

INVITATION TO TENDER (ITT) TO DELIVER THE INTEGRATED OFFENDERS' LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE (OLASS) Phase Three

POLICY BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

This document provides background information for tendering organisations. Please read this carefully to ensure that you understand the policy content and policy documentation for this work, as you will be required to demonstrate your knowledge, experience and understanding of this context and policy as part of this tender.

This document has three parts:

- **Part one** provides an overview of the Policy Background
- **Part two** provides a summary of the key policy documents to which tender organisations may refer.
- **Part three** provides supporting information relating to OLASS Phase Three specifically.

PART ONE - POLICY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1 This section provides essential background information for tendering organisations. It sets out the development of the Offenders' Learning and Skills (OLASS) policy and highlights several developments and documents which are the drivers that have shaped the OLASS vision. The units of procurement and the tender questions are derived from the policies and developments described below. An understanding of this context is therefore an essential part of submitting an informed tender.
- 2 Only brief extracts of key documents are provided, but links are given to enable you to access documents in full. The content of these policy documents provides the basis on which OLASS Phase 3 will be developed and implemented.
- 3 Organisations tendering to deliver learning provision to adults and young people need to be aware of all policy developments in this area. In addition, within this document there are links to information relating to specific areas of policy, i.e. Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and Foundation Learning Tier (FLT), which are relevant to both adults and young people in custody.

Introduction

- 4 Following the transfer of responsibility for prisoner learning and skills to the Department for Education and Employment in 2001, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have embarked on a programme of reform to bring the service for offenders into line, as far as possible, with that in the mainstream FE system. To this end, OLASS was set up in 2006 to ensure that learning and skills in prisons and that delivered to offenders in the community was provided as part of mainstream education to drive up quality and consistency.
- 5 The introduction of OLASS arrangements saw the establishment of new contracts between the LSC and a series of lead providers with largely geographical responsibilities. The new contracts replaced those originally put in place by the Prison and Probation Services, and included the functions formerly carried out by the Prison Service's Vocational Training Instructional Officers. These contracts are due to expire at the end of July 2009.
- 6 The Green Paper '*Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment*' was published in 2005 with wide consultation, leading to the publication of a policy framework, setting out for the first time the Government's medium term ambitions in a '*Next Steps*' document. The over-riding objective of the policy is to improve the skills of offenders to increase their chances of securing employment as part of the drive to reduce re-offending. The LSC's '*Developing the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service: The Prospectus*' (The Prospectus) set the foundation on which this reform would follow.

- 7 There is a cross-Government programme delivered through DIUS, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) partnership with their agencies, designed to implement the proposals in 'Next Steps'. It is overseen by the inter-Ministerial Group on Reducing Re-Offending. The more innovative policy goals are being trialled in partnership with the test bed regions: West Midlands and the East of England.
- 8 In July this year, the government published the Youth Crime Action Plan which set out further reforms for education and training for young people in custody, which intends to further align provision of learning for young people with arrangements for young people in the mainstream sector.
- 9 The LSC's Prospectus was published last year, consulting with partners and stakeholders on the best way to achieve reform in the way that provision is planned, organised delivered and funded for prisoners, alongside increasing access to more relevant opportunities for offenders serving community sentences.
- 10 The full programme of reform envisaged in the Prospectus will evolve over the next few years, during the period of the contracts which are the subject of this procurement exercise. Tendering organisations should be enthusiastic about and committed to the developments, and should see themselves as playing a key role in their successful implementation.

Through the Gate

- 11 This information relates equally to the provision for young people.
- 12 This procurement exercise deals with **provision in custody**. However the LSC will be developing plans with its providers and partners for provision for offenders in the community.
- 13 The LSC intends to widen access to mainstream opportunities for offenders in the community through LSC regional commissioning plans and increased partnership working between OLASS Lead providers, Probation Areas and LSC funded mainstream providers.
- 14 As stated in the LSC Annual Statement of Priorities 2008 offenders continue to be identified as a priority group for the LSC and its providers. This priority status will be reaffirmed in the Annual Statement of Priorities 2009. As such:
 - Offenders in the community, including young people under the supervision of youth offending teams will benefit from greater access to appropriate mainstream programmes. Offenders in the community are entitled to access mainstream learning and skills provision.
 - Offenders are already identified as a priority group for other sources of funding, for example, European Social Funds (ESF), and we intend to secure greater offender access to these funds in the future.

- 15 We will therefore adapt a **flexible commissioning approach** for work with offenders in the community. This approach will enable offenders in custody and serving sentences in the community to benefit from a richer curriculum, which will:
- be underpinned by better integration between the different offender settings and provide much improved assessment and learning planning in the context of sentence plans
 - promote wider access to up to date information on learner progress and participation
 - within the framework of robust, active and accountable regional partnerships, take responsibility for agreeing the balance and mix of provision
 - create the maximum opportunity for the LSC to lever in additional funds and provision through the shared partnership responsibility of directly commissioning provision for offenders in the community
 - provide the vehicle for more effective inter-agency links with other key Agencies
 - enable activities to be funded that support the particular needs of this cohort of offender learners, (for example, smaller average class sizes, one to one mentoring, outreach provision)
- 16 This will enable the LSC to **ensure continuity of progression** from custody to the community. The proposals are designed to emphasise and thereby address the issue of concentrations of offender populations in conurbations. As LSC mainstream resources are concentrated where learners reside we will make sure that we align those resources to target the areas of high concentrations of offenders in the community.
- 17 The LSC will work with its mainstream providers to facilitate increased participation by **all** LSC providers in the offender learning offer, including:
- colleges of further education
 - Work Based Learning providers
 - Learndirect
 - adult education providers offering Personal and Community Development Learning
 - Train to Gain and current Next Step
 - future Adult Advancement Careers Service providers

in line with the LSC Statement of Priorities 2008 and 2009.

PART TWO - RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTATION

- 18 This information relates equally to the provision for young people.
- 19 The following section provides an overview of the key policy decisions and documents that have influenced the OLASS agenda over the past years. OLASS responds to a range of policy priorities (skills, employability, crime, re-offending, social integration) and is thus guided by a large and diverse range of policy documents and communications.

There are 7 parts to this Policy and Development.

They are as follows:

- 1 - Machinery of Government Changes
- 2 - The Context for Offenders' Learning and Skills
- 3 - The Offenders' Learning Journey
- 4 - The Prospectus
- 5 - Taking the Next Step
- 6 - Female Offenders and the Corston Review
- 7 - Test Beds

Machinery of Government Changes

- 20 The Machinery of Government changes announced by the Prime Minister on 28 June 2007 saw the creation of three new Departments to take over the responsibilities of the former Department for Education and Skills and Department for Trade and Industry. The DCSF is responsible for education, children and youth issues, including children's services, families, schools, 14-19 reforms and the Respect Taskforce. During the Machinery of Government changes the government created the Joint Youth Justice Unit (JYJU), a new government unit jointly responsible for youth justice policy and which is jointly accountable to DCSF and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) ministers. The DIUS is responsible for adult learning, further and higher education, skills, science and innovation. The Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform is responsible for promoting productivity, enterprise, competition and trade.
- 21 Responsibilities for offender learning and skills follow that broad split, with DIUS taking responsibility for all adult offender learning matters through its Offenders Skills and Employment Unit. The Joint Youth Justice Unit (DCSF and MoJ) is responsible for learning and skills for young offenders in the youth justice system (those aged below 18, as well as some young people aged 18 who are near the end of their sentence and the YJB have retained in juvenile custody). The Joint Youth Justice Unit (JYJU) within the DCSF is the government sponsor unit for the Youth Justice Board. The JYJU, a partner organisation of the LSC, is therefore jointly accountable to the DCSF and the Ministry of Justice.

- 22 Following the dissolution of the LSC for adults a new **Skills Funding Agency (SFA)** will be created, again with some regional capacity, which will oversee the distribution of funds to the sector. The Agency will also house the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), the National Employer Service (NES), and the Adult Careers and Advancement Service (aacs). As has already been announced, the Train to Gain brokerage service is planned to transfer to Regional Development Agencies in April 2009.
- 23 For young people there will be a new national Non Departmental Public Body, the **Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA)** with some regional capacity, which will support local authorities in their new role in commissioning and funding 14-19 provision. Local capacity on 14-19 will therefore be with Local Authorities.
- 24 As stated in the LSC Annual Statement of Priorities, offenders are a priority group for the LSC, its providers, and the contracted OLASS Information, Advice and Guidance service.
- 25 Young people in custody are deemed by the Criminal Justice System, to be eligible for transfer to the adult estate, when they reach the age of 18 years. Therefore, when young offenders are moved to the adult estate, they will come under the remit of OLASS provision for adults in custody. Young people who reach the age of 18 in juvenile custody, and who are not transferred to the adult estate (for example because they are close to the end of their sentence) will remain subject to the juvenile provision.

The Context for Offender Learning and Skills

- 26 This information relates equally for the provision for young people.
- 27 *'Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment: Next steps' (DfES, 2006b)* sets out a programme of action to realise the vision in the Green Paper *'Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment' (DfES, 2005)*.
- 28 The **three priorities** for action are:
 - a). A strong drive to engage employers through the Reducing Re-offending Corporate Alliance linked to the Skills Strategy and the outcome of the Leitch review of skills.
 - b) Working with employers to design and implement new models of training and preparation for jobs by building on the offender learning and skills service through the development of a campus model, which among its key features aims to:
 - provide a focus on employers' needs
 - include an employability compact as part of the sentence plan, to motivate offenders and to focus resources where they will have most impact
 - provide more flexible access to skills and employment support, with effective use of ICT (the virtual campus)

c) Use the new co-commissioning role of NOMS to build a new emphasis on skills and employment in prisons and probation using unpaid work in the community and work opportunities in prisons, with a particular focus on developing the workforce to deliver this.

- 29 The Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) (for which West Midlands Test bed region is a pathfinder) is an essential strand of the way forward for provision in the community.

Test Beds

- 30 **The three main priorities** for the Government to reduce re-offending are:
- Engaging employers through the Reducing Re-offending Corporate Alliance
 - Building on OLASS and developing a Campus Model to include a package of rights and responsibilities to motivate and engage offenders
 - Reinforcing the emphasis on skills and jobs in prison and probation
- 31 The '[Next Steps](#)' document set out the intention to push forward by establishing two test bed regions which will ensure a practical way forward for some of the flexibilities required to meet the needs of offender learners, prior to national implementation. The [Test Beds](#) will operate for two years, working to design and develop a national model. After the test beds have been evaluated, the model will be considered for wider adoption beyond July 2009 when the existing OLASS contracts expire. The two test bed regions are: East of England and West Midlands.

The Virtual Campus - West Midlands

- 32 On the 15 December 2005 the Government published a Green paper entitled Reducing Re-Offending Through Skills and Employment, jointly produced by the Department for Education and Skills, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions. This document sets out the strategy to help reduce re-offending by improving skills and employment opportunities for offenders.
- 33 A central theme in the strategy is the concept of a virtual campus:
- 'Piloting of a new model for delivery – the 'Offender Learner Campus' – to develop new centres of excellence and better links with mainstream education and training.'
- 34 The Green Paper goes on to say:
- 'The campus model should enable more flexibility in meeting the needs of offenders and the most effective practice for delivery. Some providers would be those located close to the campus, while some might operate more virtually to provide services outside the immediate locality, if the needs of the population demanded it. A specific focus of

the campus would be to encourage the use of e-learning and other ICT opportunities for flexible and cost effective delivery.'

- 35 There has been much activity related to examining the concept in other countries in the EU, particularly Sweden. The main learning from this has demonstrated that the Swedish model is based on a Virtual Private Network (VPN) network rather than the internet and allows learners to hand in work and communicate with teachers.

Overview

- 36 The two Test Bed regions have made significant progress in developing the Virtual Campus (VC) concept. This has focused on the technical and content issues. The content has been developed and includes informative and interactive content. Initial set up and 'proof of concept' has been developed at HMPYOI Swinfen Hall and rolled out to HMP Blundeston.
- 37 The content is hosted on a remote server and has been assembled from a variety of materials from partners and stakeholders and includes material covering most of the reducing re-offending pathways. Contributors include OLASS providers, IT based learning providers, FE and HE. Much of the content is both informative and interactive. Some content focuses on the learner inputting their skills, interests and qualifications, producing a CV and being matched to an employment sector, to enable more focussed skills acquisition, or to be matched to a job on release from custody.
- 38 The key principles related to the Virtual Campus are critical in developing a shared understanding of the skills and employability impact of the Campus. The key underpinning philosophy is one of empowerment for the learner, placing them at the centre of the process of getting skills and a job. The concept of actual, tailored and focussed local content is also critical to the interactive process for the learner.
- 39 Following consultation, additional features are listed to be included in the 'Virtual Campus' to provide an enhanced experience for offenders in prison and into the community and to enhance advisors' ability to monitor and track the progress of offenders in prison and through the gate into the community.
- 40 The Virtual Campus II platform is designed for a national roll-out and the issues and management of permissions associated with the complexities of a multiple site system in excess of 200 locations.

Progress update

The Virtual Campus is work in progress and is undergoing technical development and trials. As a result the technical and security specifications are subject to change but this will not affect the ability of the system to deliver content as described. The status of the virtual campus is still as 'Proof of Concept' at the time of issue of this document.

Security and centralised control arrangements

- 41 Tendering organisations should be aware that there will be an expectation for a consortium approach to a national role out of the Virtual Campus. This will ensure:
- A consistent approach to content and quality
 - A consistent approach to security issues
 - An interface with NOMS' IT security group
- 42 Providers will be expected to develop a single mechanism to ensure all security requirements are met in line with Prison Service Orders (PSOs), the national security framework and the Data Protection Act. It must be stressed that these requirements are currently in place but OLASS 3 enables an opportunity to develop an integrated management process across the prison estate in England.

The technical platform

- 43 The Virtual Campus is a web based application that is accessed through a secure IT based solution. It utilises, wherever possible, existing infrastructure although hardware deployed in the Virtual Campus has to meet or exceed additional security requirements. These requirements are set out by Prison Service IT security group.

Funding

- 44 There are several cost centres associated with the Virtual Campus these are as follows:
- Teaching and learning
 - Content development
 - Remote technical support
 - Hardware service support
 - Site licence
 - Site set up costs

Process of media and content management

- 45 The following written protocols have been established within the two Test bed regions:
- Principles of data protection, content submission and deployment
 - Server policy guide
 - Risk assessment tools

Evaluation and review

- 46 As a key component of the Next Steps strategy it will be critical that providers contribute to the continuous development of the Virtual Campus. To this end there will be an expectation to become involved in a broader collaborative network.

Relevant Policy Documents

A copy of “*The Leitch Review of Skills. Prosperity for all in the global economy: World class skills*” (Leitch, 2006) is available at:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm

“*Delivering World-class Skills in a Demand-led System*” (LSC, 2007a) is available at:

<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-deliveringworldclassskills-jan07.pdf>

“*Further Education: Raising skills, improving life chance*” (DfES, 2006) is available at:

www.dcsf.gov.uk/furthereducation

“*Work Skills – Unlocking Talent*” (June 2008) is available at:

<http://www.dius.gov.uk/publications/workskills.pdf>

“*Opportunity, Employment and Progression: Making Skills Work*” (November 2007) is available at:

<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm72/7288/7288.pdf>

14-19 Reforms and Changes to Commissioning and funding of Pre-and Post-19 Learning

47 The 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper, published in February 2005, set out in the Government’s proposals to improve the choices for young people in secondary, post-16 and further education. The 14-19 reforms aim to raise basic skill levels and improve employability, ensuring that young people have the maths, English, ICT and personal skills required by employers.

48 The 14 to 19 Education and Skills White Paper (2005) is available at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/14to19educationandskills/pdfs/14to19whitepaper.pdf>

49 The Implementation Plan to the 14 to 19 Education and Skills White Paper (2005) is available at:

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14to19/documents/14to19_implementation_plan05.pdf

50 During March this year the government published a White Paper ‘*Raising Expectations; Enabling the system to deliver*’ to consult on the changes for commissioning and funding for pre and post-19 learning announced during the Machinery of Government changes during summer 2007. The white paper is available at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/raisingexpectationswhitepaper/>

51 The government published a summary of responses to the consultation, and a follow-up document providing an ‘update and next steps’ which are available at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/RAISING%20EXPECTATION%20Summary%20events.pdf>

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/Microsoft%20Word%20-%20NEXT%20STEPS%20FINAL.pdf>

- 52 The Government is shortly due to publish a 14-19 next steps document which includes implications for the pre and post-19 funding and commissioning changes. Once published this will be available at:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/>

Education and Training for Young People in Custody

- 53 The White Paper '*Raising Expectations; Enabling the system to deliver*' (March 2008), set out new arrangements for funding and commissioning for pre and post-19 learning. The document included plans to place local authorities in the lead for funding and commissioning education and training for young people up to the age of 19 in England. It also set out plans to disband the LSC to create a new Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and a new Skills Funding Agency. Subject to the passage of legislation, these plans are due to be implemented from September 2010.
- 54 The document also consulted on proposals to place new duties on local authorities to make them responsible for funding and commissioning education in juvenile custody. Following the consultation the Government announced their plans to take this forward within the Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP), published in July 2008, and this is due to be implemented from September 2010. The education reforms for offenders are detailed in Chapter 5 and the plan is available at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/youth-crime-action-plan/>

- 55 There are particular challenges for meeting the education and training needs of young people in custody, with many having previously disengaged and been out of education. We believe it is critical that education and training for young people in custody is fully aligned with that available for young people in the community. It must be tailored to meet young peoples' personal needs and should be delivered flexibly to engage young people and promote progression and achievement.
- 56 Legislation to create new duties on local authorities to fund and commission education in juvenile custody and to promote the educational achievement of young people in custody will be taken forward at the earliest opportunity. It is expected that for young people in Young Offender Institutions (YOIs), the new arrangements will commence during September 2010, in line with the wider changes to funding and commissioning for education in the mainstream sector. Timelines for implementation within other types of custodial establishments for young people will be dependent upon wider contracting issues and timescales (this includes, Secure Training Centres, Secure Children's Homes, and privately operated YOIs).

Background to the Reforms to Juvenile Offender Education and Training

- 57 During summer 2007, the government held a public consultation to consider the issues affecting education and training for young offenders in England. Feedback from the consultation indicated that:
- young offenders should have the same rights and educational goals as all young other people
 - Local Authorities must take more responsibility for young people who offend, including those that enter custody.
 - a need to carefully balance access to mainstream education provision with the need for more specialist services
 - a need for a national framework and guidance on roles and responsibilities
- 58 The DIUS and DCSF White Paper's proposal (*'Raising Expectations: Enabling the system to deliver'*), is to place Local Authorities in the lead for education in juvenile custody, based on the statement that:
- 59 *"this would mean that for the first time young offender education and training in custody can be brought more in line with arrangements in 'mainstream' education, thereby fostering an improved curriculum offer to better meet young peoples' personal needs, provide greater consistency of provision and support across transitions, and better quality provision."*
- 60 In July 2008, the government published the Youth Crime Action Plan which set out a 'triple track' approach to tackling youth crime; enforcement and punishment where behaviour is unacceptable; non-negotiable support and challenge where it is most needed; and better and earlier prevention. The Action Plan included plans for improving education for young offenders and announced that the government and relevant partners would be taking forward the proposal to place local authorities in the lead for education in juvenile custody. The document also made the following related commitments to improve education in juvenile custody by:
- developing new performance management arrangements which place greater focus on progression and achievement
 - considering how young offenders' special educational needs are best met
 - developing a national delivery framework for education and training in custody, with requirements for local agreements between partners
 - developing guidance for Local Authorities and partners on education for young offenders :
- developing and implementing a quality improvement strategy

- consulting on a more comprehensive package of support for children leaving custody, including pathway plans for young people linked to Personal Education Plans
- 61 Although the Youth Justice Board and the youth justice system operate across both England and Wales, general education and training policy became a devolved responsibility in Wales in 1999. The Welsh Assembly Government works to ensure that education in custody in Wales is aligned with Welsh education policy. DCSF and the YJB work closely with the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure consistent policies for education for young people in the youth justice system. The Welsh Assembly Government is considering whether to implement similar reforms to make Local Authorities responsible for young offenders' education in juvenile custody.

The Offenders' Learning Journey Adults (OLJ) and the Offenders' Learning Journey for Young People:

- 62 "The Offender's Learning Journey for adults" and "The Offender's Learning Journey for young people" (SIOU, 2004 and revised in 2008) describe the components of a high-quality learning and skills service at all stages of a learner's journey during his or her sentence (served in custody or under supervision in the community) and whilst under supervision in the community following release.

The Foundation Learning Tier

- 63 This information relates equally for the provision for young people.
- 64 The LSC and Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) are working together to reform provision below level 2 to increase participation and achievement amongst learners and help them to progress through work and life. This programme of work is known as the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT), a term which is also used to describe qualifications at Entry Level and Level 1 within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF).
- 65 A key outcome of the Foundation Learning Tier reforms is the development of Progression Pathways. Progression Pathways set down the parameters for designing personalised learning programmes to support individual progression through the achievement of an appropriate combination of qualifications from entry level to level 1 of the QCF.
- 66 We expect that, over time, all learners (16-18 year olds and learners aged 19 and above) working at entry level and level 1 will do so within the context of Progression Pathways. This is part of the Government's aspiration to move towards a more comprehensive but also more coherent qualification offer for both young people and adults. For young people, Progression Pathways will form one of the national suites of provision alongside Diplomas, GCSEs, A Levels, and apprenticeships,

as described in '*Promoting Achievement, Valuing Success: A Strategy For 14–19 Qualifications*'.

- 67 For adults, Progression Pathways, and more generally the QCF, will begin the development towards a more coherent and 'joined up' offer. This will encompass Skills for Life / Functional Skills and, in time, Integrated Employment and Skills (IES) provision.
- 68 For further information please see the [LSC website](#) - Progression Pathways within the Foundation Learning Tier.

Implementation of the Qualifications and Credit Framework

- 69 This information relates equally to the provision for young people.
- 70 The UK Vocational Qualifications Reform Programme (UK VQRP) is focused on reforming vocational qualifications for adults (and also includes aspects of the Foundation Learning Tier). There are three main strands to the work:
- reform and rationalisation of sector qualifications and other learning provision through Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)
 - development and implementation of a unit and credit based framework known as the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF)
 - establishment of planning, funding and delivery arrangements to support the objectives of the reform programme in England by the LSC
- 71 The QCF will, through greater flexibility, be able to meet the specific needs of offenders within the regulated system. There are two phases of implementation of the QCF:
- By 2010 - QCF will become the regulatory framework for all adult vocational qualifications, entry level and level 1 qualifications (Foundation Learning Tier), Apprenticeships and Functional Skills. From 1 August 2010 the LSC will not be expecting to fund any new enrolments on provision outside the QCF for these qualifications
 - By 2013 - The full functionality of QCF as a unit based qualification and credit system should be realised and it is anticipated that (subject to government decisions) 14-19 qualifications will also be part of the QCF
- 72 Further information can be found in the [Prospectus for Progression Pathways](#) and on the [LSC website](#).

Developing OLASS – The Prospectus

- 73 This information relates equally to the provision for young people.
- 74 In September 2007 the LSC issued its Prospectus '*Developing the Offenders' Learning and Skill Service: The Prospectus*'. The proposals

contained in the Prospectus underpin the service requirements for the Service post August 2009

- 75 The extract from the Prospectus set out below gives a very brief overview of the plans for reform. The Prospectus should be read in full, alongside '*Taking the Next Step*' which addresses the issues raised in the Prospectus consultation responses. These documents can be found on the LSC website at www.lsc.gov.uk.
- 76 The aims of the document are set out within four broad objectives, as follows:
- developing and reforming the way in which learning provision for offenders **in custody** is planned, organised, delivered and funded. We will work with NOMS and other commissioners to move away from historical arrangements by prioritising the availability and range based on personalised learner and employer need. The principal focus will be on skills for employment and employability
 - widening the scope, range and availability of learning provision for offenders in **the community**
 - for **all offenders**, ensuring that the learning offer is explicitly linked and aligned to other services and interventions, in particular by developing strong joint commissioning arrangements with NOMS commissioners
 - by supporting improvements in the quality of provision, ensuring that **all offenders** are able to benefit from existing provision and developments within the wider post-16 sector.
- 77 The LSC's budget for provision for the population as a whole is insufficient to meet the scale of the demand for the entire population for all types of learning. The LSC must therefore prioritise the allocation of funds available to it. It does this by ascribing eligibility and priority to programmes, individual learners, and groups of learners in line with the targets and priorities set for it by ministers.
- 78 The Prospectus proposes that the OLASS system for funding learning and skills for offenders should be no different. Learning and skills (particularly when linked to stable employment) have been identified as a key contributory factor in the reduction of re-offending.
- 79 To be eligible for funding, learning and skills activities must derive from the assessed needs of the individual and form part of an individual learning plan (ILP) (see '*The Offender's Learning Journey*', SIOU, 2004 and revised in 2008). Learning and skills activities should focus on beginning and advancing an offender's learning journey. All young people in the juvenile estate must be entitled to full-time appropriate learning provision.

Taking the Next Step (2008)

- 80 Following extensive consultation on the Prospectus, the LSC has recently published its responses to the consultation and its revisions to the priority curriculum areas.
- 81 *'Taking the Next Step'* provides clarification on the following:
- the revised curriculum priority areas – providing the basis for the OLASS 'core curriculum'
 - all aspects of the curriculum should be accessible **where appropriate** to learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD), and providers should be able to address the needs of learners with additional support needs
 - that the curriculum priority areas – the 'core curriculum' - include remand and foreign national prisoners
 - that the offender curriculum areas are designed to meet the needs of female offenders as outlined in the Corston Review (see below)
 - that employability skills are included in curriculum areas
 - the five core curriculum areas are, as published in the Prospectus – IAG and Preparation for Employment, Skills for Life, Skills for Employment, Learning for Living and Work. More information can be found in the Specification document for Adults in Custody.
- 82 The curriculum areas are set out in detail in *'Taking the Next Step'*, while the Core Curriculum is explained in detail in the Specification for provision for adults in custody. Understanding that the introduction of the core curriculum is an essential part of the reforms that will link to the new funding methodology will be a vital part of your tender response.

Female Offenders and the Corston Review

- 83 This information relates equally to the provision for young people.
- 84 A recent report by Baroness Corston reviewed the treatment of female offenders. The review examined women's pathways through the criminal justice process and the interventions and services available at each stage and the vulnerabilities women face. Several recommendations were made for specific changes for the treatment of females within the system in order to deliver a distinct response to women who offend. Within the last decade the number of women in prison has more than doubled.
- 85 Baroness Corston called for an extension to women's community centres to enable public-sector and volunteer agencies to reach the most socially excluded females through their holistic and woman-centered approach to meeting the needs of women. The Government has established a cross-departmental Criminal Justice Women's Unit within the Ministry of Justice in response to the Corston Review.

- 86 There are significant issues specific to a high proportion of women in custody:
- **Primary carers** - over half the female prison population are the main source of care and support for children and other family members prior to their imprisonment
 - **Emotional state of mind** - often women, due to the location of female prisons, are held far away from their families, making it very difficult for their relatives including their children to visit, which can cause additional stress.
 - **Serving short sentences** - this creates a lot of disruption to inmates' lives, causing childcare and accommodation issues
 - **Complex needs** - affecting women offenders including mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, victims of abuse, unemployment and financial situation
- 87 Issues to be considered by tendering organisations when delivering learning and skills to this group of learners:
- Sequencing** - timing of provision is important, as for all offenders, as learning opportunities need to be offered when potential learners are most receptive. This means when other issues have been addressed such as, substance abuse or other concerns e.g. the welfare of their children
- Small numbers of learners** - smaller numbers may present challenges to the delivery of a wider curriculum
- 88 **Providers should ensure that the needs of women offender learners are met**, while acknowledging the issues listed below may also be relevant to some male offender learners:
- appropriate assessment needs to be carried out to identify the individual's learning and skills needs
 - appropriate advice and guidance services are vital to support women so they know what is available to them and empower them to take control
 - appropriate learning activity that will recognise and support an increase in self-esteem and confidence, and provide skills such as being part of a group and getting along with other people
 - progression pathways for learning and skills development to support movement between establishments, those on short sentences and after their release
 - learning opportunities for female offender learners to aid the rehabilitation process and reduce the likelihood of re-offending
 - education and training in female establishments should be relevant to the outside world; developing skills which enhance employability and helping women understand that education and employment might be relevant to them

- provide opportunities for women to learn practical business skills which will make self-employment an option on their release
- transition into the community on release needs to be managed very carefully; signposting female offenders to where they can get the advice and support they need, e.g. Women's Centres

OLASS PHASE 3 - SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

- 89 This supplementary information is to inform tendering organisations of other work that has occurred or is currently taking place to develop the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service post August 2009. Also included are current developments in the mainstream. More detail on some of these areas may be found in the Specification.
- 90 The following information is relevant for adults aged over 18 years and young people in custody under the age of 18 years.

Contents:

- 1 - NAO Report "*Offender Learning and Skills Service – Meeting Needs?*"
- 2 - Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement
- 3 - MIAP OLASS Learner Plan
- 4 - Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
- 5 - Demand Led Funding
- 6 - Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- 7 - Provider Expert Seminars (May 2008)

NAO Report

- 91 The recommendations in the recent review of offender learning by the National Audit Office '*Offender Learning and Skills Service – Meeting Needs?*' (2008) highlighted some areas that require action to be taken. Action is in hand to address these recommendations. However, in addition to identifying areas for improvement, the report acknowledges and supports the proposals set out in the Prospectus and urges the LSC to press forward. The provision which is the subject of this tendering process forms part of our response to the issues raised in the NAO Report.

Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement

- 92 Please refer to the Specification document for full detail on Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement for this service.
- 93 With regards to offender learning, some elements of mainstream quality assurance and continuous quality processes will require some adjustment to accommodate the custodial context. Further Guidelines will be agreed in July 2009.

MIAP OLASS Learner Plan

- 94 The MIAP OLASS Learner Plan is part of the MIAP Learner Registration Service (LRS). Any LSC recognised UK Learning Provider

can register with MIAP and gain access to the system. See the MIAP Website for further details of the registration process:
<http://www.miap.gov.uk/>.

- 95 The MIAP Learner Plan is an online internet application. It cannot be used offline and there are no plans for an offline version of the Learner Plan. However, when there is no access to a computer during the interview, notes can be taken on paper and the MIAP Learner Plan updated at a later time.
- 96 The key benefit of the MIAP Learner Plan will be the improved sharing of records between OLASS learning providers. In the longer term this should result in a reduced number of repeat assessments, and give access to learner progress in 'real time' to support the continuity of learning.

UKRLP Registrations

- 97 All organisations will have to be registered on the UK Register of Learning Providers in order to access the Learning Plan. In the majority of cases an organisation has to be registered on the UKRLP before they can become a MIAP Learner Registration Body.

Users

- 98 The Super-user(s) within each organisation will be responsible for the creation of the necessary MIAP Users and there are specific security constraints which govern this activity. Each organisation will have to decide which of their staff will require access to MIAP. Some have indicated a preference for restricting direct access to administrative staff whilst others would like to give access to all tutors who have contact with offenders. An Implementation Guide is available on the MIAP website; this includes comprehensive guidance for all users of the MIAP system/service. This Implementation Guide will be updated to incorporate learner plan functionality and provide appropriate guidance for those involved in offender learning.

Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

- 99 It has long been recognised that the offender population has lower levels of literacy than the general population and fewer educational attainments. Offenders are also more likely to have had negative experiences of school with many more offenders than people in the general population having been suspended or expelled; they are also more likely to have played truant. Recent research tells us that:
 - 20-30% of offenders have learning disabilities or learning difficulties that interfere with their ability to cope within the criminal justice system (Loucks, 2007)
 - 7% of prisoners have an IQ of less than 70 and a further 25% have an IQ of less than 80 (Mottram, 2007)

- 20% of the prison population has some form of 'hidden disability' that 'will affect and undermine their performance in both education and work settings' (Rack, 2005)
- 100 **“No One Knows”** is a UK-wide programme led by the Prison Reform Trust that aims to effect change by exploring the experiences of people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are in contact with the criminal justice system. The programme runs until 2008, but has already published findings which suggest that a substantial percentage of offenders cannot benefit from interventions because the system does not allow for their learning difficulty or disability.
- 101 There will also be learners who experience developmental delay and whose cognitive and communication skills make learning particularly difficult. Some may have physical or sensory impairments that limit their access to normal learning opportunities, while very many more will have mental health difficulties that affect concentration and memory, both essential skills for learning.
- 102 The LSC commissioned Skill: The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities to carry out some research on this issue and to produce information leaflets for providers. The Skill report and information leaflets on “*Production of information for LSC providers’ staff in the LSC Offenders’ Learning and Skill Service in custodial provision and an associated resource for learners*” are available at:
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-OLASSreportoffenderlearningdirectorapr08-jun08.doc>
<http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-providerinformationleaflets-ps-29sept2008-v1-0.pdf>

Demand led funding for OLASS Provision

- 103 Following a number of consultations including that on “*Delivering World-class Skills in a Demand-led System*” held in early 2007, the LSC has proceeded with the implementation of Demand-led Funding for 2008/09. From 1 August 2008, the LSC implemented three new funding models in FE, School 6th forms and work based learning designed to support the wider Leitch reform programme and to take forward the commitments in the FE White Paper.
- 104 The consultation document recommended that the proposed funding methodology would not apply to a number of areas including Adult Safeguarded Learning (ASL) and offender learning provision in custody ‘which has its own funding arrangements for the time being’¹. In line with the proposals in the consultation document, neither ASL nor offender learning provision (funded through OLASS 3 contracts) are in scope for Demand-led Funding at the current time.
- 105 However tendering Organisations for OLASS phase 3 delivery in 2009/10 should understand that the future funding methodology may

¹ Delivering World Class Skills in a Demand-led System, paragraph 146
 C:\Documents and Settings\greenwebba\Local Settings\Temporary Internet
 Files\OLK276\Policy\FinalOLASS3.doc

incorporate a phased introduction of (some or all) of the Demand-led Funding methodology to OLASS provision within the terms of the contract.

Information and Communications Technology

111. The government's strategy for ensuring that the learning and skills sector makes innovative and appropriate use of technology to meet the needs of all learners and practitioners is contained in the Becta document '[Technology strategy for further education, skills and regeneration- Implementation plan for 2008-2011](#)'
112. This document outlines a vision for Harnessing Technology to transform learning outcomes in terms of:
- Improved participation, engagement and progression for all learners facilitated by user-focussed technologies
 - Personalised learning pathways, programmes and assessment, using technologies to respond to the learners needs.
 - High performing providers making confident use of technologies for sustainable self-improvement
113. Tendering organisations must be aware that they will be expected to adopt these modern and proven approaches in the OLASS learning environment (subject to security restrictions).
114. A range of support services are available to providers, e.g. Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) regional support centres and the QIA excellence gateway portal.
115. The council has recently invested over £11 million in upgrading and replacing the ICT infrastructure in prison OLASS learning provision and has financed suitable maintenance arrangements to ensure sustainability of learning.

Provider Expert Seminars (May 2008)

Aim of the Events

116. The aim of the events was to capture the unique perspective of providers on some of the implementation arrangements to be set out in the forthcoming OLASS document: "*Taking the Next Step*". The event was facilitated entirely by consultants to ensure that participants gained no unfair advantage by possible discussion with the national OLASS team in advance of the next procurement process.

Programme

- 117 The events took as a starting point for discussion issues around participation, achievement and quality improvement, asking what part providers, OLASS, and the Prison Service might play to address the concerns expressed in the

118. Each seminar also considered a presentation on Performance Management measures. Discussion on both days was very lively, displaying both the commitment to this work from participants and their extensive knowledge of the issues. A report of the content of the meeting can be found by following the link <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/nat-olassexpertseminars-re-06oct2008-v1-0.doc>

Concluding comment

119. All of the information contained in this document is relevant to the developing agenda for the improvement of learning and skills offer to offender learners of all ages in England.