours. Intensive approaches may also be of value for learners operating at Level 2.
- When introducing intensive approaches, providers should ensure English and maths tutors have opportunities to develop and review schemes of work, materials and delivery methods, and review opportunities to reinforce skills through homework, one to one support, and links to work.
- Awarding Organisations should review the guided learning hours for delivery of Functional Skills qualifications and increase the hours from 45.
8. Culture of learning and incentives

Whole Organisation Approach

In the Armed Forces English and maths provision is set within a whole organisation approach and has top level approval. There is an ethos which supports the acquisition of English and maths skills, and Service policies that directly link English and maths skills attainment to requirements for promotion. In the criminal justice system, government policy clearly articulates the importance it attaches to English and maths for offenders. It is seen as fundamental to prisoner education, essential in achieving vocational and other qualifications and hence important to reducing reoffending.

In the Army, recruits are required to achieve a level of competence in functional English and maths prior to becoming a field soldier and in progressing through the ranks. The achievement of English and maths qualifications are not compulsory in prisons, except where these skills are identified and agreed with prisoners in their sentence plan.

All the prisoners interviewed in the course of this research were unanimous that they believed education should not be made compulsory:

- *Education should be a choice.*
- *A lot of people would stand their ground if education was compulsory and wouldn’t go.*
- *You should have a choice whether you learn or not.*
- *Education shouldn’t be compulsory. We don’t want to be treated like kids.*

Evidence from the Armed Forces indicates that some coercion does not always impede learning – so long as it is accompanied by incentives, where the rationale for learning is clear, and where learning is not seen as a punishment but as part of the pathway to reducing re-offending. In order to address and manage the issue of educational disengagement in the prison context, pilot sites were asked to consider incentives for learning.

Some but not all prisons include English and maths programmes as part of sentence planning, and many prisons set requirement levels for specific levels of English and maths in order for learners to access vocational training programmes and some other facilities.

**Incentives**

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46 BIS / Ministry of Justice (2011) ‘Making Prisons Work’
The intensive pilot study in prisons found that where English and maths programmes were part of sentence plans, retention of learners was high. All prisoners at the Category D pilot site have learning goals as considerations in their sentence plan. Once learners sign up to these (which in theory they are involved in setting though in practice their options are limited) their progress towards them is compulsory. Where learners do not want to do a maths or English course but realise that with targets/plan they have to, the intensive approach has the merit that ‘might as well get it over with quickly.’

A range of prisons have introduced ‘carrot and stick’ approaches. Some have policies that mean offenders cannot access popular activities such as workshops until they have achieved a Level 1. If they refuse, they do not get work. At another prison, it is standard practice to ensure that people have a Level 1 qualification prior to taking on different types of work.

Many tutors supported incentives for English and maths learning:

We need incentives for the intensive to work. We have told the learners that once they have done the course and sat the exam and completed properly then we will give them a preference on the pathway they want to follow. If that doesn’t happen there will be a lot of unhappy people. There needs to be something as part of the carrot and stick approach.

The plus side of the current approach is that it gives an incentive to try hard at the ‘plus’ test/ diagnostic. They know if they get Level 2 they don’t need to do four weeks of intensive maths and English. They are quite competitive. We get a more accurate diagnostic.

Learners also commented on the value of incentives:

They used to pay if you passed the test. That’s a good incentive.

However they felt that some incentives were better than others and need to give the right messages:

I feel that although this course was very good there should be a better incentive than afternoons off with nothing to do. More wages or phone credit or longer visits would be better.

Many tutors and indeed HoLS, supported the introduction of English and maths learning programmes as part of sentence planning. They commented that the omission of English and maths learning programmes from sentence planning indicated a lack of real understanding of the role of education in reducing re-offending.

We would love to have English and maths in the sentence plan.
At the moment the courses in the sentence plan are about behaviour management and drugs awareness. English and maths should be in there too. We feel the prison should recognise the value of Functional Skills and have an aspiration to get all lads to Level 1.

Where learning is part of an incentive scheme, if offenders refuse to go to classes, education staff have the authority to issue an IEP\(^7\)

> *If they refuse to come over to education, the prison disciplinary system operates. If this happens a number of times then they lose basics e.g. television.*

Tutors commented that an IEP is more of a deterrent for prisoners on longer sentences, compared with those on shorter sentences.

**Motivation and consistent messages about the value of learning**

Whilst some prisoners are interested and keen to attend English and maths classes, many, at least initially, do not want to learn. As one learner said:

> *The military have a different mentality than us. They’re there by choice. We’re not. They’re motivated to learn in the Army.*

The reasons for prisoners’ reluctance to learn are various: some may feel they do not need English or maths; some may feel when they leave prison their job opportunities are limited and so there is no point; some may have had poor experiences of schooling and are nervous about a return to learning.

Opportunities to convey the value of English and maths are many: induction; one to one IAG advice; initial assessments of skills; sentence planning; during course inductions; development of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), formative assessment, vocational training, outreach activity. Interviewees to this research suggested that reinforcement of the message that learning is important to rehabilitation is not happening consistently across the regime.

**Embedded approaches, motivation and achievement**

Research suggests that embedded approaches improve learning. Learners have better staying-on rates than those on non-embedded courses, more positive attitudes to the value of literacy/numeracy study and were more likely to gain a qualification. \(^8\) Embedded literacy and numeracy can either adopt a front loaded model, where the literacy and numeracy sessions precede the vocational element

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\(^7\) A disciplinary warning under the Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme.

but are related or an integrated model, where the different aspects run side by side. Both have been found to be successful, except where a single teacher had dual responsibility for teaching both vocational skills and basic skills. Basic skills appear to benefit from a dedicated teacher. However, there needs to be good communication between basic skills tutors and vocational tutors, something which implies a whole organisation approach. A higher degree of integration of key skills (literacy, numeracy) is one of the main areas of good practice associated with successful completion of work based learning programmes.

**Competing prison priorities**

Within prisons involvement in learning can be impeded not only by a lack of consistent messages about the value of learning, but also by competing priorities for prisoners’ time. The level of avoidable absences reported in Section 3 illustrate in a very concrete way how this can impact on education.

One of the long term concerns of further education providers in prisons is that educational achievement can be hindered by interruptions to learning due to prison reasons, e.g. the transfer of learners to other establishments; the withdrawal of learners to fit in with other requirements of the prison regime such as security, healthcare, visits (both legal and social) and movements to classes. Poor attendance is more critical in the intensive model, since there is less capacity for learners to catch up with learning they have missed. Less disruption to learning is likely to lead to greater attainment.

Tutors highlighted some prison related issues that have affected the number of learners enrolling on the course and their subsequent attendance:

- At one prison, the number of guided learning hours was reduced by one and a half hours each week due to learners being taken to the gym.
- At another prison, the learners on the course were all on a particular training programme. If the learners were ‘sacked’ from the programme, they also ceased to attend the English and maths course.
- Another tutor explained that prison risk assessments were delaying people turning up to the learning sessions.

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49 Casey et al 2006

Some tutors believed that getting prisoners into learning was not a priority for offender managers, and that these attitudes can present a significant barrier to prisoners’ participation in learning.

*It’s the character of the regime... The prison officer should know that they have to be [in education] and they should be woken up... These men are vulnerable and have never been given that encouragement or structure.*

*They say you can’t tell a man over 18 that he has to go to class... We’ve got men in for four years who can’t read or write but [prison staff] don’t care because they’re a good cleaner.”*

*Why would you go to prison and be a cleaner or work in the kitchen? It makes sense you should try and develop your skills. Education should be number 1.*

Learners also commented on conflicting priorities in the prison regime which impacted on their learning:

*There needs to be more communication between the wings and education. You get stopped for drugs tests and miss your class.*

*When you go to healthcare you miss your class. My appointment was 20 minutes but I had to miss the whole three hour session of maths.*

*I was due to start the beginning of the course but I had to wait for security clearance. So for the three week course I didn’t get to start till day 13. There were three days left.*

*Sometimes you don’t get called to education in time. One day I was doing my teeth and heard them call. I ran along but got to the gate just after everyone had gone through. The officer only had to open the gate for me but decided not to. I missed three hours learning.*

There appears to be no one answer to timetabling: solutions will vary from prison to prison, but commitment to attendance at the prison senior management level is needed. Where learning is delivered in an intensive format it is essential to sort timetabling issues as they will impact significantly on achievement.

Another issue appeared to be pressure to ensure places on courses are filled. In some situations this can mean that learners may not be appropriately placed on courses: they may not be at the right level or they may not be interested in attending. This was the experience in a number of the initial pilots. The focus was on filling places.

*There is pressure from the prison to ensure all places in classrooms are full. If there are only six people on the course at the right level then the prison will say we need to fill the places. It's part of their targets.*
The HoLS is keen to try to negotiate that people are there with purpose, i.e. need to be there/courses are appropriate. But this isn’t always achieved.

The pilots most successful in retaining learners were those where prison staff and further education (FE) providers worked together on sequencing and timetabling to mitigate the risk of withdrawal.

**Intensive models and a whole organisation approach**

Tutors felt that the intensive model could be effective but that it would need support from senior prison management and other prison staff.

*There is a lot of leeway to do this but it has to come from the top and from prison officers.*

*It would take the Minister and NOMS to tell them that they had to do it in order for it to work effectively.*

*It’s not just the governor, it needs to be the officers as well.*

They explained that management need to be convinced that:

- prioritising learning over non essential visits was essential to the success of the intensive model;
- if prisoners do not regularly attend learning the provision is not cost effective;
- prisoners are more employable if they have English and maths qualifications and have a positive experience of learning; and
- English and maths learning is part of the reducing reoffending agenda.

**Points for consideration**

On the basis of these findings we suggest:

- As part of the reducing reoffending agenda, NOMS should issue guidelines for prisons to include English and maths interventions in prisoners’ sentence plans. Prisons, at senior management level, should consider a range of incentives for English and maths learning including the achievement of a Functional Skills qualification into sentence plans where appropriate.

- For the intensive model to be successful it is important that disruptions to learning are minimised. NOMS should issue guidelines for prisons to consider ways of maximising the benefits and minimising disruptions to intensive English and maths programmes including:
  - putting a hold on transfers of intensive maths/English learners until the course has completed and qualifications sat;
- minimising unnecessary interruptions to the learning programme possibly through a compact between prison and offender;
- ensuring allocations to classes are appropriate.

- NOMS should produce a short offender focussed resource about the value of English and maths through their offender journey which can be used in dialogue with potential learners. The resource could be placed on the virtual campus and be adapted locally using the appropriate learner voice.

- Prisons should introduce short CPD awareness programmes for staff where appropriate about the value of English and maths provision and its role in reducing reoffending, to ensure learners receive consistent messages about the rationale for learning English and maths.

- Prisons would benefit from introducing peer learning mentors to encourage people in custody to take advantage of English and maths programmes. Mentors should be trained about the value of English and maths skills and qualifications.
9. Conclusions
The intensive English and maths delivery model of 45 hours over a period of three to four weeks was evaluated for learners at Entry Level 3 or Level 1 in terms of their achievement, retention, and attitude to learning.

The quantitative data show that the intensive programme makes a statistically significant improvement in learners’ attainment in maths. While English learners made improvements, this did not reach a significant level. Initial Functional Skills test results for learners in the pilot compare reasonably with previous Skills for Life test results.

The evaluation has found some significant improvements to learners’ attitudes towards the value of learning and levels of confidence in their ability to learn; this was particularly evident in relation to maths learners, mirroring the results for attainment.

While retention rates improved at four of the six sites, due to small sample sizes, there is no strong evidence that the intensive model improves retention. Where retention is not as high as in the previous delivery model, part of the explanation may be attributable to implementation issues.

Although the pilot has not been able to test fully whether learners were able to achieve a Functional Skills qualification in the time frame available, we suggest the 45 guided learning hours recommended by Awarding Organisations and confirmed by Ofqual are insufficient for learners who are not already close to achieving the target skills level. For some learners there will be need for additional support such as pre course workshops, one to one support, opportunities for self study or longer programmes of study.

The intensive approach is not a magic bullet. It is not appropriate for all learners in all prison situations. Provision needs to be localised and responsive to the local prison environment. The intensive approach is a good model for some sites, as part of a range of approaches to learning provision. From a provider perspective it is no problem to run different models at the same site: providers can, and do, operate mixed models of provision, including outreach, discrete, contextualised, workshops, embedded, and one to one.

The pilot suggests the intensive model works best:

- in local prisons for learners on short term sentences when appropriate allocation to courses and attendance is supported by prison management;
- when learners are highly motivated: these learners enjoy the pace and the opportunity to focus on making progress with their skills;
where English and maths are part of a clear rationale for learning e.g. in YOIs as part of a vocational pathway;

- in the Category D prisons where learners are working towards release. Prisoners see there is more value to achieving in a short period of time in order to progress more quickly.

The pilot suggests an intensive model will have less success:

- for prisoners with mental health issues or complex needs, for example prisoners on IPPS; women who are concerned what is happening to their children on the outside; and those who have issues related to health and addiction;
- where there is not enough throughput of prisoners at the right level to make the model viable in numerical and financial terms;
- where learners are given no clear rationale for learning English and maths;
- where prisoners are on very short sentences of less than six weeks, especially young offenders. Short term courses possibly involving proficiency qualifications may be more appropriate;
- as the only model for long term prisoners who need ongoing reinforcement to retain their skills.

The main features of the intensive model which distinguish it from previous approaches at the pilot sites are the number of hours of learning a week and running a course with the same start and end date and with the same cohort of learners at the same level.

Benefits

- Learners find it is beneficial to be part of a group going on a learning journey together. It fosters peer learning and peer support, and a stronger tutor learner relationship.
- Learners can focus on English and maths. For those less interested but who know they are required to learn, the intensive course has the merit of getting the learning over with more quickly. For those who are interested it enables them to concentrate on their learning.
- The intensive model offers structure – prisoners know what they are doing and when they are doing it.
- Learners know why they are learning. It creates better ownership.
The model enables tutors to build up a stronger picture of each learner and to offer appropriate support.

There may be advantages in the new OLASS 4 funding model: retention may be enhanced given the right prison support; and finite blocks of learning time may help management of learning within the prison regime.

Disadvantages

The intensive model is not for everyone, in every prison, at every stage of learning: some learners may find the pace and pressure overwhelming.

For some learners, especially those with an antipathy to classroom learning, a discrete contextualised English and maths model may be less motivational than learning delivered in a workshop and/or embedded in a vocational course.

The intensive model does not address the issue about the constant need to reinforce skills. This is a particular issue for prisoners on longer sentences. Introducing ‘homework’ into the model may provide opportunities for prisoners to consolidate their learning and might foster a greater sense of autonomy. Given that some prisoners complain about the boredom of the cell, engaging tasks might be attractive.

To work effectively any provision, but particularly an intensive model, requires support from the prison for learners to attend. In the shorter intensive model there is less opportunity to catch up with learning which has been missed. Less disruption to learning is likely to lead to greater attainment.

The pilot found that there are some missed opportunities for prisons to provide consistent messages about the value of acquiring English and maths skills. Opportunities to convey the value of English and maths are many: induction; during one to one IAG advice; initial assessments of skills; sentence planning; during course inductions; formative assessment, vocational training, outreach activity. Interviewees consistently reported the need to reinforce the value of English and maths by all staff prisoners come into contact with, in order that offenders better appreciate the value of English and maths learning to rehabilitation.

Learning works best where it is fully supported by offender managers in a whole organisation approach where English and maths learning is seen as a critical part of reducing reoffending. This involves:

- consistent messages about the role of English and maths skills in reducing reoffending;
• incentives to learn, specifically the inclusion of English and maths learning in sentence planning;
• compacts to ensure attendance is maintained and prisoners are retained on programme before transfer or release;
• involvement by both offender managers and FE providers in appropriate allocation of learners to courses.

During the time of the pilot, a prison cluster approach to considering the curriculum offer was introduced. This helped enormously in developing a strategic approach to where investment in learning is best placed and which delivery models are appropriate.

There is no one simple solution for what works in learning. Effective practice involves a mix of pedagogical and organisational considerations. This study focussed on structural factors, specifically an intensive model. However, all the usual factors apply to good teaching and learning. The model of delivery alone will not ensure high quality learning. The pilot demonstrated the importance of skilled, qualified and motivating tutors who have regular access to continuing development opportunities, including review of (intensive) delivery models, appropriate schemes of work and resources. A specific advantage of an intensive course is that it can offer rich learning opportunities, for example to develop learning around themes; to incorporate speaking and listening and group activity. However developing high quality learning schemes and resources takes time and requires opportunities for tutor reflection of their effectiveness.

This study focussed on Entry Level 3 and Level 1. It did not test the validity of an intensive delivery model for learners Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2 or Level 2. The needs of these learners are equally as important and should not be forgotten.
10. Appendices

Appendix 1a  **Attitude questionnaire for learners: beginning of course**

Please read the statements below and indicate how much you agree or disagree with them.

(Please tick one box on each line.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I very much enjoyed the last English/maths course I was on. (This may have been at school.)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think I did very well on my last English/maths course. (This may have been at school.)</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>English/maths courses are very useful to me.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>English/maths courses have helped me in my social/family life.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>English/maths courses have helped me with work.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>English/maths courses have helped me manage my life (housing, benefits, etc).</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>I believe I will do really well in this class.</td>
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<td>Strongly agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m certain I can understand the most difficult material for this course.</td>
<td>□</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for me to learn the things taught in this class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m confident I can learn the basics in this course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am very interested in what we will cover in this course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m confident I can pass the tests at the end of the course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I expect to do well in this class.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the subject matter of this course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding the subject matter of this course is very important to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m certain I can master the skills being taught in this class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 1b  Attitude questionnaire for learners: end of course

Please read the statements below and indicate how much you agree or disagree with them.

(Please tick one box on each line.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<th></th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed this English/maths course very much.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think I did very well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think this course was very useful for me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think it will help me to manage my life (housing, benefits, etc).</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think it will help me to enjoy life more.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think I will be able to use what I learnt in this course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I believe I did really well in this class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m certain I can understand the most difficult material for my next course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is important for me to continue learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m confident I can learn more in future courses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am interested in continuing my</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
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<td>Strongly disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m confident I can gain more qualifications.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I expect to do well in my next course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I liked the subject matter of this course.</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the subject matter of this course was very important to me.</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m certain I mastered the skills taught in this class.</td>
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Appendix 1c  Focus group with learners

1. What were the best things about taking part in the learning sessions?
   (What did you enjoy most?)
   *(E.g. learning new skills, social interaction, routine, etc)*

2. What could have been better?
   (Was there anything you didn't like about the course?)
   (What else would you have liked?)

Now I am going to ask you about what you have got out of taking part in this learning programme. We are interested in knowing how learning might have changed what you think about English/maths and learning. We would like to know about both positive and negative things.

3. Has taking part in the course changed what you think or how you feel about taking part in learning? Please tell us how your thoughts or feelings have changed.
   Does anyone feel the same about learning as they did before?

4. Has taking part in the course changed what you think or how you feel about English/maths?
   Does anyone feel the same about English/maths as they did before?

5. Has taking part in the course had any other impact on you or your life?

6. Overall, what do you think are the main benefits of participating in the course?

7. Thinking about all of these changes, what do you think contributed to these changes the most?
   (What aspects of the course made the biggest difference?)
   *(E.g. the tutor, the length of the course, number of hours each day, peer support)*

8. How do you personally plan to use the things you have learned in the future?
   *(E.g. for work, job applications, further learning, helping children with their reading/homework)*

9. Are there any other things you would like to say about the course?
Appendix 1d   Focus group with tutors

1. Please describe the main differences between this intensive model and traditional English and maths provision.

2. In terms of the process, what has gone well?

3. In terms of the process, is there anything that could have gone better?

4. In your opinion, do you think the intensive learning programme is relevant and appropriate for this group of learners?
   Why / why not?

5. To the best of your knowledge, what impact has the intensive programme had on learners?
   Please describe any benefits for learners in detail.
   What, if any, negative effects has the programme had on learners?
   In your opinion, are these outcomes related to the intensive model in particular or did the previous model have the same effect?

6. What, if any, benefits have you or your colleagues experienced as a result of the programme?
   Please describe the benefits in detail.
   In your opinion, are these benefits related to the intensive model in particular or did the previous model have the same effect?

7. What, if any, negative effects have you or your colleagues experienced as a result of the programme?
   Please describe in detail.
   In your opinion, are these negative outcomes related to the intensive model in particular or did the previous model have the same effect?

8. In your opinion, which aspects of the programme contributed most to the positive outcomes?

9. How could the programme be improved in the future?
   What recommendations would you make to improve the success of the programme?
10. The programme has only been piloted with learners at entry level 3 and level 1. Do you think the intensive model is transferable to learners with lower skills levels, e.g. entry levels?

    Why / why not?

11. Do you have any other comments about the intensive model of delivery?

12. If you were able to make any other improvements to the way English and maths programmes are delivered in prisons, what would they be?
Appendix 1e  Interview with Heads of Learning and Skills

1. How, if at all, were you involved in the setting up or running of the intensive learning programme?

   In terms of the process, what went well? What could have been done better?

2. In what ways does the programme differ from the previous model?

3. In your opinion, do you think the intensive learning programme is relevant and appropriate for this group of learners?

   Why / why not?

4. In your opinion, what impact has the intensive programme had on learners?

   Please describe any benefits for learners in detail. Please give examples of any learners that have experienced these benefits.

   What, if any, negative effects has the programme had on learners?

   In your opinion, are these outcomes related to the intensive model in particular or did the previous model have the same effect?

5. What, if any, benefits have you or your colleagues experienced as a result of the programme?

   Please describe the benefits in detail.

   In your opinion, are these benefits related to the intensive model in particular or did the previous model have the same effect?

6. What, if any, negative effects have you or your colleagues experienced as a result of the programme?

   Please describe in detail.

   In your opinion, are these negative outcomes related to the intensive model in particular or did the previous model have the same effect?

7. In your opinion, which aspects of the programme contributed most to the positive outcomes?

8. How could the programme be improved in the future?

   What recommendations would you make to improve the success of the programme?
9. The programme has only been piloted with learners at entry Level 3 and level 1. Do you think the intensive model is transferable to learners with lower skills levels, e.g. entry 1 and 2 levels?

Why / why not?

10. Do you have any other comments about the intensive model of delivery?

11. If you were able to make any other changes to the way English and maths is delivered in prisons, what would they be?
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