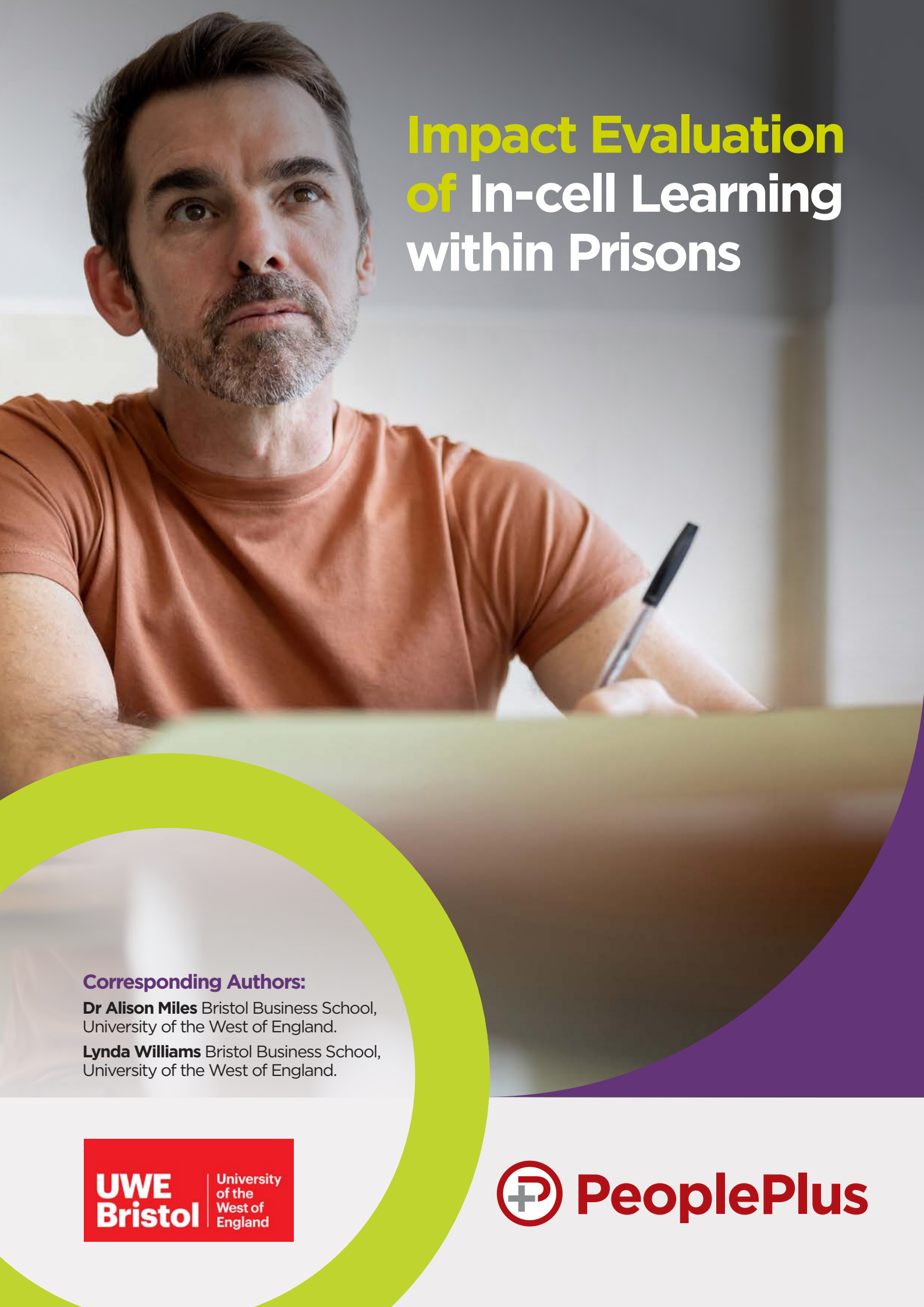




Impact Evaluation of In-cell Learning within Prisons

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“I’m learning so much, I’m so happy I completed this book”

Foreward

At PeoplePlus, our mission is clear: to make a positive difference to people’s lives every single day. Nowhere is that commitment more impactful than in our work across the prison estate, where access to education can be the first step in someone’s journey to a better future.

This report on the impact of in-cell learning highlights what we have long believed; when you make learning accessible, relevant, and engaging, you unlock potential that is all too often overlooked. The direct feedback from learners and staff from all corners of the prison estate speaks volumes: in-cell leaning not only boosts confidence and skills but also positively impacts the overall culture within prison environments.

From improved mental health and behaviour to increased aspirations and job readiness, the benefits of in-cell learning are far-reaching. And what stands out most clearly of all is the level of engagement with education as a concept and in practice. These are ‘learners’ who might never wish to step foot in a traditional classroom: but who are now completing accredited courses, asking for more work and at higher levels; and seeing themselves, their world and their prospects within it, differently as a result.

Our partnership with UWE has been instrumental, bringing academic insight and independent rigour to our shared ambition of making education more accessible behind the gate.

As we look ahead, we are proud to continue championing educational approaches that remove barriers and open doors. Way2Learn and WayOutTV are proof that the right model, delivered in the right way and in the right location can lead to real, lasting impact.



Kenny Boyle,
CEO, PeoplePlus

1.0

Executive Summary

KEY THEMES:

Engagement



Accessibility



Relevance



Digital



Celebration



Education in prisons is fundamental to prisoner employment opportunities on release. It also goes much further, giving prisoners confidence, self worth and skills to integrate into communities.

In recent years, there have been several reports looking into the impact of prison education, each one highlighting the value and calling for more to be done. The vision of Dame Sally Coates, in her report 'Unlocking potential, A Review of Education in Prisons' (2016) was for education to be at the heart of the prison system. The report from the House of Commons Education Committee 'Another Brick in the Wall' (2022) found that since then, very little had been done. This report demonstrates that in-cell learning, specifically Way2Learn has addressed many of the issues raised by the reports, increasing access and engagement with learning in prisons across the country.

Way2Learn

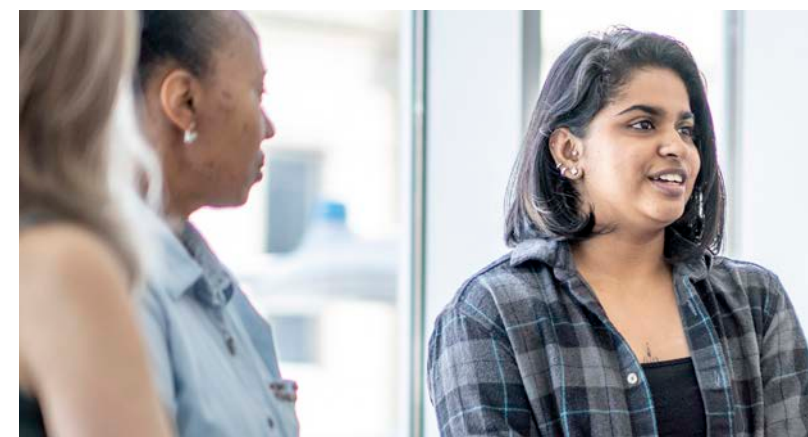
By looking at the impact Wayout TV's Way2Learn courses have, we can learn from what has been working well and use that best practice to enable future successes. The brief for this report was to explore initiatives taking place in prisons across the country, gain feedback from prisoners and staff, and note the impact on prison life and future aspirations. The report

draws on insights from prisoners, ex-offenders, staff members and Governors from around the country. Both quantitative and qualitative data from course feedback sheets, letters from prisoners and ex-offenders, and statements from staff contributed to the case study approach.

The key finding from the research was how the themes of 'Engagement, Relevance, Future aspiration, Achievement and Digital/Certification and Community' all combined to increase the engagement with learning for prisoners of all abilities. Each theme was visible through a range of diverse learning programmes, which all have inclusivity and equality at their heart. The learning is accessible to all, regardless of schooling, disability or prior experience. When analysing the data further, we see that each theme builds on another and provides an outcome greater than the sum of its parts. The findings show how learning in this way is allowing prisoners to feel they are doing something useful with their time, while building confidence and aspirations for the future. The final part of the report focuses on how this learning addresses some of the key issues identified by the House of Commons Education Committee (2022) and can inform future learning programmes across the prison sector.

2.0

Introduction



Prison education plays a key role in changing lives and improving futures, getting prisoners onto the ladder of opportunity. Education allows a prisoner to gain self-confidence and provides mental health benefits in isolating conditions while also improving behaviour. Education has a value in itself developing the person as a whole²

Wayout TV

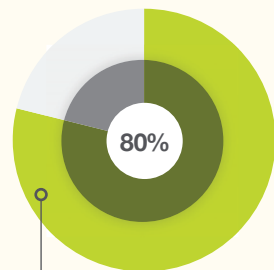
This report was commissioned by Wayout TV, through PeoplePlus, to investigate the impact of in-cell learning within prisons. The aim of the report is to investigate how the courses are affecting prisoner learning, confidence and aspirations for the future. The objectives are to analyse the range of learning approaches, accessibility and relevance, and to show how these might inform future learning. It also allowed prison staff to showcase their experiences in terms of improved prisoner behaviour and increased rapport, and how they celebrate the successes. Above all, it highlights the range of initiatives that are working well and making a difference to prisoners, ex-offenders and prison staff.

¹<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f537eed915d74e33f5bf5/education-review-report.pdf>

²<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/28707/documents/173902/default/>

3.0

Background and Context



Students who complete their workbooks and gain **80% or higher** pass rate gain a Higher Education Certificate certified by UWE (Bristol) which is digitally accredited.

Wayout TV has been working in prisons for 10 years. With an audience of 60,000 (roughly two-thirds of all prisoners in England and Wales), it broadcasts into cells twenty-four hours a day, every day of the year, in 70 out of 143 prisons, from HMP Erlestoke to Northumberland.

Wayout TV's channels and content can be accessed in-cell, reaching prisoners who may have previously had a negative experience of education and therefore may not have engaged with the traditional classroom approach. The on-screen courses cover a range of subjects including key skills, industry specific courses, and a range of creative reflective courses. Students who complete their workbooks and gain 80% or higher pass rate gain a Higher Education Certificate certified by UWE (Bristol) which is digitally accredited. There are currently eighteen courses that are accredited and carry CPD points. Annex 1 gives details of the current suite of courses and their popularity.



The Independent Review of Prison Education by Dame Sally Coates (2016) cited prison education as one of the key pillars in effective rehabilitation and argued that education in prisons should give individuals the skills they need to unlock their potential, gain employment and become assets to their communities³.



The hope was that those in custody would be encouraged and drawn into learning through a range of settings and activities relevant to their interests, abilities and aspirations.

The report also highlighted that engaging with education has other benefits, including improving well-being, increasing self-belief and confidence to change, together with building a sense of community. Despite this, traditional methods of education delivery in prisons have struggled with engagement, with the House of Commons Education Committee report in 2022 found that since the Coates Review (2016), very little had changed⁴.

This report finds that many of the issues highlighted by the education committee report have been overcome through the Way2Learn programmes.

The findings presented and discussed below seem to suggest that in-cell learning breaks through barriers to engagement caused by previous experiences of learning, disability or accessibility, allowing prisoners to engage with relevant content in new ways, growing in confidence as they complete accredited courses. The quality and clarity of the material is

shown to be an integral part of this engagement, together with the breadth of material and the language used, which is designed to be accessible to those with lower literacy levels.

The research was conducted using a mixed method approach, collecting both qualitative data from feedback comments and letters from 422 participants, and quantitative data from evaluation sheets from 1624 participants. This method allows the nuances of the lived experience of prisons to be captured.



The data was then analysed using line by line content analysis which revealed a number of key themes: **Engagement, Relevance, Future aspiration, Achievement and Digital/Certification and Community**. These are discussed in detail below, together with two case studies, highlighting the particular impact in the areas of mental health and disability.

³<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unlocking-potential-a-review-of-education-in-prison>

⁴<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/28707/documents/173902/default/>

4.0

Findings and Discussion

The findings are presented and discussed under the headings of the themes which emerged from the investigation. Engagement (including accessibility) is shown to be the most important aspect.

Without it, the material is redundant and none of the benefits of prison education can be realised. After engagement, the findings are discussed under the headings of the key themes to emerge from the data. These include relevance (job prospects and employability), future aspirations, (including self-belief and changing behaviours), achievement (including digital credentials, certification, and celebration), and finally, becoming part of the community. In this section, the key areas of importance were mental health awareness and understanding of disability.



4.1 Engagement

Mark Humphries was one of Wayout TV's first viewers when serving a lengthy sentence at HMP Wayland in 2015.

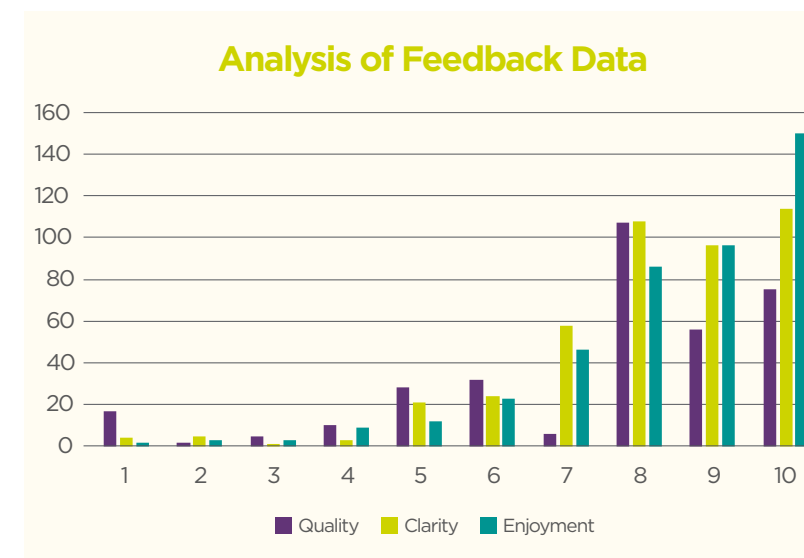
'It was brain food,' he remembers. 'There are many people in prison who don't want to sit in a classroom in the education wing or risk making themselves look stupid in a class by giving the wrong answers. Or look clever by giving the right answers.'

A trained chef, Humphries' initial engagement with Wayout TV's courses eventually gave him the confidence to attend the prison education department's classroom and go on to complete an Open University degree.

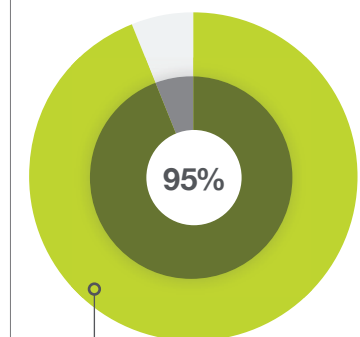
He has since launched a career as a local journalist and ghostwriter. He has also completed his first novel, 'Recovered', which won a Koestler Prize.

For prison education to fulfil the purpose of changing lives and improving prisoners' futures, the courses have to be engaging. If the content is not accessible and seen to be useful and relevant, then engagement with learning will be poor. The key finding of this report was the increase in engagement with learning from prisoners. The reasons for this are discussed in more detail below.

In January 2025, 1018 prisoners were working through Way2Learn courses and submitting completed workbooks. The data analysed below was collected from course evaluation sheets, which asked prisoners to score the courses on three main areas: **quality, clarity and enjoyment**. The data is presented in the bar chart below:



The feedback sheets also included a free text box where prisoners could add their thoughts and feelings about the course. This qualitative data allows for a more nuanced understanding of the lived experience of engagement with the content. The findings from the qualitative data are given in the rest of the report.



Way2Learn has had an enormous uptake with 310 answer booklets being returned with a 95% pass rate for September alone. The knock on effect of this is an increase in the number of people now seeking to engage with more formal qualifications, which will improve prospects for employment and leading a crime-free life on release. **Governor, HMP Channings Wood**

4.0 Findings and Discussion

‘Good use of my time in the cell’

4.1.2 Accessibility

It is clear from the data that accessibility of the courses was also important for engagement. The careful use of language to ensure courses are suitable for prisoners with low literacy levels, and using gamecards to allow prisoners to track their progress and earn incentives all contribute to engagement, with one prisoner commenting:

‘Good we can finally do something so easily accessible within prison that will actually help’

‘Way2Learn is a marvellous approach for prisoners to re-engage with learning. The mix of watching the TV slot, reading the questions, and writing the answers provides an all-round activity.’
CXK, HMP Swinfen Hall

Prisoners also commented that they found the in-cell learning a ‘very interesting way to learn’ and that they ‘...enjoyed learning from the video on TV’. Other students agreed, with comments including ‘like it, want to do further learning’, and ‘good to learn in own time, read it and take it in better’.

‘The addition of in-cell learning allows us to reach the hard to reach.’
Head of Safety & Equalities, HMP Long Lartin

Being able to learn in their own time also seems to be an important factor in engagement and accessibility, with one prisoner summing up their experience:

‘Studying in my cell while having a tea and no one around is what I needed, thank you. Excellent way to learn and easy to understand’

It also seems that seeing a personal purpose in the content was important to engagement. One prisoner commenting that the learning was a ‘good use of my time in the cell’ with another stating that Way2Learn courses are:

‘Valuable in-cell learning which gave me purposeful activity during down time between prison regime’.

‘Enjoyed pushing myself out of comfort zone’

The impact this has on behaviour is highlighted later on in the report, but it is clearly linked to the engagement, with prison staff noticing these additional aspects for example:

‘Way2Learn benefits the prison regime, as it offers the men an opportunity to use lock-up time productively. This has the tangible effect of reducing their frustration at being confined to their cells.’
Distance Learning Coordinator, HMP Bullingdon

‘The in-cell tutor support through WayoutTV enables some of our prisoners who won’t apply for college courses... the chance to build their confidence and develop their knowledge and skills.’
Learning and Skills Manager, HMP Swinfen Hall

Although for many this was a new way of learning, there were several comments that support the importance of clarity and ease of use. Prisoners commented that ‘I found the Way2Learn strange at first but soon got into it’; ‘I managed to get through this workbook yet found it somewhat difficult but enjoyed it so very much’ and ‘I’m a hands-on learner so didn’t think this course would suit my style of learning but I found following the videos to the booklet enjoyable’.

It is also apparent that this method of delivery does go some way to mitigate the lack of confidence felt by some prisoners in their ability to engage with learning. This can be seen in the comments:

‘I was putting it off as I thought it was too hard but actually it was very good’; ‘Enjoyed pushing myself out of comfort zone’; ‘I enjoyed these problems, with pen and paper rather than a calculator regardless of whether I got the answer right or wrong’.

There was also a clear correlation between success in one course giving the confidence to engage with higher levels of learning with prisoners asking for a ‘Higher level of course please’; ‘My third workbook this week, please keep them coming’ and ‘Liked it, will do more in-cell’

In summary, it is clear that in-cell learning increases engagement. The findings show high levels of engagement with this style of learning, even from those prisoners who lacked confidence. The findings also highlight how prisoners successfully engaged with the content regardless of prior learning, experience or disability, and how success led to improved confidence to engage in more learning. The clarity and quality of the courses along with their purpose were shown to be key indicators in this engagement.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

'I struggle with maths, but I found this very helpful and it was broken down very well and easy to follow'.

4.2 Relevance (including job prospects)

'The importance of core employability skills, such as communication and reliability, as well as basic skills such as literacy, has been identified by research with employers who take on former offenders. Many employers I have spoken to say that the ability of individual prisoners to present appropriately, be organised, accept and provide feedback in a positive way, and engage constructively with colleagues is an important factor in their hiring decisions'

Dame Sally Coates (2016)

Previous research and reports have highlighted the importance of gaining employment within the first year of release in reducing reoffending rates⁵. However, prisoners are often unprepared for the real world, lacking the digital skills needed for employment and life skills that reduce their likelihood of reoffending⁶. The data analysed from the Way2Learn feedback showed prisoners engaging in courses supporting key skills learning, industry specific courses, and skills for life courses.

The learning covers a diverse range of subjects. Those most relevant to future employment are part of the key skills course, including interview techniques, industry specific courses, and those helping prisoners who may wish to start their own businesses. Each are considered below:

The courses have given them an overview of lots of different subjects which has then raised awareness and created the interest to study certain areas in more detail through formal education.

'Some learners have progressed on to classroom based education and some have completed 'Job Smart' to help them prepare for job interviews within the prison.'

HMP Channing's Wood

4.2.1 Key skills

'As with education, training and skills outside prisons, it is vital that what is taught or learned is relevant to rehabilitation and employment'

Dame Sally Coates (2016)

Key skills are a vital aspect of gaining employment. In-cell learning courses analysed in this report include Minute Maths, Digital Skills, Creative Writing, and Job Smart.

As seen in the quantitative data, the quality, clarity and purpose of the course are key to engagement. This can also be seen here with prisoners who engaged with the Job Smart course stating it was 'very interesting and helpful for when I try for a job when I get out' and that it gives people in prisons something to help our employability once released'. Comments also included that it was 'a good reminder of what I need to expect and apply for work' and a 'good educational workbook on how to identify qualities and abilities on a successful job interview'.

The willingness to engage with this style of content can also be seen in the feedback from the 'Minute Maths course': 'I struggle with maths, but I found this very helpful and it was broken down very well and easy to follow'.

'The learners are gently re-introduced to learning, can build on their knowledge, and build an employability pathway whilst in custody. Engaging with education to gain up to Level 2 in Functional Skills opens up more opportunities and encourages learners to seek more education, either through other in-cell packs or by requesting to enrol in classes.'

CXK, HMP Swinfen Hall

4.2.2 Industry

The relevance of the courses linked to engagement has been shown throughout. In addition to the key skills and interview preparation courses, there are high levels of engagement with industry specific courses, which have been developed around specific gaps in the labour market. These include:

LGV Theory



Warehousing



Food Hygiene



Construction



Customer Service



Sales



The findings here support the importance of quality, clarity, enjoyment and accessibility. The feedback from prisoners completing these courses included:

'Great introduction to LGV theory. Feel prepared to move onto more in-depth course that will help me to where I need to be to take LGV theory test, hazard perception test and practice LGV'

'The fact I learnt about LGV theory in my cell has got to be a positive may consider another course very soon.'



⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/unlocking-potential-a-review-of-education-in-prison

⁶ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/28707/documents/173902/default/>

4.0 Findings and Discussion



4.2.3. Self-employment

For some prisoners, self-employment may present the most practical way of re-entering the labour market and may help circumvent the discrimination found by some offenders. As with the key skills courses above, the prisoners engaged with content that was clear, of good quality, and had clear links to their future purpose.

Students who engaged in the 'Mind your own business' course commented that the course 'increased their knowledge of understanding business needs and cash flow' which they found 'is really helpful' and 'gives me vital information to consider and act on'

and **'helped me learn a lot more about opening my own business'**

In summary, the relevance of the courses to future employment opportunities is shown as important for engagement with learning. The qualitative data shows high levels of engagement with courses that prisoners feel will give them the skills needed to help find employment on release. The comments also support the quantitative findings that the clarity, quality and enjoyment of the learning are key to engagement and completion.

'Really enjoyed the course and will look out for other courses on the same subject. Makes me want to write a book now which I'm thinking about ideas. Thank you'

4.3 Future aspirations

'Prison education must play a key role in improving the employability of prisoners and therefore in reducing reoffending. However, prison education must also be understood in broader terms than just improving the employability of a prisoner. Education allows a prisoner to gain self-confidence and provides mental health benefits in isolating conditions, while improving their behaviours in prison. Education has a value in itself, developing the person as a whole. Previous research into the impact of undertaking distance learning cited increased self-belief and confidence to change as an additional benefit to the course material ^{7 and 8}.'

In-cell learning not only offers courses covering key skills and employability but also options to engage with creative and social learning. The research found that prisoners who engaged with these courses found benefits which went beyond employment opportunities on release.



'Learners have said how much they have enjoyed learning, and I know as a result of doing certain subjects, it has encouraged them to get books from the library to learn a bit more about the subject. I think the learners who have completed all or most of the booklets have both enjoyed the learning experience but also challenged themselves to complete them which creates a positive experience for them as well as increasing self-confidence and self-esteem.'

Learning and Skills Manager, HMP Erlestoke

Comments from those taking the creative writing courses reiterate this, for example:

'Enjoyed my creative side coming out and planning own story'

'Really enjoyed the course and will look out for other courses on the same subject. Makes me want to write a book now which I'm thinking about ideas. Thank you'

'I really enjoyed the creative writing course. I can now write stories for my daughter'

It is also clear from the data that engagement with the courses is helping with prisoner confidence and self-belief with many going on to complete further courses.

⁷ Reducing reoffending the enterprise option Jan 2004

⁸ Prison Education Trust research

4.0 Findings and Discussion

‘Completed all courses, any new courses released please send to me’

Way2Learn has proven to be a great gateway for further education; students who complete the courses often go on to engage with other areas of study with other educational institutions e.g. Open University.
Distance Learning Coordinator, HMP Bullingdon

This can be seen in the data, with prisoners commenting:

‘I managed to get through this workbook yet found it somewhat difficult but enjoyed it so very much’; and, ‘Thank you, it was a good challenge.

It is also clear that completion of the work is giving prisoners a sense of achievement and driving a willingness to engage with further material, for example:

‘Courses boost confidence to go onto distance learning higher education. Aid my employment on release.’

‘Completed all courses, any new courses released please send to me’

‘Enjoyed pushing myself out of comfort zone’

‘I’m learning so much, I’m so happy I completed this book’

‘Enjoyed course and inspire me to want to excel in my goals’

It is also echoed by the experiences of the staff from across the country:

‘Those who have completed courses, have expressed their enjoyment and many have requested further packs.’
Learning and Skills Manager, HMP Swinfen Hall

‘At HMP Erlestoke, we have been fortunate to have quite a high engagement by learners in the completion of Way2Learn booklets, with a number of men completing several – and some completing all of them.’
Learning and Skills Manager, HMP Erlestoke

‘Way2Learn affords staff an opportunity to encourage men who would otherwise be uninterested in classroom study. The focus on practical skills rather than purely ‘academic’ skills means the staff are able to offer a more varied syllabus.’
Distance Learning Coordinator, HMP Bullingdon

In summary, the research shows how education in the wider sense, not just courses in key skills and employability, can make positive impacts on confidence and aspirations for the future. In doing so, this supports the call from Dame Sally Coates (2016), echoed by the House of Commons Education Committee (2022) of that education should be at the heart of prison life.



4.4 Achievement (Digital and certification)

‘The lads are happy to do the in-cell work, especially as it comes with a certificate. Even better with the new certificated system coming into play. All have said the courses are easily accessible on the television. In the parole hearings the panel are informed of the in-cell work completed and how the Way2Learn system works. The response from the panel members is always positive, feeling that if the lads are prepared to do work behind their doors in their own time it shows commitment to progression.’
Prison Offender Manager (Band 4), HMP Swinfen Hall

The report has shown that accessibility to courses regardless of prior experience or disability is one of the cornerstones of the impact of in-cell learning. This is supported by the relevance of the courses to future employment but also fosters a new confidence in learning ability. This becomes a virtuous circle, which drives more engagement with learning and greater self-esteem. One of the key cogs in this wheel is the sense of achievement prisoners feel when they complete a course. The certification of the course by the University of the West of England (UWE, Bristol) helps develop the sense of achievement.

As one member of the prison staff said:

‘Many have never achieved anything in their young lives, or had an achievement recognised.’

Digital Credentials:

Dame Sally Coates (2016) and the HM Government Education Committee report (2022) called for a digital passport which would allow learning to follow the prisoner if they are transferred.



A key feature of the Way2Learn material is the digital credential awarded by UWE Bristol to those students gaining 80% or higher. This is linked to a UWE certificate, which can be accessed through a QR code, enabling prisoners to collect certificates (for some their first academic recognition) and send them to prospective employers, who can access the course content details and level via the QR code.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

‘Love learning new qualities to make me more aware and able in the workplace’

It also gives the prisoners access to the certificates without the need for an internet connection and allows the learning to follow the prisoner should they be transferred or released. Details of the certificate and digital badge can be found in Annex 2.

The qualitative data clearly shows the links between gaining certificates, increased engagement, and the optimism of gaining employment, with prisoners recognising this added credibility. This is clearly shown in comments such as: ‘Love learning new qualities to make me more aware and able in the workplace’; ‘Really helpful that we’re able to do these accredited courses as it helps with work once released’ and ‘I suffer from PTSD and also have nerve damage to my neck and shoulder due to getting hit by a tank in 1992. I wasn’t aware of the changes in law and now my eyes have been opened I’m now optimistic that I can find suitable and sustainable employment, thank you’.

This is further supported by the experiences of the staff, for example:

‘Gaining a certificate of achievement for each course has helped learners understand that each educational achievement is recognised, promoting all educational courses available in the establishment’
CXK, HMP Swinfen Hall

In summary, the certification of the courses seems to be a key driver of engagement with learning, giving prisoners optimism for the future on release and a sense of self-worth. The digital credentials given by UWE Bristol, which can be accessed via a QR code, address the need for easily transferrable course history and information that can be accessed by prospective employers before and after the prisoners are released. The joy the prisoners feel when collecting digital certificates is shown to be a key driver to engage with more learning.

‘Learning is always fun especially if it can help you understand the world and people better.’

4.5 Community

‘Education in prison should give individuals the skills they need to unlock their potential, gain employment and become assets to their communities. It is one of the pillars of effective rehabilitation... Improved prison education can transform individual prisoners lives but it can also benefit society by building safer communities and reducing the significant financial and social costs arising from re-offending’
Dame Sally Coates (2016)

Our findings support and reflect these comments. The data shows the impact of in-cell learning goes far beyond just giving prisoners new skills - it shows the impact the learning has on prisoners’ understanding of themselves and other members of the community, and also highlights the levels of self-reflection that the learning brings.

For example:

‘Made me think about my working life and how disagreements could have been better resolved.’

‘Another valuable course has given me better understanding of my own issues and those of others. Thank you’ and ‘Thank you it made me realise what people are going through and they are not alone. When I started this I didn’t think I can do it and I got mental health as well but I’m so glad that I done it so thank you’

And of their self-reflection: ‘Learning is always fun especially if it can help you understand the world and people better.’

‘Great fun, really made me look at life.’

One of additional benefits shown in the research is the increased sense of community within prisons.

Staff across the country experienced an increase in communication and support between prisoners and staff.

‘There are more requests than ever to be added to the education waiting lists, in particular Level 2 functional skills which then allows learners to apply for distance learning courses. The peer mentors now also hold group classes at weekends to discuss each topic, which keeps everyone engaged in the workbooks and what they would like to study next’.

CXK, HMP Swinfen Hall



4.0 Findings and Discussion

‘Great fun, really made me look at life.’

‘We are currently using this service to communicate directly with prisoners and provide important updates and information. We also promote education skills and work opportunities within the prison, plus much more including advertising job vacancies, competitions, book reviews posters and monthly newsletters showcasing learning achievements.’

Way2Learn allows students to learn at their own pace, which means we as education staff are able to adapt and pace our support for each individual accordingly. Learners therefore feel better supported.
Distance Learning Coordinator, HMP Bullingdon

Staff also commented that prisoners gained confidence to engage with the prison community.

‘We are seeing confidence grow and attitudes and behaviours improve across education, skills and work. Learners are more confident in their job roles and unemployed men have progressed to employment within the establishment’.
Learning Skills and Employment Manager, HMP Durham



Celebrating success is another important part of the programme.

‘We have held a celebration event to celebrate success which was a fantastic way to show recognition for the prisoners’ hard work and efforts’.
Learning and Skills Manager, HMP Channing’s Wood

‘By completing Way2Learn’s courses, prisoners have discovered the pleasure of learning and a renewed sense of purpose. They have the opportunity to study at their own pace, free from the pressure of deadlines. Each completed course has not only enhanced their skills but has also ignited a feeling of accomplishment. Upon completion, they receive certificates, which are presented to them during an annual awards ceremony held at the prison. This has transformed their time into a journey of hope and personal growth. They appreciate the free gifts received after completing four and ten courses, which have further motivated them to pursue additional courses’

Prison Education Manager, University College Isle of Man, C/O Isle of Man Prison Service

In summary, it is clear from the findings that the engagement with Way2Learn courses is developing not only their self-confidence and reflection but is also contributing to the development of communities within prisons. The celebration events highlight this contribution to an increased sense of achievement, support and self-worth.

5.0 Case Studies

‘Gaining more awareness of mental health, the signs to look out for with myself and to notice in others to help people suffering from mental health’.

Throughout the report, the findings show that engagement with in-cell learning through Way2Learn has increased due to the quality, clarity and enjoyment of the courses together with their relevance and accessibility. In addition, the data has also highlighted benefits in increased confidence, optimism for the future, self-worth and a sense of community. Each theme builds on and is related to the next. While analysing the data, it became clear that mental health awareness and disability awareness were areas where all the themes are clearly evident. The following two case studies highlight the comments from prisoners and staff, showing how these courses have had an impact on prisoner lives.

5.1 Mental health awareness

‘During some difficult times in my cell, I would switch over to the Wayout TV channel. Some of the education content would get me thinking about how I could use my time to be more productive and increase hope. There would also be practical support around mindfulness and even exercise which improved my mental health and mood. A great tool that delivers hope and knowledge’
Andy Gaillee, now employed at Beacon Counselling Trust

We have seen in the sections above how learning has helped prisoners better understand themselves and others. Many of the prisoners commented that the learning had helped them deal with difficult

situations, reflect on themselves and how they may better understand and help others. The impact of in-cell learning is shown in the comments and experiences below from prisoners and staff from around the country:

Self-help and looking after others

‘Another valuable course has given me better understanding of my own issues and those of others. Thank you’

‘Learning different ways and coping strategies of stress. Can help others now.’

‘Gaining more awareness of mental health, the signs to look out for with myself and to notice in others to help people suffering from mental health’.

‘Very insightful and easy to understand. I’m someone who suffers mental health... I still learnt a lot to about how mental health effects daily life.’

‘Very informative and I learnt a lot about dealing with my own mental health that I didn’t know before’

Greater understanding and confidence to ask for help

‘I enjoyed this course as I suffer from severe mental health. Not having any understanding at the time resulted in a suicide attempt that nearly cost me my life, I’ve since learnt a lot and understanding better.’

5.0 Case Studies

'We have seen improvement in behaviour and mental health with men engaging in Way2Learn'

'As someone who has a diagnosed mental ill health issue this was not only thought provoking but it will assist me to reach out to others when I need help. I will not be afraid in asking for help especially to other agencies'

'Suffer from depression because of current situation and from losing my dear Mum nearly 2 years ago. This course has made mental health more understandable and better to manage'.

'It is a good course because mental health and mental ill health are misunderstood or ignored by most people so this course opened people eyes.'

The staff experiences are summed up:

'Way2Learn has really supported the prisoners to develop their confidence in learning and taking responsibility for their own personal development. Many have completed all of the courses and really enjoyed them. The incentives have worked really well in encouraging them to learn more. The service has increased the opportunities and purposeful activity available to prisoners within the establishment and enabled them to learn in-cell. This has in turn promoted mental health'

Learning and Skills Manager, HMP Channing's Wood

'Way2Learn booklets also provide an avenue of learning for our self-isolators, or men who struggle to engage with more mainstream or traditional learning, thus providing an opportunity for them to learn and gain knowledge in different subjects. This in turn has provided support for improving any mental health issues by providing a different focus and sense of achievement'.

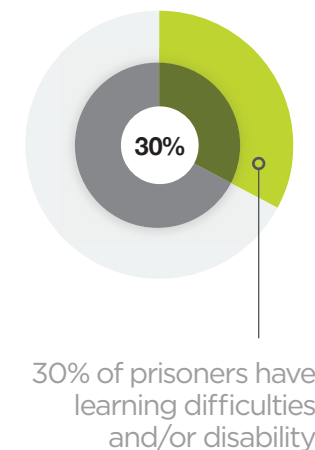
Learning and Skills Manager, HMP Erlestoke

'Learners have benefited from developing personal skills as well as employability skills as part of their learning experience. We have seen improvement in behaviour and mental health with men engaging in Way2Learn. Positive learning experiences have led to men progressing into education and work within the prison'.

Learning Skills and Employment Manager, HMP Durham

5.2 Case study: Disability

The 'Review of Reading Education in Prisons' (2022)⁹ found that 30% of prisoners have learning difficulties and/or disability. They face challenges in prison and after release, especially if they cannot read or write. The Education Committee report 'Another Brick in the Wall' (2022) also highlighted significant challenges that prisoners with learning disabilities face. In addition, the 'The Criminal Justice Joint Inspection Report on Neurodiversity' (2021) estimated that around 50%



of prisoners have a neurodivergent condition that affects their ability to engage with learning. As we have seen throughout this report, the Way2Learn provision enables prisoners with learning and physical disabilities to engage with learning. From helping with the key skills of reading and writing, through to industry specific courses and those which are creative or informative. Learners complete workbooks and gain recognised qualifications where they may not have done so in a classroom setting.

This is highlighted in the experiences of prison staff, for example:

'It really does bridge the gap when prisoners are not employed or enrolled onto education and supports those with LDD needs who are not comfortable in a classroom environment' **Learning and Skills Manager, HMP Channing's Wood**

The data highlights how the courses have given prisoners more understanding of their own situations and hope for the future with prisoners commenting: 'Boosted confidence that my disability not barrier to employment'.

The report has also highlighted how the learning can help prisoners integrate into the community and empathise with others. This is particularly evident in some of the comments from those who had completed the disability awareness courses:

They commented:

'I have a better understanding of disability in the workplace thanks to this course'

'Given a lot better understanding of disabilities and that not all can be seen'

'Enjoyable course, gave me time to think that people with disabilities come in all shapes and sizes'.

'I learnt a lot about disabilities and how wide the spectrum can be'

'I've learned more about disabilities because of this work pack. It a good way to learn about this from the Way2Learn channel its helpful and easy to understand, good to have completed and enjoyable'

'Taught me a lot of information and understanding I simply didn't know I hope it makes me a more humble kind and caring person'

⁹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prison-education-a-review-of-reading-education-in-prisons/prison-education-a-review-of-reading-education-in-prisons>

6.0

Conclusion

In this review of the initiatives being undertaken by Way2Learn, much has been learnt about engagement and the importance of accessibility. We also learnt how these courses are changing lives within the prison and increasing ambition and optimism for life on release. As Dame Sally Coates pointed out:

'In our vision for future learning... it is just to them and in the interests of their communities that they have the same decent chance. The chance to re-enter society successfully, to find work, to live fulfilling lives. If education is the engine of social mobility, it is also the engine of prisoner rehabilitation.'

Dame Sally Coates (2016)

This report has found interlinking themes, primarily engagement with the course content has increased confidence to engage with more learning. The learning has provided skills which are relevant to future employment opportunities, and this is fuelling optimism amongst the prison learners for a better future. The content is also giving skills to help deal with personal mental health issues and recognising and understanding those needs in others. The learning support from staff and the celebration events are changing behaviours and developing relations and rapport in the prison community.

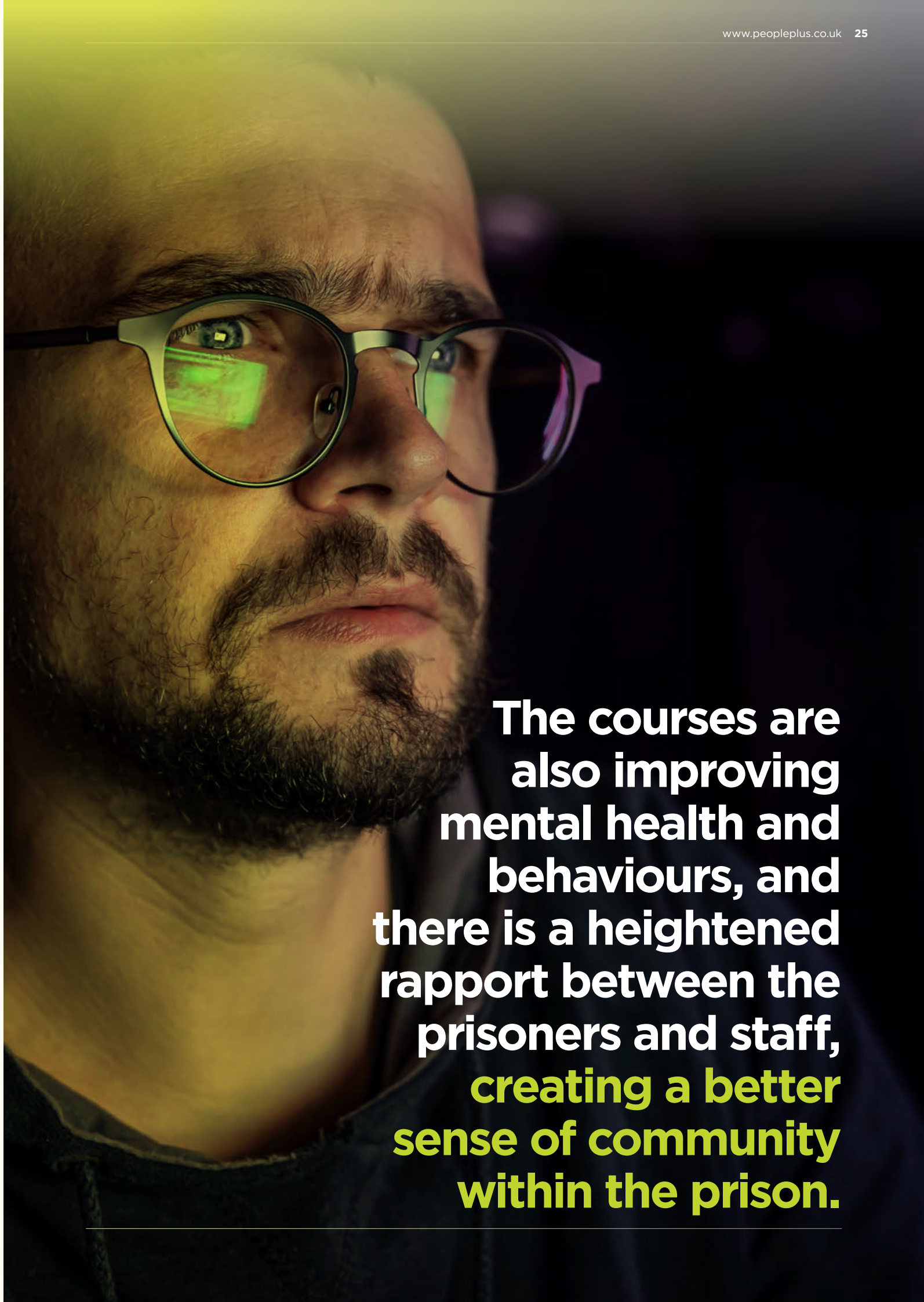
The Government has recognised the advantages of in-cell learning to improve prisoners' preparedness for the real world. The Coates

Review (2016) and the Educational Committee report (2022) highlight the need for prison education to be accessible, engaging and relevant. It is clear from the findings in this report that Way2Learn is helping prisoners to engage in the skills they need to find employment, which in turn is improving their self-esteem and confidence. The courses are also improving mental health and behaviours, and there is a heightened rapport between the prisoners and staff, creating a better sense of community within the prison.

The Coates Review (2016), highlighted the need for prison education to be at the heart of the prison system. It is clear from this report that the in-cell learning provided by Way2Learn is doing just that.

Overall, WayOut TV has transformed the way education can be delivered in HMP Bedford, making it more accessible and effective giving individuals the skills they need to unlock their potential, and ultimately contributing to the successful rehabilitation of our prisoners.

**Deputy Governor,
HMP/YOI Bedford**

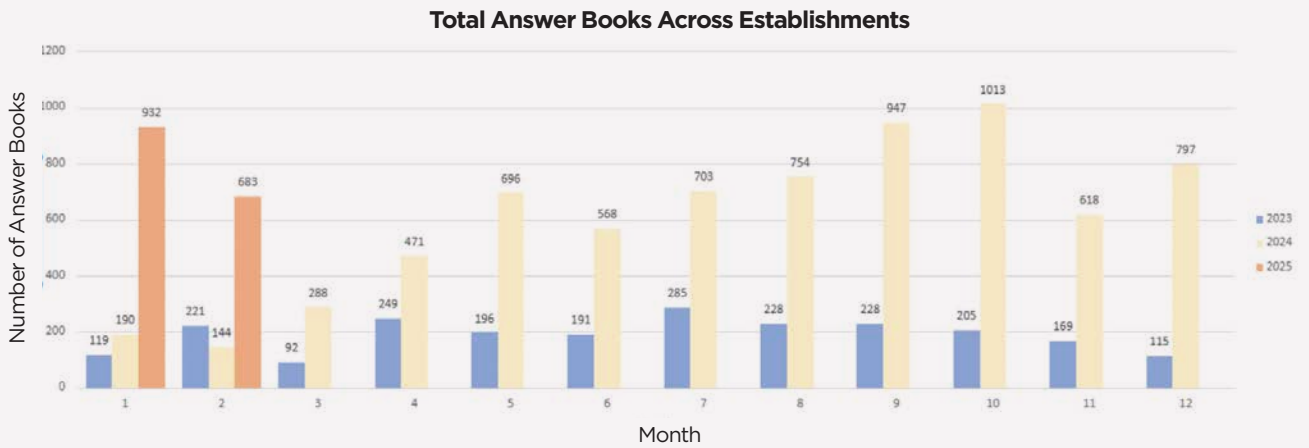


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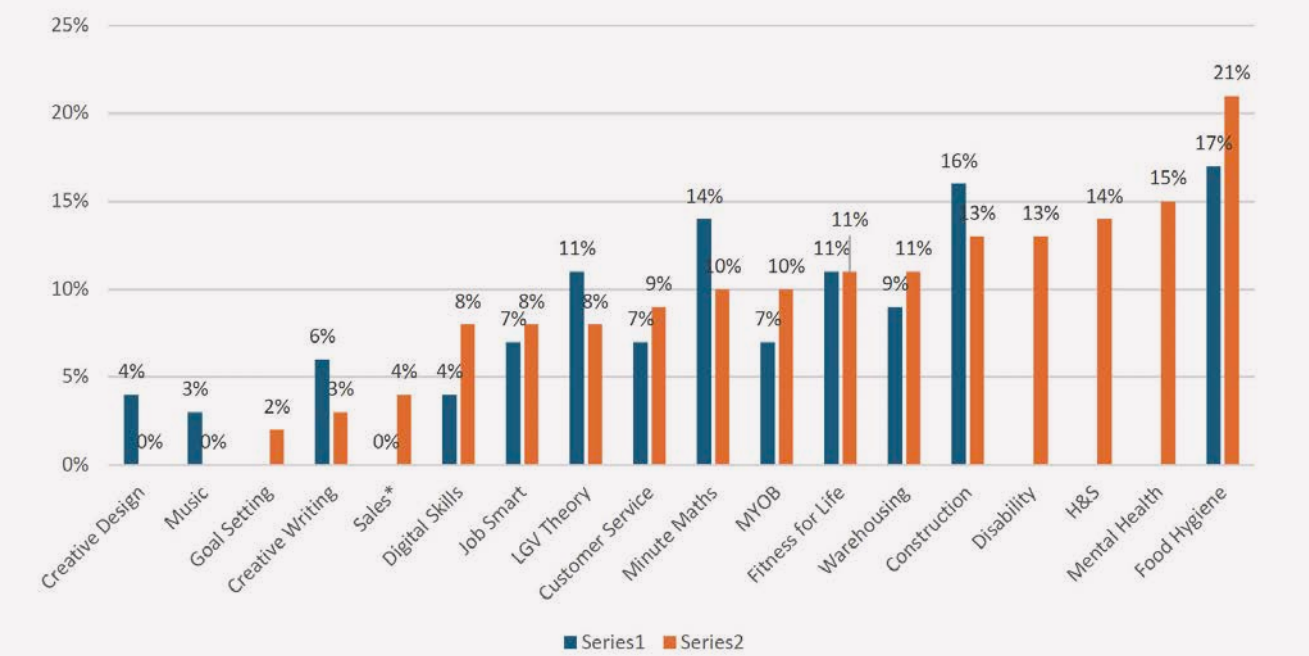
Annex 1.0

Way2Learn Engagement Data

Monthly engagement



Course Popularity



March 2023 - Feb 2024 (Series 1)
March 2024 - Feb 2025 (Series 2)



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