

Get Set for Success:

Delivering and evaluating the Get Set for Success curriculum

June 2018

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In January 2016, NIACE and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion merged to form Learning and Work Institute

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Learning and Work Institute is an independent policy and research organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion.

We research what works, develop new ways of thinking and implement new approaches. Working with partners, we transform people's experiences of learning and employment. What we do benefits individuals, families, communities and the wider economy.

We bring together over 90 years of combined history and heritage from the 'National Institute of Adult Continuing Education' and the 'Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion'.

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Executive Summary

This report details Learning and Work Institute's (L&W) ongoing research and development work with Get Set for Success, a personal and social development (PSD) curriculum for use in prisons.

Over the last year, L&W have continued to support prison establishments delivering Get Set for Success as well as to engage other establishments. Through prison visits, we have encouraged providers to adopt a 'whole organisation approach' to both delivery and evaluation of the programme. We have also supported the prisons to integrate evaluation practices into delivery, to ensure that the impact of the course is being captured for funders, commissioners and future learners. Our continued engagement with prisons has enabled us to explore barriers to delivery and evaluation, and we have made suggestions for how these can be overcome.

Policy context

In 2016, a national review of education in prison outlined the role for education as one of the 'pillars of effective rehabilitation'¹. In addition to more formal and vocational learning, the findings of the review emphasised the role that PSD can play both in its own right and as a 'progression route' into more formal education. Although the recently published 'Education and Employment Strategy'² does not explicitly explore PSD learning specifically, it draws on research that suggests employers are concerned that offenders will lack necessary social and communication skills³.

L&W's previous work with prisons delivering Get Set for Success suggests that PSD learning can be used to raise confidence and help foster work-related skills including good communication, conflict resolution and problem-solving. Get Set for Success can also act as an engagement tool to 'ease in' prisoners who are otherwise reluctant learners. In this sense, PSD provision could be an enabler of the MoJ's agenda for better engagement with formal learning, and improved levels of post-release employment. Get Set for Success could also contribute a wider programme of action aimed at reducing violence and improving behavior within prisons, as it can help to address inappropriate attitudes and behaviours.

Get Set for Success

Get Set for Success is a PSD course, developed by L&W in 2014⁴. The course is comprised of four models:

¹ Dame Sally Coates, (2016) Unlocking Potential – a review of education in prisons, Ministry of Justice

² Education and Employment Strategy (2018), Ministry of Justice

³ Research by Yougov suggests that employers are concerned about the social skills of ex-offenders.

⁴ This work was produced by NIACE, L&W's predecessor.

- 1) Developing ourselves
- 2) Dealing with problems
- 3) Managing social relationships
- 4) Working with others

The course is guided by the tutor notes and learner activities, and each learner is given a learner journal and assessment booklet. The learner journal provides a space for the learners to reflect on the skills developed through the course, while the observational assessment tool is designed for use by staff to observe learners putting into practice what they have learnt in class.

Delivery and critical success factors

Although prisons are guided in delivery by the tutor notes and learning resources provided by L&W, tutors are also encouraged to adapt delivery in line with learner needs. Duration, cohort size, and recruitment differed across the participating prisons, and in some instances prisons chose to amend the course materials to suit the learners. Regardless of differences, crucial success factors include:

- To engage reluctant learners, Get Set for Success should be marketed as something different to 'formal' education. For example, one prison decided to advertise Get Set for Success as an 'employment skills programme'. This approach helps to engage reluctant learners or those with learning difficulties, who may have negative associations with formal education, or experience confidence issues. Testimony from learners who were previously reluctant has also proved a good means of engagement.
- Groups with disruptive or reluctant learners can be balanced with those who are familiar to the education department or who wish to act as mentors. These individuals can act as role models, and their contributions to group discussions can encourage participation from more reluctant learners.
- Although intensity and duration of the course may need to vary depending on each prison regime, the Get Set for Success modules are designed to be cumulative. Therefore, the course should be delivered at a sufficient intensity so that learners are able to make links between the content of the modules.
- Where possible, the course should be linked through its goals and planning exercises to further educational and employment provision. In this way, Get Set for Success can contribute towards the wider goal of increased engagement with employment and education.

- Get Set for Success can be successfully used as a precursor to other programmes in order to increase engagement and improve behaviour. Prisons have found that Get Set for Success can provide a good preparation for Thinking Skills Provision and can be useful in engaging learners in more formal education and as preparation for vocational skills courses.
- The tutor should be aware of referral pathways for support services and make appropriate referrals if learners disclose issues and needs during the course.

Whole organisation approach

L&W's previous research suggests that Get Set for Success works best when delivered and evaluated within a 'whole organisation approach'⁵. Delivering Get Set for Success within a whole organisation approach ensures that learners are given the opportunity to transfer the skills they have learnt in contexts outside of the classroom. A whole organisation approach to delivery could involve running the course alongside or in succession to other provisions, such as vocational learning or employment. A whole organisation approach to evaluation ensures that multiple perspectives are included when assessing changes in learners' attitudes and behaviors. This might include asking prison officers or staff members from the library, the gym, other vocational courses or workshops to use the observational assessment tool or share data⁶. Overall, a whole organisation approach helps to encourage positive behaviours and attitudes within the prison culture

This year, L&W have encouraged both new and long-standing participating prisons to adopt a whole organisation approach to Get Set for Success, however, there have been significant barriers. While all the prisons currently use the observational assessment tool, for most it's use is limited to the course tutor rather than a member of staff who could observe the learner outside the classroom. In many instances this was due to prison understaffing. In some instances, prison took a whole organisation approach by sequencing Get Set for Success with other education or employment provision. However, current funding arrangements meant that no prisons were able to embed Get Set for Success within vocational learning provision.

Evaluation

Good evaluation and monitoring can ensure a course is having its intended impact on learners, diagnose areas for improvement, and evidence the impact of the course for funders, commissioners and future learners. For Get Set for Success, evaluation also provides a chance to adopt a whole organisation approach by involving prison officers and staff from other departments in observational assessment and data sharing. L&W have

⁵ Jones, E and Penistone, E, 'Personal and Social Development Curriculum for Women in Prisons'

⁶ If data is shared with an external party, they should ensure they have a data sharing agreement from outset.

created an evaluation toolkit containing data collection tools and guidance for tutors and education staff. The toolkit includes:

- A pre and post learner questionnaire (both quantitative and qualitative)
- Case study templates
- Guidance on using interviews and focus groups, and example topic guides.
- Guidance on how to use the assessment tool and learner journal for evaluation.
- Instructions on submitting to the MoJ datalab
- Consent forms, and guidance on data protection and ethics.
- A spreadsheet for data collation and analysis

Prisons are currently in the process of embedding evaluation practice into their delivery. Three prisons have begun to trial a pre and post course learner questionnaire. Tutors have reported that the questionnaires were well received by learners. However, in these early staged sample sizes are too small to draw robust conclusions.

Prisons have anticipated difficulties with the additional burden of carrying out evaluation activities alongside delivery. Most were unable to secure the buy-in of prison officers due to understaffing and, in some cases, serious behavioral incidents on the wings. Therefore, there was only one instance where the observational assessment tool was used by personal officers. Tutors also reported that, although they found the spreadsheet straightforward, they required help from administration staff to complete it due to time constraints.

Although most prisons were keen to make a Ministry of Justice (MoJ) data lab submission, small cohort sizes mean that it will take many months for prisons to accrue the 60 learners necessary.

Outcomes

Three prisons have provided feedback and quotes and created case studies. These showcase the impact that Get Set for Success can have on learners.

Initial evaluation indicates that Get Set for Success can foster learners' wellbeing, improve social relationships and help learners to plan for the future by:

- Encouraging positive thinking about the future through challenging negative attitudes, and goal setting.
- Developing self-awareness about thoughts and actions.

- Acting as an engagement tool for further learning and skills
- Improving confidence, including confidence in learning.
- Helping to make plans for post-release life, including for employment.
- Improving relationships with friends, family, other prisoners and staff.

In prisons where Get Set for Success has been running the longest, and where it has begun to be embedded within a whole organisation approach, staff feedback suggests that personal and social development skills have begun to filter into the prison culture.

Policy Recommendations

Currently, employment for ex-offenders one-year post-release is just 17%⁷. The most recent MoJ Education and Employment Strategy⁸ emphasises the link between employment and reduced reoffending and sets out a strategy to increase post-release employment, as well as outlining the role that formal learning can play in achieving this.

The recent strategy does not explicitly outline the role that PSD can play in encouraging accredited learning and employment. However, from 2019, governors will have more flexibility in the types of education provision they run within their prison. This will allow governors the chance to consider the needs of their specific prison population and tailor education provision accordingly. As such, this report comes at an opportune moment to consider the role that PSD can play in facilitating employment and wider skills development, encouraging rehabilitation and reducing reoffending.

To enable this, future reports and policy papers should give greater consideration to the role that personal and social development can play in improving post-release employment outcomes. For personal and social to contribute towards this goal, MoJ should ensure that new funding arrangements allow for additional funding to be drawn down to cover the costs of design and delivery for personal and social development skills content relevant to employment to be embedded within vocational courses. Similarly, policymakers should consider the impact that current issues with understaffing and limited resources has on educational provision including personal and social development work, and evaluation of such provision.

Finally, to better understand the impact of Get Set for Success on post-release life, commissioners should focus future research on the through-the-gate, longitudinal studies.

⁷ This figure refers to registered, P45, employment

⁸ Education and Employment Strategy (2018), Ministry of Justice

Introduction

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) is an independent policy and research organisation, dedicated to promoting lifelong learning, full employment and inclusion. We research what works to transform people's experience of learning, employment and social participation.

L&W has a longstanding involvement in offender learning. We believe that learning can play a key role in improving the lives of offenders and ex-offenders, facilitating community integration and reducing reoffending. Our work in this area has included research, evaluation and curriculum development to inform and improve policy and practice.

This report outlines our ongoing work on 'Get Set for Success', a personal and social development (PSD) curriculum designed for prisons by L&W⁹ in 2014. This year, we have continued working with prisons already delivering Get Set for Success and engaged additional prisons. We have offered support for participating prisons, including help with marketing the course to new learners and embedding the programme within a whole organisation approach. We have also provided prisons with materials to evaluate the programme in their context.

This report details our activities and describes the progress that prisons have made with their delivery of Get Set for Success. Changes to funding and commissioning arrangements mean that from 2019, governors will have more flexibility in the types of education provision they run within their prison. This will allow governors the chance to consider the needs of their specific prison population and tailor education provision accordingly. As such, this report comes at an opportune moment to consider the role that PSD provision can play in facilitating rehabilitation, employment and wider skills development among offenders.

Background

In 2014, L&W was commissioned by the then Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to develop, pilot and evaluate a PSD curriculum for women in prisons. This was in response to a request from the then Minister of State for Justice and Civil Liberties (Simon Hughes MP). The development of the new course, Get Set for Success, was informed by the insights of Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) providers into the PSD needs of women prisoners and the offender learning context, as well as findings from L&W's research on learning provision for women in prison¹⁰ and the impact of PSD

⁹ Then called the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)

¹⁰ Dixon, A. and Jones, E. (2013) *Learning for women in prison: the role of learning and skills in responding positively to the issues and circumstances faced by women in prison*
http://shop.niace.org.uk/media/catalog/product/l/e/learning_for_wip_v3_final.pdf

learning¹¹. We worked with OLASS providers to determine the most effective format through which the course could be delivered, and developed new tools and advice to support OLASS practitioners to make reliable initial and summative assessments of PSD skills through learner observation.

The final course, Get Set for Success, comprised of four modules:

1. Developing ourselves
2. Dealing with problems
3. Managing social relationships
4. Working with others

Modules 1 and 2 focus on the individual; module 3 focuses on interactions with partners and family members; and module 4 focuses on interactions with a wider group. The content of module 1 on thoughts, beliefs and values is designed to enable learners to better understand why they think, behave and feel the way they do, whilst the content on self-esteem, self-acceptance, ways of thinking, motivation and self-development is designed to equip learners to better respond to real-life challenges. Consequently, it is intended that learners heavily draw upon what they learn in the first module when tackling the issues set out in modules 2, 3 and 4.

Theoretical principles of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) underpinned the course's description of the links between thoughts, beliefs and values, behaviours and feelings. Materials were developed to adhere to the PHSE Association principles of good PHSE education. In particular, we ensured that the materials took a positive approach which did not intend to induce shock or guilt and focused on what participants could do to keep themselves and others healthy and safe, and to lead confident and fulfilling lives.

Get Set for Success was initially piloted in three women's prisons – HMP/YOI Drake Hall, HMP/YOI Low Newton and HMP Eastwood Park. L&W evaluated the three pilots using both qualitative and quantitative data from learners and practitioners. Our evaluation found that the programme, particularly when embedded into a whole organisation approach, can support women in prison to feel more positive about learning, work and social relationships, and to feel more self-confident and optimistic for their future. The evaluation identified the circumstances under which the course made the greatest positive

¹¹ Jones, E. and Dixon, A. (2014) *The impact of personal social development learning for offenders* http://shop.niace.org.uk/media/catalog/product/t/h/the_impact_of_personal_social_development_learning_for_offenders.pdf

impact and resulted in a set of recommendations for the future development, adaption and roll out of the programme.

In 2016 L&W widened the scope of Get Set for Success to include both Young Offenders Institutions (YOIs) and male prisons. Additionally, we revised the pilot course materials to reflect the findings of the evaluation. This included adding recommendations to the 'tutor notes', emphasising the importance of differentiated teaching strategies – allowing the course to respond flexible to learner needs.

Over the last year, L&W have continued to support prison establishments delivering Get Set for Success as well as to engage other establishments. Through prison visits, we have encouraged providers to adopt a 'whole organisation approach' to both delivery and evaluation of the programme. We have also supported the prisons to integrate evaluation practices into delivery, to ensure that the impact of the course is being captured for funders, commissioners and future learners. Our continued engagement with prisons has enabled us to explore barriers to delivery and evaluation, and we have made suggestions for how these can be overcome.

Policy context

In 2016, a national review of education in prison outlined the role for education as one of the 'pillars of effective rehabilitation'¹². The review took a holistic approach to education. In addition to more formal and vocational learning, the findings of the review emphasised the role that PSD can play both in its own right and as a 'progression route' into more formal education.

The more recently published 'Education and Employment Strategy'¹³ elaborates the crucial role that prison education can play in reducing reoffending by facilitating employment and community integration post-release. This is corroborated by quantitative research that demonstrates a positive impact of employment on reoffending¹⁴. However, currently, only 17% of offenders are in registered employment one-year post release.

The strategy puts forward recommendations to ensure that 'when an offender enters prison they should be put, immediately, on the path to employment on release'. Although the Strategy does not explicitly explore PSD learning specifically, it draws on research that suggests employers are concerned that offenders will lack necessary social and communication skills¹⁵. Although some of this can be attributed to employer prejudice, offenders may also be disadvantaged in the job-application process by behavioral issues,

¹² Dame Sally Coates, (2016) Unlocking Potential – a review of education in prisons, Ministry of Justice

¹³ Education and Employment Strategy (2018), Ministry of Justice

¹⁴ Analysing the impact of employment on re-offending following release from custody using Propensity Score Matching, Ministry of Justice, March 2013

¹⁵ Research by Yougov suggests that employers are concerned about the social skills of ex-offenders.

attitude problems and poor social skills. Moreover, as offenders are likely to have a significant period of missed work experience, they may lack confidence, preventing them from applying for jobs in the first instance.

Our previous work with prisons delivering Get Set for Success suggests that PSD learning can be used to raise confidence and help foster work-related skills including good communication, conflict resolution and problem-solving. Get Set for Success can also act as an engagement tool to 'ease in' prisoners who are otherwise reluctant learners. In this sense, PSD provision could be an enabler of the MoJ's agenda for better engagement with formal learning, and improved levels of post-release employment. Get Set for Success could also contribute a wider programme of action aimed at reducing violence and improving behavior within prisons, as it can help to address inappropriate attitudes and behaviours.

Our approach

In 2017-18, L&W have built on previous work by offering ongoing support to prison establishments running Get Set for Success, as well as engaging additional establishments. Our work has involved:

- Providing printed curriculum materials to prisons.
- Producing marketing materials to support prison and learner engagement.
- Undertaking prison visits to support delivery of Get Set for Success in line with our recommendations for good practice, particularly encouraging a 'whole organisation approach'.
- Using visits and telephone conversations to capture the benefits and challenges experienced by prisons delivering Get Set for Success.
- Producing evaluation tools and guidance that can be used by delivery staff to monitor and improve delivery, as well as to evidence the impact of Get Set for Success to governors, funders, commissioners and future learners.
- Collecting and collating case studies and feedback from learners, to better understand the impact of Get Set for Success.

Strand 1: Increasing engagement

Building on our previous work on Get Set for Success, this year L&W have worked to widen the scope of the programme, both by engaging further prison establishments and by helping prisons to engage a larger number of learners. To facilitate this, L&W have developed a briefing sheet explaining the purposes of Get Set for Success to prison governors, education staff and tutors and a pop-up banner aimed at engaging learners within prison establishments.

To further encourage and support prisons in their delivery of Get Set for Success, we have conducted visits, contributed to training activities and used our previous experience to offer examples of best practice in how to deliver the course.

Strand 2: Researching best practice and barriers to delivery

Through prison visits and telephone interviews with education staff, L&W have explored the various modes of delivering Get Set for Success across different establishments as well as barriers to delivery and to taking a whole organisation approach. Findings from these visits and interviews are summarised in this report.

Strand 3: Developing evaluation tools and guidance

L&W have developed an evaluation toolkit to enable prison staff and OLASS providers to monitor and evaluate their delivery. The toolkit includes a pre and post questionnaire ¹⁶with advice on administration, suggestions for monitoring data, options for collecting qualitative feedback including an example topic guide and case study proforma¹⁷, and advice around data protection and informed consent, including an example consent form¹⁸.

This evaluation toolkit is designed to be used directly by tutors and was developed in consultation with staff at four prisons. L&W have also designed a user-accessible spreadsheet to allow for data input and management. The spreadsheet enables data storage of information that can later be used to make a submission to the MoJ datalab¹⁹, if and when programmes meet the eligibility criteria.

¹⁶ See appendix 1

¹⁷ See appendix 2 and 4

¹⁸ See appendix 3

¹⁹ For information about the MOJ datalab see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/justice-data-lab>

Delivery of Get Set for Success

This section includes information on the course materials used to support delivery of Get Set for Success, how Get Set for Success has been implemented across prisons, barriers to delivery, and key critical success factors that support successful delivery and maximise impact. There are also case studies from five prisons, which showcase different delivery models.

Course materials

The learning materials include tutor guidance notes with recommendations for delivery and resources for each of the four modules. Each module is sub-divided into sections, following the same format:

- Learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- Tutors notes for the section
- Learner activity sheets

While all tutors are given the same materials for consistency, they are also encouraged to add content and activities relevant to their context and learners. Learning activity suggestions, as well as extension activities, are made in the tutor notes and tutors have the flexibility to adapt these to suit the needs of specific groups and individuals. Where opportunities exist, tutors are encouraged to work with other departments (for example, the library, vocational workshops, the gym) to embed some of the content within other activities, enabling learners to apply the skills they have developed.

Each learner is provided with a learning journal and assessment booklet. The purpose of the learning journal is for learners to reflect on specific events and to record the outcomes of applying what they have learnt outside the classroom, reinforcing their learning and new behaviours. Learners are encouraged to share their journal with their tutor or someone else in a support role, in order that they can receive constructive feedback.

The assessment booklet is a strengths-based observational tool structured around the four modules. The tool should be completed by an assessor who can observe the learner's behaviour and skills, preferably outside of the classroom. The assessor should be someone in a support role, for example, a tutor, mentor, prison officer, probation officer/offender manager. The tool includes spaces for both the assessor and learner to provide written feedback on progress made.

Implementation of the programme

L&W explored the delivery models at each participating prison through regular visits and phone calls.

All participating prisons follow the sequence of content as laid out in the learner materials, in recognition that the first module (Developing ourselves) provides a foundation for later modules. Feedback from the prisons confirms that the initial focus on the individual helps to build learners' confidence and their ability to participate in group activities within subsequent modules.

Prisons tend to deliver Get Set for Success to groups of up to 10 learners, this number being considered large enough for group work and yet small enough to ensure the tutor has sufficient time to give feedback to individuals. Course delivery is classroom based and often quite intensive, with the course being delivered on a full-time or substantial part-time basis. Most tutors said this intensity enables learners to better recall and recognise the interdependence of the course content, which leads to a deeper understanding and greater impact. Classroom assistants are used to support learners with additional needs or challenging behaviour.

Learners are encouraged to record their thoughts and actions in their learner journal, focusing on how they utilise their learning in their daily prison lives. L&W designed the observational assessment tool to be used by a range of staff within the prison to observe learners putting their learning into practice outside of the classroom. However, understaffing among prison staff means that in most cases, the tool is only being used by the tutor to record their observations of learners whilst undertaking group work.

All participating prisons use Get Set for Success as a stepping stone into the mainstream curriculum. To achieve maximum impact on participation rates, Get Set for Success is promoted to prisoners on arrival at HMP/YOI Drake Hall. HMP/YOI Oakwood plan to utilise Get Set for Success as an introduction to education for new arrivals including prisoners within the drug rehabilitation unit. At HMP Bullingdon vulnerable prisoners are also offered Get Set for Success, the tutor reporting that it complements the therapeutic provision they were receiving. The only learners excluded from taking part are those exhibiting the effects of taking illegal drugs, as they would not be able to participate sufficiently in the sessions.

The curriculum is delivered in its entirety in all the participating prisons except in HMYOI Aylesbury and HMP Bullingdon, which deliver abbreviated versions tailored to the needs of their young offenders and male prisoners respectively²⁰. However, the prisons vary in respect to how they deliver the curriculum and fund Get Set for Success. For example:

- In some prisons Get Set for Success is funded by OLASS. Here, learners can be supported to achieve qualifications by mapping the course onto Level 1 PSD or employability skills qualifications. Other prisons fund the programme as non-regulated provision using Engagement and Progression Learning (EPL) funds. These prisons do

²⁰ More details about the delivery models for each of these prisons can be found in the case studies.

not accredit Get Set for Success. This can give them greater flexibility to meet individual learner needs. For example, they can better accommodate learners with below Entry Level 3 writing skills who would find it challenging to undertake the written assessment requirements of qualifications.

- Some prisons have embedded maths and English skills within Get Set for Success, to prepare the learners for accredited learning. For instance, the tutor at HMP Bullingdon attaches monetary values to a tower building activity and asks learners to remain within the budget for the build.
- Most prisons deliver Get Set for Success to groups of offenders, however, there have been examples of Get Set for Success being delivered through cell-packs and supported self-study. For example, during a short break in delivery to groups at HMP/YOI Drake Hall, a small number of higher-level learners completed Get Set for Success through self-study supplemented by weekly tutor facilitated workshops. This highlights the potential for Get Set for Success to be offered to a range of learners and delivered in flexible ways to fit with wider commitments.
- Learners are generally recruited to the course through inductions for new arrivals or through referral by other prison staff such as probation or personal officers. However, in HMP/YOI Drake Hall and HMP Bullingdon, where the provision has been running longest, many prisoners refer themselves having been recommended the course by past learners. A number of learners reported that they were attracted to the course because participation in Get Set for Success had helped past learners achieve release on temporary license (ROTL).
- Learners generally join the course voluntarily. However, in some prisons, once Get Set for Success is incorporated into learners' timetable it is considered part of their sentence plan, from which unauthorised non-attendance could lead to the withdrawal of incentive and earned privileges (IEP). Retention rates in these prisons are consequently very high, with drop out generally only occurring due to prison transfer or release. Additionally, at one prison, a small number of prisoners in the Care and Support Unit are mandated to participate if their behavior indicates profound personal and social development needs. Similarly, HMP/YOI Oakwood are considering mandating Get Set for Success for some offenders in the drug and alcohol rehabilitation unit.

Case studies

These case studies currently Get Set for Success delivery at HMP/YOI Drake Hall, HMP Oakwood, HMYOI Brinsford and HMYOI Aylesbury.

HMP/YOI Drake Hall

HMP/YOI Drake Hall is a closed women's prison in Staffordshire, with capacity to accommodate up to 340 adult and young women. Since 2009, the prison has changed from being a semi-open to a closed prison, although women are not locked in cells and are free to move across the wings. The prison also has an open unit outside the perimeter fence, which gives up to 25 women an opportunity to work in the local community and prepare for release. The regime provides prisoners with voluntary and paid outwork programmes, including opportunities to work in a Call Centre, Halfords Academy and Greggs Academy, with the possibility of employment on release.

HMP/YOI Drake Hall participated in the first phase of Get Set for Success pilots, which began in May 2015. Following the success of the pilots, they continued to deliver the course, such that over 400 women, aged 18 and over, have now participated in Get Set for Success. Get Set for Success was initially incorporated into the induction for new prisoners, however, as a result of changes in the prison population, staff decided that this was too early for some prisoners who need more time to settle into the regime. Currently, Get Set for Success is promoted during induction and takes place subsequently. Although Get Set for Success is made available to all, priority is given to women at risk of self-harm or lacking confidence. Although voluntary, once prisoners are signed up Get Set for Success becomes part of their sentence plan and non-attendance can result in removal of incentives and earned privileges.

The tutor reports that the course is popular and well known within the prison, and that most prisoners choose to participate at some point whilst at Drake Hall. Delivery takes place in a dedicated classroom, which is decorated with past learners' work. The tutor ensures the learning activities are varied and interactive, for example including group discussions. The tutor reported that learners appreciate the chance to use skills they develop through the course during group work.

The course is delivered in approximately 60 guided learning hours over six weeks. This includes three mornings per week in the classroom for five weeks. During the sixth week, the tutor goes out to see learners who are participating in vocational workshops to observe and assess their behaviour in the wider prison context. This approach also reinforces the content in Module 4, which is focused on teamwork. Going out to the workshops has also helped the Education Department to make links with vocational instructors, who were reluctant at first to let women take their Get Set for Success workbooks into the workshops. The instructors are now happy for the tutor to come into the workshop and

discuss elements of Module 4 as they can see the positive difference the programme makes to learners' behaviour.

The course is funded through the OLASS budget, and small amendments having been made to the course materials to make it possible for learners to achieve NCFE ²¹ qualifications. The course is highly regarded by prison staff as it engages prisoners in further learning and builds their aspirations to find employment. The course is also used as a stepping stone course for learners planning to work in the prison's Call Centre and/or undertake a qualification in Information, Advice and Guidance. After release, a number have gone on to work for Jobcentre Plus or as business advisers, having been inspired by Get Set for Success to help others. Those with long sentences sometimes train to become peer advisers and go onto support other prisoners.

Prison departments and services at Drake Hall record information about individuals on the Prison National Offender Management Information System (PNOMIS). The course tutor uses this system to report on learning outcome achievements and track the behaviour of learners, which can be an effective way of identifying learning and skills needs. This has fostered a whole organisation approach to the delivery of the programme, whereby learners are observed in daily life, and not only in the classroom. Drake Hall has also arranged for three learners to be observed on the wing prison staff, who will record observations in the assessment booklet. Tutors feel that Get Set for Success has filtered positive personal and social skills into the prison culture.

²¹ Northern Advisory Council for Further Education is an awarding organization recognized by the qualification regulators for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

HMP Oakwood

HMP Oakwood is located in Staffordshire and provides places for 1500-2000 Category C adult male prisoners. HMP Oakwood is one of 14 private prisons in the UK and is currently operated by G4S.

Oakwood are due to begin their delivery of Get Set for Success in July 2018. Through visits and phone calls, L&W have worked with education staff at HMP Oakwood to consider their options for delivery, marketing and learner engagement.

Staff have decided that Get Set for Success will be delivered in a classroom-based format to cohorts of 10 learners. Learners will undertake all four units on a full-time basis over four weeks. If helpful, some learners will undertake the course more intensively over two to three weeks or alternatively on a part-time basis over five weeks. Other learners will undertake the course on the wings, with one to one support from the peer learning mentors who have completed the course themselves.

As well as for new arrivals within other house-blocks, HMP Oakwood is keen to offer Get Set for Success to new arrivals within the drug rehabilitation house-block as the course is likely to support overall well-being and inspire learners to progress onto further learning or employment activities. HMP Oakwood also plan to use the course to build learners' personal and social skills prior to vocational courses such as their track maintenance skills programme in partnership with Railtrack. Currently post-release employment with Railtrack is low, and Railtrack have reported that poor attitudes and lack of social skills often mean that offenders do not make it past the interview stage, despite being suitably qualified. HMP Oakwood hope that Get Set for Success will ensure greater success in securing paid work on release through learner's being better able to demonstrate positive attitudes and aspirations at interview.

HMP Oakwood will also deliver Get Set for Success to prospective learning mentors alongside their Level 3 Learning Support Practitioner course (as part of the Offender Learning Improvement Programme). Once trained, the learning mentors will then cascade the course, on a one to one basis to hard to reach prisoners on the wings. The average stay at HMP Oakwood is four years meaning learning mentors often remain for some time and can make a considerable contribution to the work of the Education Department.

The course at HMP Oakwood will be funded through the OLASS budget with NCFE external accreditation. As well as marketing the course through posters and pop-up banners in houseblocks, a pop-up banner will be displayed in the visitors centre as visiting family members often encourage prisoners to participate in learning provision.

HMP Bullingdon

HMP Bullingdon operates as a local men's prison holding both remanded and sentenced prisoners, with a total capacity of 1114. HMP Bullingdon have delivered an abbreviated non-regulated version of Get Set for Success as funded through EPL for approximately one year. It is now a part of the mainstream curriculum offer. Approximately 20 learners per month choose to undertake the course, after being introduced to it by the Education Department's recruitment team. By this stage, the course has developed a good reputation among prisoners, and so it has become easy to recruit for.

The course is delivered very intensively, all four modules being delivered for groups of up to 10 learners in nine full days, over a two-week period. In order to achieve this, some of the more time-consuming activities within the 'Working with others' module are missed out. The course has been used for several groups of vulnerable prisoners where it has been found to complement therapeutic provision. When delivering to vulnerable prisons, the tutor amends delivery to three weeks as these offenders tend to be more reluctant and less active in participation.

The flexible non-regulated format makes it possible for the tutor to tailor the course for each cohort by introducing new activities and approaches to fit the learners' needs. The tutor finds the course materials helpful to refocus learners when discussion goes 'off track'. A classroom assistant is always present to support learners who struggle with the written work.

Get Set for Success is made available on a roll-on/roll-off basis so prisoners who drop out can return. The course is synchronised with vocational skills provision as Get Set for Success' content on managing relationships and working with others underpins good customer service skills and team working, which are essential skills in many sectors, such as hospitality. The course also dovetails well with other personal development provision such as the health and well-being course and the mentoring course.

Learners receive a certificate on completion of the course. The tutor reported that the learners are often proud to receive these, and many are keen to show them to their families.

Tutor and learner feedback from HMP Bullingdon suggests that Get Set for Success plays a role in changing learners' perception of the value of participating in education and employment provision. As such, the tutor believes that Get Set for Success can be particularly useful for reluctant or disruptive learners.

HMYOI Brinsford

HMYOI Brinsford is located near Wolverhampton. It is a young offenders institute, providing places for up to 577 males aged 18 to 21 years including some prisoners on remand. Get Set for Success was trialed for the first time at HMYOI Brinsford in May 2018 with a group of eight learners. All four units were delivered in a classroom setting to learners on a part-time basis over five weeks.

The course delivery is non-regulated and funded through EPL funding. The tutor was therefore able to use the Get Set for Success learning materials flexibly to meet individual learner needs, with no changes necessary to meet awarding body requirements.

Prison and education staff reported that there are a high number of prisoners with learning difficulties at HMP Brinsford, such that usually every learning group has at least one learner with dyslexia, aspergers syndrome or ADHD. The tutor explained that to avoid showing vulnerability, prisoners will often say they are not interested in education rather than risk revealing that they have additional needs. Therefore, Get Set for Success is being marketed as a careers programme. The tutor reported that even after voluntarily joining the group, some learners were reluctant to participate in the initial sessions. In anticipation of this, to ensure at least some of the learners within the first group were actively involved, the tutor included several learners who had taken part in education previously and wanted to be mentors. This had an added advantage in that once they became mentors, they would be well informed about the course and could promote it to other prisoners

All eight learners completed their course. The tutor observed that the learners grew in confidence, motivation and self-belief, this being demonstrated through greater participation in discussions and their willingness to listen to, work with and support others. Once all the learners began to contribute, the tutor found it necessary to quite tightly manage discussions as learners often brought up and wanted to discuss their day to day concerns at length. Although personal input is welcome, the tutor wanted to maintain focus during the sessions, to ensure the content was not lost, and the pace of delivery was not be compromised.

As the course proceeded, the tutor also observed improvements in learners' body language and their willingness to participate in group work. Learners began to write more when completing assignments, and those learners who had classroom support tended to become more independent. Some of the learners have now signed up to other courses and others are considering their employment options. The learners that are getting close to being transferred to adult prison say they are keen to go to a prison with wide-ranging educational opportunities.

HMYOI Aylesbury

HMYOI Aylesbury is situated in the Thames Valley Region and holds male young offenders aged 17-21, with a total of capacity of 444. HMYOI Aylesbury holds the longest sentenced young adult males in the English prison system.

Since February 2017, HMYOI Aylesbury have delivered an adapted version of Get Set for Success in an EPL funded, non-regulated format tailored to the needs of young offenders. The tailoring generally involved shortening the existing exercises or introducing new versions of exercises that better capture the imagination of younger learners. HMYOI Aylesbury have recently further abbreviated the course and renamed it 'Believe and Achieve' – one of several names proposed by learners. They intend to trial this course and make further revisions based on learner feedback.

The course is primarily used as an engagement programme for prisoners who are least likely to participate in education and those who have been excluded from other forms of education. Most learners are recruited through one to ones undertaken by the learning mentor or the course tutor. A small proportion of the learners are referred to the course from other forms of learning where tutors have identified personal development needs. The small numbers taking the course have been sufficient to generate some peer recommendation. However, because the prisoners are aged 18 to 21 and their experience of school is recent, peer recommendations are often not enough to overcome their reluctance to return to education anyway.

The course is delivered for two days per week over four weeks. The tutor has reported that once they begin, learners tend to enjoy the programme, and attrition rates are low. However, some learners need more support and encouragement with written work. The tutor has observed many learners develop better relationships with others and increase their willingness and ability to communicate whilst in the group. The tutor reported that the learners who complete the course are proud of their completion certificate and the course has had success in progressing some of the most disengaged learners into further learning or employment within the prison.

Barriers to delivery

Generally, tutors have found delivery unproblematic. However, tutors and education staff reported issues with funding and staff resources. Prisons have been adept at identifying funding sources for Get Set for Success through EPL or OLASS funding streams. However, EPL and OLASS budget constraints limit the volume of provision possible.

L&W recommends that Get Set for Success is delivered by a qualified tutor who is experienced in delivering PSD courses. However, the prisons reported that there is often limited availability of sufficiently experienced and skilled staff to do this. Some tutors also flagged the need for training to ensure readiness to deliver, including training on how to manage and cope with learner disclosure of distressing experience, and how to manage classroom behaviour.

Critical success factors

Despite differences in delivery across prisons, there are several common success factors that support engagement and course delivery. They include factors related to engaging learners; helping to manage the classroom; ensuring sustainable delivery; best practice for tutors; and appropriate inter-agency work.

Engaging Learners

- When engaging learners, it may be helpful to emphasise that the course differs from formal learning. This can be particularly useful when trying to engage younger prisoners and/or adults with negative experiences of education. For example, the pop-up banners present Get Set for Success as something fun and engaging. In one instance, Get Set for Success is marketed as an employment programme so as not to 'put off' learners who have negative associations of education.
- Classrooms should display the work of previous learners, which can help to demonstrate the credibility of the course.
- Learners, particularly those who were previously reluctant to engage, can be powerful advocates for the course. In one example, a learner reported that Get Set for Success had built his confidence to do other courses within the Education Department. He had previously feared being made to 'look stupid' but he became a champion for Get Set for Success, and as a result the course began to gain popularity within the prison.

Managing the classroom

- Where groups contain disruptive or unresponsive learners, it is helpful to balance the group with learners who have taken part in education previously and/or who wish to be mentors. Their early positive contributions in class can encourage the less responsive learners to participate more fully.

- The nature of PSD provision can cause learners to bring up their own issues and experiences. Whilst this is welcome, and it can help make the learning personally relevant, it can sometimes cause the group to be distracted from the focus of the session. It is therefore important for the tutor to be able to use classroom management techniques to bring the session back on topic.

Delivery

- As each module builds on the one before, the course needs to be delivered at sufficient intensity for learners to recall and make links to the content of previous sessions.
- Building in ample opportunity for whole-class discussion gives learners an opportunity to develop their ability to express themselves appropriately, by putting into practice the listening and talking skills content within the course. It also gives the tutor the opportunity to get to know their learners and observe their progress.
- Learners may find drawing pictures a useful alternative if writing about a very distressing experience is too challenging. The learning materials are deliberately designed to avoid issues that are likely to cause distress but due to the nature of the course, learners may choose to draw upon distressing issues or experiences when answering assignment questions.

The Tutor

- Adequate breaks for the tutor are essential as, like all PSD courses, the delivery can be quite draining.
- The experience and personal qualities brought to the course by the tutor are important. Learners respond well to tutors who they perceive as honest and relatable. It is important that tutors have the confidence to be themselves and are able to occasionally inject fun and humour into the session.
- The tutor's enthusiasm for the course is important to secure the buy in of learners.

Inter-agency work and referrals

- Linking the course, for example through its goals and planning exercises, to further educational or employment provision is important to secure progression for individual learners.
- Referral pathways into support services are important as learners may disclose issues and needs.
- As a PSD programme based on the theoretical principles of cognitive behavioural therapy, Get Set for Success inevitably has some shared concepts and content with Thinking Skills provision (TSP). However, the purposes of Get Set for Success and TSP are quite different. TSP is therapeutic provision designed to reduce reoffending, whereas Get Set for Success provides essential personal and social skills and tools to enable individuals to manage their daily lives and make the most of the opportunities

available to them. The coherency between the courses therefore means they can complement each other. As a result, some prisons use Get Set for Success as preparation for TSP because they find learners respond faster to TSP if they have already completed Get Set for Success.

Taking a ‘whole organisation approach’

L&W’s previous research suggests that Get Set for Success works best when delivered and evaluated within a ‘whole organisation approach’²². Delivering Get Set for Success within a whole organisation approach ensures that learners are given the opportunity to practice the skills they have learnt through the course in different contexts. A whole organisation approach to delivery could include, for example, running the course alongside or in succession to other provisions, such as vocational learning or employment. A whole organisation approach to evaluation ensures that multiple perspectives are included when assessing changes in learners’ attitudes and behaviors. This might include asking prison officers or staff members from the library, the gym, other vocational courses or art workshops to use the observational assessment tool or share other data. Adopting these evaluation practices will not only monitor, but incentivise and encourage learners to use the skills they have developed through Get Set for Success.

To support each prison to take a whole organisation approach, L&W provides a learner journal booklet for learners to record and reflect on how they utilise their skills beyond the classroom and an observational assessment tool which non-education department prison staff can complete when observing learners applying their new skills in everyday prison activities, including in work. Education managers have said that involving prison officers in this way could raise their awareness of the purpose and potential of Get Set for Success. Education managers also reported that Governors might welcome the opportunity the assessment tool gave for personal officers to engage with prisoners directly about their progress on a specific form of education.

Examples of a whole organisation approach

All participating prisons give learners the learner journal at the start of their course. The frequency and content of entries varies widely but learner feedback is generally positive. Many learners report that they found the course thought provoking and the journal provides the opportunity for learners to record and reflect on these thoughts. Some share parts of their journal content with tutors, mentors and personal officers and as such, the journals provided a starting point for some useful discussions and interaction across the prison.

To further encourage learners to utilise what they have learnt beyond the classroom, tutors in several of the prisons are exploring the possibility of making a set of learning materials available on each wing or within the prison library. This will be helpful for past learners wanting to refresh their knowledge, perhaps ahead of occasions where they feel some of what they learnt on the course will be particularly useful.

²² Jones, E and Penistone, E, ‘Personal and Social Development Curriculum for Women in Prisons’

Staff at HMP/YOI Drake hall have begun to undertake observational assessments more widely by arranging for three learners to be observed by a range of prison staff such as other tutors, probation officers, prison officers and personal officers. The observations are then recorded on the PNOMIS system, so that they are then accessible to staff across different departments and services.

Some prisons have also linked Get Set for Success within other provision. For example, HMP Bullingdon synchronise Get Set for Success with their vocational skills learning provision, as they find that the skills learnt through the course can help to promote good customer service and employment skills. Similarly, HMP/YOI Oakwood plan to use Get Set for Success as a precursor to vocational courses, after reports of problems with attitude and behaviour from some of their employer partners.

Barriers

At present, HMP/YOI Drake Hall is the only prison to have implemented observational assessments of learners by prison officers. While tutors and education managers at other establishments see the value of arranging observations, many felt that they need more time to establish their course delivery first. This would also help to gather evidence of the course's impact to encourage prison officers to get involved in observational assessments.

Some prisons reported that a whole organisation approach will be too challenging due to implement with limited prison staff capacity. All the prisons believe the timing of the introduction of a whole organisation approach is important and that it would be better to wait until regime changes had settled. For example, one prison had experienced a number of violent incidents and given the strain this placed on prison officers, felt that it would be inappropriate to ask for participation. However, they said it might be possible to start in a small way by involving staff who may have greater availability such as the librarian.

Another aspect of adopting a whole organisation approach is to embed elements of Get Set for Success in other forms of educational provision or in wider prison activities. Embedding PSD learning in this way can provide essential employability skills alongside vocational learning. Unfortunately, current funding arrangements do not cover the costs of preparing embedded materials and providing support to tutors with their delivery. Consequently, prisons have chosen instead to synchronise delivery of Get Set for Success ahead of vocational skills provision in order to foster better in-work social skills and increase the rates of prisoners finding employment post-release.

Evaluation tools

Good evaluation and monitoring can ensure a course is having its intended impact on learners, diagnose areas for improvement, and evidence the impact of the course for funders, commissioners and future learners. For Get Set for Success, evaluation also provides a chance to adopt a whole organisation approach by involving prison officers and staff from other departments in observational assessment and data sharing.

The evaluation toolkit

Building on our previous evaluation work with Get Set for Success and from other prison learning programmes, L&W created an evaluation toolkit containing data collection tools and guidance for tutors and education staff. To accompany the data collection toolkit, L&W provided staff with a spreadsheet for data input and management.

The data collection toolkit includes:

- A pre and post course questionnaire, with instructions for tutors on how to administer the questionnaires
- Suggestions for relevant monitoring data
- Guidance on how to use qualitative data from the learner journal and assessment tool for evaluation
- Instructions about how to collect data for an MoJ data-lab request
- Suggestions for a range of other possible data collection methods
- Advice about obtaining informed consent

Learner questionnaire

The pre and post questionnaire draws on our previous evaluation work with Get Set for Success, as well as validated social metrics. Administering the questionnaire before and then after the programme will allow providers to observe change over time. There are four sections to the questionnaire, the first three measure different outcomes expected to be produced by the course and the fourth leaves space for learners' own reflections.

Section 1: Measuring wellbeing: This first section uses the Short Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMBS) to measure an individual learner's overall wellbeing. SWEMBS is a validated metric, which has undergone extensive testing. The tool has been established as an accessible, and easy to complete scale which has been used within a number of contexts and populations, including with prisoners.

Section 2: Measuring attitudes to learning, skills and work: This next section uses questions developed by L&W to measure the learners' self-efficacy and confidence in picking up new skills, desire for progression in learning, and attitude towards employment and community involvement on release.

Section 3: Measuring resilience and conflict resolution: These questions are devised to measure the learner's ability to cope with stress, social conflict, and difficult emotions.

Section 4: Open-ended questions: The pre and post questionnaires both finish with an open-ended question about the course. The pre-course questionnaire asks about course expectations, and the post questionnaire asks about whether these expectations have been met and any areas for improvement. This will provide useful feedback for delivery and management to consider when taking on the next cohort.

The guidance to tutors explains that it is important to emphasise to learners that this questionnaire will be used to assess the impact of the course, not to assess the learner individually. The questionnaire also clearly states that learners do not have to take part.

Monitoring data

The guidance document suggests keeping data on key performance indicators including

- Number of sessions
- Anticipated contact hours
- Delivered contact hours
- Participation numbers

As well as key socio-demographic data:

- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity

There is space to enter this data on the spreadsheet provided by L&W. The data will help to provide a snapshot of the course and identify who is taking part in the course. In the future, if the sample size is big enough this will also help to determine if the impact of Get

Set for Success is different across groups – for example male/female or young/adult offenders.

The spreadsheet also has space for additional data such as date of birth, conviction date or index date, required if prisons wish to make an MoJ datalab submission in the future.

Learner journal and assessment tool

Although the learner journal and assessment tool are already embedded within programme delivery, our research this year suggested that prisons are not taking full advantage of the potential for the learner journal and assessment tool to provide evidence for a wider course evaluation.

Using the learner journal for evaluation: The learner journal can be used to document the learners' changes in behavior, attitude and thinking over time. This can be used to create case studies of 'success stories' which can bring to life the programme for the sake of funders, commissioners or governors. If accompanied by observations from the assessment tool and quantitative questionnaire results, this will start to build a fuller picture of the impact of the course.

Using the assessment booklet for evaluation: The booklet is modelled on a strength-based observational tool. The booklet contains a list of skills, and space for the assessor to verify whether the learner demonstrates each skill. Although it is helpful for the course tutor to complete the booklet, we strongly recommend the use of the observational tool by a member of staff who can observe the learner outside the classroom. This will help to see whether the learner's skills and behaviours are being transferred across context. This staff member could be a tutor from another course, mentor, librarian, personal officer, key worker, community support worker, or probation officer. Having this perspective in addition to the course tutor's will help to ensure a robust evaluation. Qualitative data from the tool can be used to provide quotes and to create case studies for reporting.

Submitting to the MoJ Data lab

The MoJ data lab compares course participants' one-year reoffending rates to a matched control group in order to determine whether the intervention has an impact on reoffending. The MoJ already provide detailed information on how to make a data lab submission, and a spreadsheet for data submission. However, our previous work with prisons and OLASS providers suggest that staff often have difficulty with collecting and storing the data for the necessary time-period. Often data is not recorded at the time of the intervention and cannot be found retrospectively once offenders have been released. In other instances data is not securely or centrally stored. The spreadsheet created by L&W provides a simple and accessible way to store data to be used for a later MoJ justice lab submission as well.

Suggestions for other data collection methods

The guidance document provides suggestions for a range of other possible data collections that can be used to capture the impact of Get Set for Success, including focus groups and interviews; case studies, learner progression data. The guidance also explains how gathering feedback from multiple perspectives can create a more robust picture of the impact of Get Set for Success.

Feedback on evaluation tools

Every prison that chose to deliver Get Set for Success was interested in evaluating the impact of their course. Given the differing circumstances of each prison, L&W made a variety of evaluation tools available and allowed prisons to choose what evaluation tools to use. However, we recommended that if possible, and if limited to using just one or two tools, that they used the pre- and post-course questionnaire to capture quantitative data and case studies to capture qualitative data.

The concept of a pre- and post-course questionnaire was familiar to all the prisons. Most participating prisons were already using some kind of learner feedback. It was therefore straightforward for the Get Set for Success tutors to swap their usual learner feedback questionnaires for the Get Set for Success pre- and post-course questionnaires.

Tutors reported that learners responded well to the pre- and post-course questionnaires and seemed to enjoy the process. The questionnaires were easy to incorporate into the first and the last sessions, and the wording fit well with the course content. Tutors themselves looked forward to receiving the results of the post-course questionnaire to learn if the course had had a positive impact on learner skills and well-being.

L&W also provided a briefing and questions for use in learner focus groups and one to one learner interviews. To date no prison has undertaken learner focus groups or learner interviews but the tools were welcomed by the tutors who felt a focus group or interview some time after the course could be very helpful as a means of reminding past learners to utilise what they had learnt and for those that had, to enable them to reflect on the progress they had made. Tutors themselves suggested learner Individual Learning Plans, learner reviews and the learner journals could also provide rich source of learner feedback on the impact of the course.

Limitations

A well-known limitation of strengths-based questionnaires is that they are subjective; learners having the potential to score themselves too high or too low against given criteria. Two of the prisons said that their learners could be concerned with the impression they give to others and wary of disclosing how they really feel. Consequently, these learners could be prone to score themselves too highly in the pre-course questionnaire and then,

having gained a much greater appreciation of their personal well-being and needs through doing the course, score themselves much more realistically in the post-course questionnaire. This could lead to their post-course questionnaire scores being lower than their pre-course questionnaire scores, potentially leading to a false conclusion that the course had had a negative impact on learner well-being, skills and confidence. To try to avoid this scenario, one of the prisons chose to introduce the pre-course questionnaire at the end of the first week rather than in the first session and only once learners had gained greater self-awareness through participating in the first week and trusted the tutor enough not to fear scoring themselves realistically. An observational assessment tool, completed by a third party can be a useful to comparison.

The majority of prisons reported that they would struggle with the resources needed to carry out evaluation activities. Although incorporating the questionnaires was straightforward, the requirement for tutors to complete an anonymised spreadsheet was an additional burden for which tutors often required support from administrative staff. As previously described, issues with understaffing meant that all but one site were unable to incorporate prison officer feedback into evaluation.

Whilst the prisons that had delivered Get Set for Success for some time, and could anecdotally report longer-term outcomes for some learners, up to now they had no systematic means of tracking the post-release outcomes of Get Set for Success learners. Therefore, whilst tutors were happy and able to complete case study proformas for some learners who had kept in touch following release, tutors believe there were a lot of learners who benefited from the course but about whose longer-term outcomes they were unable to capture.

Tutors recognise that it is difficult to disentangle the impact of the course from the cumulative impact of the many other interventions received by prisoners. Consequently, whilst they believe that the course is a major factor in learners' outcomes, and learners often attributed their outcomes specifically to Get Set for Success, tutors had no means of proving it. Education managers and tutors are therefore very interested in the opportunity to input data into the MOJ datalab as a means of systematically tracking the outcomes of learners and teasing apart the impact of Get Set for Success from the impact of other interventions. However, they also said they might find it challenging to find time to gather and input the data, bearing in mind the need to submit data for at least 60 learners, and to wait for an extended period post-release for the outcome.

Evaluating the impact of Get Set for Success

The majority of participating prisons are in the process of integrating evaluation practices into their delivery of Get Set for Success. This is in its early stages and quantitative data is not yet available to report. Qualitative data from the prisons, in the form of learner feedback and case studies, describe a variety of benefits, including:

- Increased self-awareness
- Well-being outcomes for individuals
- Better relationships with prison staff, other prisoners, family and friends
- Increased aspirations to participate in learning and employment in prison

Increased well-being and self-awareness

Learners and Tutors reported that Get Set for Success can help learners to better understand their thoughts, beliefs and behaviors. Some learners felt that this had positively impacted their wellbeing, and others explained that it allowed them to think more clearly about their goals, and increased their positivity for the future.

“The section on how beliefs and thoughts influence their behavior is very helpful. For many, it is the first time they have considered why they behave the way they do. Each unit does different things for them; unit one helps them understand themselves, unit two gives them the tools to recognise and tackle some of their issues and problems, unit three on managing relationships makes them think about their approach to things and causes them to think about how they treat others and unit four gives them the skills to work constructively with others.” (Get Set for Success tutor)

Through the process of developing awareness, tutors reported that learners could begin to change their behavior and begin to feel more empowered in their decision making. Learner feedback suggests that the skills developed through Get Set for Success can help to increase positivity about the future, and a sense of self-efficacy²³.

“Get Set for Success was very good for me because I feel like I’ve learned some good life skills and I am now ready to meet my goals.” (Get Set for Success learner)

Learners also fed back that Get Set for Success had enabled them to think more positively, increasing wellbeing and confidence:

²³ Perceived ability to meet one’s own goals.

“A very good course, it has helped me focus more on being positive.” (Get Set for Success learner)

“Get Set has been my most happiest 2 weeks in education.” (Get Set for Success learner)

“A good course, I definitely feel more confident.” (Get Set for Success learner)

Case study: Sam

Sam is currently serving a two-year sentence in a YOI. Although he signed up to the Get Set for Success course himself, he had reservations about whether the course would help him because he found written work difficult due to having dyslexia and Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This made it hard for him to focus when writing unless Additional Learner Support (ALS) were present. He also found group situations stressful and lacked confidence in working with others.

However, on starting Get Set for Success, Sam became fascinated by the content on how beliefs, values and thoughts influence behaviour and motivation. He was particularly interested in how his thoughts and feelings were undermining his confidence and motivation. His interest motivated him to take part in the group discussions and to persevere with written exercises despite finding it difficult to concentrate. Towards the end of the course, Sam began to try to do the written work without ALS support. He found the last unit, on working with others, particularly useful in giving him an understanding of how to behave in group situations, which he previously had avoided whenever possible. Working with another learner, he built a house of playing cards, during which he had to communicate with and follow instructions from his partner. In the end, they built the strongest structure.

As well as feeling able to work with others, Sam now feels he is better able to maintain his confidence and resilience and manage stressful situations. He has become an advocate for the course and, with the tutor, has created a learner voice wall and encouraged all the learners to put their views on it. He is now interested in doing a hospitality course so that he can start up his own business on release.

Better relationships with prison staff, other prisoners, family and friends

Tutors have reported that Get Set for Success can help learners to manage difficult family relationships, as well as relationships with their peers and with staff. For example, one tutor described how Get Set for Success helped a learner to re-engage with her Mum:

“When one learner first arrived, she refused point blank to engage in unit one. Though she had additional one-to-one support, she was very reluctant and expressed challenging behaviour throughout. We used additional support to get her through unit two. Then, in the next unit on managing relationships, she became really interested. She changed; you could see all the things she’d learnt in units one and two being drawn out. It brought her to a point where was able to participate in a mediation process with her mum. Everyone saw a massive change in her behaviour and attitudes towards others.” (Get Set for Success tutor)

In another example, learners described how Get Set for Success helped him to make important decisions about their romantic relationships:

“In regards to my Final Action Plan from the Get Set for Success course, my girlfriend and I are getting married next year. Thanks for making a huge difference to my life” (Get Set for Success learner)

Case study: James

James is in his 30s and one year into a three-year sentence. He expressed a lot of anger and said he could not understand why he was in prison. Although not intended to tackle offending behaviour specifically, the course content on how thoughts and emotions influence behaviour helped James to recognise how his thoughts and feelings had led to him committing crime and that he was responsible for what he had done. The course also helped him come to terms with his actions and developed his personal and social skills to help him secure a positive future. In particular, the managing relationships unit helped him change his attitude and behaviour towards his girlfriend. Since completing the course, he has progressed onto other education courses. He is now a Red Band and is now on enhanced. Without prompting, he has continued to use the course’s GROW planning approach to set goals for himself. He said recently that through the course he has taken control of his future and that he has the self-confidence and knowledge to cope with challenges.

Increased desire to participate in learning and employment in prison

Although Get Set for Success can be used at any point during learners' sentences, most prisons choose to make it available to prisoners soon after their arrival. In this way, the course can be used to build offenders confidence and enthusiasm to take part in further learning. Many offenders begin the course as reluctant learners. Learners and tutors have described how attitudes to learning and skills can change through the course.

"We have seen some dramatic changes in motivation of the women. At the beginning of the week, the women were really not interested in the course in any shape, but by the end of the week they were more motivated and some of the women wanted to take the files with them." (Get Set for Success Tutor)

Data suggests that greater understanding of themselves, and the ability to identify and manage stress and negative thoughts, lead to learners having greater optimism and greater willingness to think positively about their future. Moreover, some exercises are specifically aimed at helping learners to plan their future participation in education and employment in prison and on release. Feedback suggests that learners have a clearer idea of the path they want to take post-release, and in some cases, the course opens learners mind to opportunities they previously felt shut off from:

"There is an increase in confidence and self-esteem after the course; with the learners having a path forward, and able to see the prison for the opportunities available to them" (Get Set for Success tutor)

"This course has made me feel more positive and it has made me think about myself and my future." (Get Set for Success Learner)

For many, their future plans focused on participating in vocational skills courses that would lead to employment on release. For others, Get Set for Success has helped them recognise their need to acquire further personal and social skills in their lives:

"Get Set for Success has helped me to move forward and to try and look at other options to better my life skills." (Get Set for Success Learner)

Case study: Kaylee

Kaylee was serving a three-year sentence and was very angry when she started Get Set for Success. She had had no contact with her family for some time, including her

children. Kayle was not happy about being referred to Get Set for Success and had asked the tutor to be taken off the course before it started. The tutor suggested that instead, she work with a classroom assistant on a one to one basis in an adjacent room and when she felt comfortable, she could come into the classroom. Eventually Kaylee agreed to attend but stated that she believed she would get nothing from the course.

However, by the middle of the first session, Kaylee was in the classroom participating in group discussions and activities – she appeared to love group discussions, listening attentively to other people’s views and forming and articulating her own. She began to display a really positive attitude in class and became very motivated to do more education. When she was observed working in the kitchen, despite the pressure of dealing with the teatime rush, the tutor could see how much Kaylee loved cooking. Encouraged by the tutor, Kaylee went on to undertake a Level 2 Hospitality course and secured a job interview in a kitchen for when she was released. Having gained a more positive outlook and greater confidence in the ability of others to help her, she approached Prisoners Advice and Care Trust (PACT) and with their support, she was able to rebuild her relationship with her family.

Summary

Qualitative findings suggest that Get Set for Success can play an important role in helping offenders to consider the links between their thoughts, beliefs and actions. In doing so, Get Set for Success can increase well-being, produce behaviour and attitude change, and help learners to see their future differently. Learners and tutors also found the skills developed through Get Set for Success could be used as tools to improve family, peer and work relationships. Additionally, feedback demonstrates the important role that Get Set for Success can play as an engagement tool for reluctant learners. Tutors have described previously reluctant learners becoming advocates for the course, and progressing onto other education or vocational courses, and many prisons have taken advantage of this by sequencing Get Set for Success before other courses. Overall, Get Set for Success appears to have both an immediate positive impact on learners, and data suggests it may have a longer-term impact by acting as a path to further skills development. In the future, quantitative data will help to triangulate qualitative data in order to better understand the full impact of Get Set for Success.

Conclusion and recommendations

Over the last year, L&W have continued to support prison establishments delivering Get Set for Success as well as to engage other establishments. This has involved working with prisons to: embed the programme in their delivery; adopt a whole organisation approach to both delivery and evaluation; integrate evaluation practices to ensure that the impact of the course is being captured for funders, commissioners and future learners; and explore barriers to delivery and how these might be overcome.

Our ongoing work with prisons has shown that the course Get Set for Success can have a positive impact on an offenders' wellbeing, confidence, self-awareness and social relationships, as well as increasing learner motivation and aspiration to participate in further learning and employment. Changes in confidence and wellbeing, as well as learner progression, can result in a greater sense of optimism about the future and concrete education and employment goals for post-release life. Where Get Set for Success has been delivered to large volumes of prisoners, for instance at HMP/YOI Drake Hall, there is anecdotal evidence of prison-wide improved prisoner behavior and morale.

Initial feedback and evaluation suggests that Get Set for Success leads to similar outcomes for male and female learners. Although the course benefitted from some adaption for use in HMYOIs, its overall focus and approach was still found to be appropriate and useful. Therefore, L&W suggest that Get Set for Success delivery should be supported across different types of prisons.

The evaluation of the Get Set for Success pilots indicated that the programme was most effective in establishments that took a whole organisation approach to delivery. Changes in individuals' thinking, behavior, aspiration and willingness to rehabilitate may become apparent if learners are encouraged and supported to apply what they have learnt outside of the classroom. Although L&W acknowledge that for the time-being taking an expansive whole organisation approach is unlikely to be possible due to staffing constraints and other limitations, small steps have been taken where Get Set for Success has been delivered for the longest time. Other prisons should be encouraged to follow suit as Get Set for Success becomes embedded as part of the mainstream curriculum.

Policy recommendations

The MoJ's most recent Education and Employment Strategy focuses on the transformative role that employment can play in encouraging rehabilitation and community integration post-release. However, at present, the number of offenders in P45 one-year post-release is extremely low (17%). Our work with Get Set for Success demonstrates the role that PSD courses can play in engaging reluctant learners in education and providing key work-place skills. Moving forward, the MoJ should begin to integrate PSD programmes into its Education and Employment Strategy. To enable this, the ESFA and MoJ should consider

changing their funding rules so that additional funding can be drawn down for employability skills content embedded within vocational courses. This funding is needed to cover the additional costs of course design, delivery and assessment.

Currently, a whole organisation approach to delivery and evaluation of Get Set for Success is limited by prison understaffing. To maximise the impact of Get Set for Success and similar PSD courses, the MoJ need to provide funding for sufficient staffing levels so that prison officers can begin to build supportive relationships with offenders, as well as manage behavior on the wings and ensure prisoner safety.

Future research

Continued collection of outcome data will help to better understand the impact of Get Set for Success. Prisons that meet the eligibility criteria should be encouraged and supported to make submissions to the MoJ data lab. This will begin to identify and isolate the impact of Get Set for Success on reoffending. To complement this, prisons should pursue any opportunity to engage in longitudinal through the gate research to gain a fuller understanding of how Get Set for Success can impact an offenders' life on release, including helping them to engage with employment and further education.

Appendices

1. Questionnaires

Questionnaire (Pre-course)

We would like to ask you some questions to help us understand more about your needs and how the course might help you. We will ask you some similar questions at the end of the course, to see how things have changed for you.

You do not have to complete this questionnaire, but if you do, your answers will help us understand how effective the course is and whether we need to change anything.

Your answers will be kept confidential and will only be used by the Learning and Work Institute to see what the course has achieved. The answers you provide will not affect your involvement on the course. We may link the information you provide here with other data but will do so securely and anonymously.

In order to monitor the impact of this course on reoffending, we would like to share your Prison Number, Conviction Date and Date of Birth with a research department at the Ministry of Justice. Would it be alright for us to share this data?

Yes No (Please tick one box to show your answer)

Please answer the questions as honestly as possible!

Name:

Prison number

1. This section looks at your wellbeing. Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last two weeks:

| Over the last two weeks ... | None of the time | Rarely | Some of the time | Often | All of the time |
|---|------------------|--------|------------------|-------|-----------------|
| ... I've been feeling optimistic about the future | | | | | |
| ... I've been feeling useful | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| ... I've been feeling relaxed | | | | | |
| ... I've been dealing with problems well | | | | | |
| ... I've been thinking clearly | | | | | |
| ... I've been feeling close to other people | | | | | |
| ... I've been able to make to make up my own mind about things | | | | | |

2. This section looks at your attitude to learning and skills and employment. Please only tick one box.

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagreed |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I am confident that I am able to learn new skills | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am keen to participate in more learning after this course finishes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I want to improve my employability. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am confident that I can get a job or go | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| back to a job on release. | | | | | |
| I will make a positive contribution to my community on release. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. This section looks at how you deal with stress and conflict

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I am able to recognise when I am stressed | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have tools and strategies to cope with stress | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am able to stay calm, even when things aren't going my way | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am able to stay calm, even when things aren't going my way | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am able to listen to others' opinions, even when they are different from mine. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| When I experience conflict with another person, I have tools and strategies to deal with it. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Finally, please tell us what you are hoping to achieve from the course?

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Thank you for your time!

Questionnaire (Post-course)

We would like to ask you some questions to help us understand more about your needs and how the course might help you. We will ask you some similar questions at the end of the course, to see how things have changed for you.

You do not have to complete this questionnaire, but if you do, your answers will help us understand how effective the course is and whether we need to change anything.

Your answers will be kept confidential and will only be used by the Learning and Work Institute to see what the course has achieved. The answers you provide will not affect your involvement on the course. We may link the information you provide here with other data but will do so securely and anonymously.

In order to monitor the impact of this course on reoffending, we would like to share your Prison Number, Conviction Date and Date of Birth with a research department at the Ministry of Justice. Would it be alright for us to share this data?

Yes No (Please tick one box to show your answer)

Please answer the questions as honestly as possible!

Name:

Prison number

1. This section looks at your wellbeing. Please tick the box that best describes your experience of each over the last two weeks:

| Over the last two weeks ... | None of the time | Rarely | Some of the time | Often | All of the time |
|---|------------------|--------|------------------|-------|-----------------|
| ... I've been feeling optimistic about the future | | | | | |
| ... I've been feeling useful | | | | | |
| ... I've been feeling relaxed | | | | | |

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|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| ... I've been dealing with problems well | | | | | |
| ... I've been thinking clearly | | | | | |
| ... I've been feeling close to other people | | | | | |
| ... I've been able to make to make up my own mind about things | | | | | |

2. This section looks at your attitude to learning and skills and employment. Please only tick one box.

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagreed |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I am confident that I am able to learn new skills | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am keen to participate in more learning after this course finishes | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I want to improve my employability. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am confident that I can get a job or go | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| back to a job on release. | | | | | |
| I will make a positive contribution to my community on release. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. This section looks at how you deal with stress and conflict.

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree or disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I am able to recognise when I am stressed | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I have tools and strategies to cope with stress | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am able to stay calm, even when things aren't going my way | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am able to tolerate difficult emotions such as sadness, guilt and anger. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am able to listen to others' opinions, even when they are different from mine. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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Thank you for your time!

2. Example Topic Guide

Introduction

Many thanks for joining us today. We would like to ask you a few questions about how it felt to take part in Get Set for Success and how the course has helped you. The answers you give will help us improve the course for the future. The Learning and Work Institute and the Ministry of Justice are interested in what you thought of the course and we will share what you say about it with these organisations. However, anything we share with the Learning and Work Institute and the Ministry of Justice will be anonymised – this means we will remove identifying details such as your name. Everybody's views are important and valid so please let everyone have their say and please don't criticise anyone for what they say. Although we would be grateful for anything you would like to say, it is OK not to give an answer if there is a question you would prefer not to answer.

Questions for a Get Set for Success focus group and one to one interviews (When facilitating a focus group, please ask a colleague to take notes to capture everything that is said).

- 1) What, if any, parts of Get Set for Success were interesting or helpful to you?
- 2) What, if any, part of the course made you feel more confident about your ability to manage relationships and work with others?
- 3) What, if any, part of the course increased your ability to manage stress, problems and disappointments?
- 4) What, if any, part of the course helped you identify your goals and build your motivation to achieve your goals
- 5) How have you used what you learned on Get Set for Success in your daily lives?
- 6) Was it enjoyable to do Get Set for Success and if so, what parts did you enjoy the most?
- 7) Was any part of Get Set for Success difficult and if so, why?
- 8) Do you feel more positive and optimistic about the future because of Get Set for Success and if so, why?
- 9) Is there anything that could be improved about the course?

3. Example Consent Form

Get Set for Success: consent form

Please tick

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. I understand how my data will be used | |
| 2. I agree to take part in the case study | |

Name

Signature

Date

4. Case Study Proforma

Case study Proforma

Name of activity: Get Set for Success

Prison:

About the learner: *(describe the learner – age, length of sentence etc)*

The learners starting position and any barriers to participation (were they reluctant to participate and why, have they participated in previous courses):

Experience of the course: *(what was it like for them to take part, what did they learn, have you seen them display any of the skills, behaviours outside of the classroom)*

What parts of the course did they enjoy the most and why:

Any difficulties experienced, and if/how they were overcome:

What have been the positive outcomes and long term impact of the course for the learner: (e.g. behavior and attitude change, progression onto other courses)