



Leading learning and skills

**Learning and Skills Council
Developing the Offenders' Learning
and Skills Service Regional Roadshow**

Chilford Hall, Cambridge, 24th September 2007

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1 Comments and Questions

The group was invited to enter comments about the event and questions for the speakers from the morning section of presentations. 1 Tablet was also used as a question station to capture further questions during the coffee break and over lunch. The results were then categorised and used to form the basis of the Q&A session at the end of the day.

1.1.1 Comments

The group was asked to "Please enter your comments regarding this morning's presentations"

- Thought provoking
- Government departments TALKING
- There still seems to be a gap for those moving from custody to community
- Need to link funding more closely between Govt. departments - fewer more joined up contracts e.g. one pot of funding to one provider to deliver range of provision
- Concern that under a funding based on outputs funding regime that poorer providers would be penalised tendency for quick fix solutions which deny improvement to prisoners who need most support
- Some prisoners need social and life skills to be able to hold on to sustained employment

1.1.2 Questions

The group was asked "What questions do you have for this morning's presenters?
(If appropriate, please include the presenter's name)"

1.1.2.1 Impact of Proposals on other areas

- What's in it for those that do not come from the skills arena?
- Can prisons and providers cope with significant change in provider hours?
- how will the spread of the niche to mainstream be handled
- how will the ROM use any future budgets to influence probation areas priorities
- How will we ensure that the Prison service and OLASS continue in the same direction toward the same ends?
- Discussed better links how far are prison establishments going to be involved in those links?

1.1.2.2 Impact on specific groups of learners

- How will the LSC direct funding for Pre 16 learning
- RE Women offenders in Custody when will we have further feedback on the 4 phase approach
- Electronic records- how do you plan to link to E-asset in the Youth Justice Estate?

1.1.2.3 The process/scope

- How are we going to ensure buy-in?
- Who is going to prioritise need
- how will the 80/20 split be implemented
- How will LSC incorporate FLT (Foundation Learning Tear) provision into OLASS delivery - it should
- What are the timescales for CJARS
- Is money going to move from Establishment to meet priorities across the Estate?
- Will LSC align WBL funding with FE funding 07/08 which gives an uplift for delivery to offenders
- Local Area Agreements - will these dovetail with OLASS in custody - what work is going on here?
- Will it allow for innovation

- Will any split in the delivery of the funding be phased in?
- will CJARS realign the balance between provision in custody and the community
- what will be the expectations of local LSC area teams in terms of the CJARS

1.1.2.4 Other

- will OLASS still insist on full level two quals in vocational areas
- How will LSC link the proposal for the electronic ILP to learner achievement records
- Interesting to know how we will assess the link between improved learning and skills and re-offending in light of the suggested change

1.1.2.5 For Clarification

- Can we move from alignment of priorities (as is currently happening) to joint contracts?
- interested to know how a national functional process will sit in the AJR

2 Facilitated Round Table Discussion

The delegates were split into table syndicate groups relating to their area of expertise and asked to answer questions relating to the Prospectus. The results are shown below:

2.1.1 Table 1 - Prisons

2.1.1.1 Objectives

Do you consider that our proposed four broad objectives, as contained in paragraph 30 of the Prospectus, are appropriate? Should there be any other considerations?

- the purposeful activity potential conflict with widening participation and prioritisation
- concern with 80/20 split for funding also concerns with regard to those above level 2 and possible lack of provision
- Concern for short sentences and remand and what opportunities there will be available for them

2.1.1.2 Priority groups

Do you consider our proposed priority groups for offender learning in custody at Annex B to be appropriate? What might be the impact on different groups?

- Misses out on prisoners on remand? There can be a lot of short sharp courses that can be delivered within 12 months - modular would be useful 2/ It would be unrealistic for someone to study for a year in the present situation in some prisons It would be more useful to put SFL into vocational skills rather than visa versa
- A full level 2 in catering and plumbing can be achieved within 6 months and other level 2 courses. Good to be able to use the whole credit framework
- yes agreed
- Needs to be a high priority not medium as this impacts on 50 % of population and progress can be achieved in a short timescale.
- Purpose of the group needs to be expanded. Also for prisons like HMP Whitemoor and long term prisoners this is very important

2.1.1.3 Additional support

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce a formal method of supporting offender learners in custody and in the community with additional learning support needs? This will have significant budgetary implications on a finite resource. How can the varying learning needs be most appropriately supported within that finite resource?

- Yes its very important to have additional learner support Does not always have to be very expensive
Could be using prisoners as mentor support working closely with volunteers and other voluntary groups

2.1.1.4 Clarifying the role of learning and skills

In relation to custodial provision, do you agree that the role of learning and skills as part of purposeful activity within prison regimes needs urgent clarification? How can learning and skills work in harmony with other interventions?

- Concerns if prioritisation means reduction in hours then purposeful activity could be reduced T learning etc can show how purposeful activity can harmonise Linking Offending behaviour to learning and skills example of IAG at the end of a offending behaviour course
- moving ETS and P-ASRO away from local prisons
- Important meeting is the resettlement meeting bringing all interested parties together
- The HOLs role needs to be clarified - the role has changed from 2003, HOLs roles have evolved. This role need to be looked at again in the new world of the LSC and providers

2.1.1.5 Delivery through mainstream provision

In relation to community supervision, we do not believe that commissioning significant levels of offender-specific provision in the community would be beneficial. Is our intention to harness delivery through mainstream LSC-funded post-16 provision the most appropriate route? How can we best take this forward?

- Also JCP provision as well as LSC
- If specific provision was supplied would it be fully utilised? Concerns with duplication of funding

2.1.2 Table 2 - Prisons

2.1.2.1 Objectives

Do you consider that our proposed four broad objectives, as contained in paragraph 30 of the Prospectus, are appropriate? Should there be any other considerations?

- How can OLASS influence the other seven pathways?
- How can the curriculum be developed to offer more tangible outcomes around the family issues and other pathway?
- There appears to be an assumption in annex D that a high tier equals a long sentence left to serve that is wrong?
- The Offender Manager has a great part to play as the number of Offender Managers working with prisoners outside the areas of prison releases? Need to try to house local prisoners with in their areas,
- Eastern area Prisons need to be accommodate eastern area prisons
- What is the role of the HOLS in the strategic planning?
- Being able to bring New deal paperwork into prisons will speed up the links between custody and community

2.1.2.2 Priority groups

Do you consider our proposed priority groups for offender learning in custody at Annex B to be appropriate? What might be the impact on different groups?

- The needs of the learners which are identified with good diagnostic evidence need to be priority rather than the learner target groups
- Easier access to additional learning support should be offered to those who have been identified as wanting to change and rehabilitate

2.1.3 Table 3 - Adult Community

2.1.3.1 Objectives

Do you consider that our proposed four broad objectives, as contained in paragraph 30 of the Prospectus, are appropriate? Should there be any other considerations?

- include employer engagement as one of the proposal _ how /who will engage with employers
- where is the link between custodial sentence offenders and offenders in the community/require continuity between offender released from prison and offenders released into the community
- consider investigating different group, i.e. lone parents/women/ethnic minorities, to target projects
- re point 5/ that there is still a need for offender provision in probation service premises
- there still needs to be niche provision which is made available to offenders in the community to deliver SFL e.g. at pre entry level,
- niche provision to inc
- niche provision to include mentoring
- Proposal 3- ALS definition- what will ALS support?
- ALs should fund offender's needs- this may not be the same ALS as defined under FE- i.e. ALS to fund mentoring, 1-1 support, meeting all the needs of the person to ensure success.
- suggest a project where offenders support other offenders in probation
- No linkages to JCPlus

2.1.4 Table 4 - Adult Community

2.1.4.1 Objectives

Do you consider that our proposed four broad objectives, as contained in paragraph 30 of the Prospectus, are appropriate? Should there be any other considerations?

- one concern is that it is still looking primarily at custody, need to more explicitly state needs for 'in the community' side
- tension around knowing the level of need in the community and identifying clients
- identification of learners is key
- employability agenda key
- how do we further engage offender managers
- proposals need to respond to needs for non-accredited vocational provision that deliver life/employability skills

- proposal bullet re widening scope of provision for in the community needs expansion to more clearly state what this means
- How will funding follow learners in custody when they move from institutions and differing regions etc.
- general points - how does this link to train to gain, need to clarify for both programmes the possible mutual benefits

2.1.4.2 Priority groups

Do you consider our proposed priority groups for offender learning in custody at Annex B to be appropriate? What might be the impact on different groups?

- concern why LLDD learners are only a medium priority
- where do learners with mental health issues fit
- LLDD same as for those in mainstream issues wise
- focus on the learner is seen as good
- ways to address dyslexia from assessment to support is important as large numbers of clients have this
- CPD for staff needed on how to motivate and engage learners
- linked to CPD is clarity of roles and responsibilities in working with clients

2.1.4.3 Additional support

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce a formal method of supporting offender learners in custody and in the community with additional learning support needs? This will have significant budgetary implications on a finite resource. How can the varying learning needs be most appropriately supported within that finite resource?

- tension on the very limited LSF budgets with the range of learners that need supporting
- how will commitments to ALS be managed when learners move from institution to institution

2.1.4.4 Clarifying the role of learning and skills

In relation to custodial provision, do you agree that the role of learning and skills as part of purposeful activity within prison regimes needs urgent clarification? How can learning and skills work in harmony with other interventions?

- yes
- the question is purposeful for who, our view is that it should be for the learners not to hit targets for getting people out of cells in a day - needs to be re-defined, will require relationship management with governors
- bridges between custodial and community provision key and role of IAG in this
- role of IAG providers needs to be more explicitly stated
- looking at embedding key skills with other interventions such as substance misuse, behavioural activities

2.1.4.5 Delivery through mainstream provision

In relation to community supervision, we do not believe that commissioning significant levels of offender-specific provision in the community would be beneficial. Is our intention to harness delivery through mainstream LSC-funded post-16 provision the most appropriate route? How can we best take this forward?

- its getting this over to providers and that it is taken seriously as an agenda
- its the only route forward, but its a lot to expect of providers - issues around understanding, perceptions and skillsets of staff

- about the tensions for providers in supporting the range of clients groups
- need to ensure the volcom sector are kept engaged as they are a key provider e.g. consortium approach
- introductions of MLP's will be a key issues, how this done will have an impact for providers
- how will the disorganised/chaotic nature of clients be supported in mainstream
- The ULN will be of help in tracking learners and seeing how their OLJ progresses etc.

2.1.5 Table 5 - Young People

2.1.5.1 Objectives

Do you consider that our proposed four broad objectives, as contained in paragraph 30 of the Prospectus, are appropriate? Should there be any other considerations?

- Are the YJB the most appropriate for determining the relevance of learning and skills provision? Perhaps this should be reviewed? The service level agreement with the Prison Service ought to be reviewed also.
- Who in the short term is going to provide direction? Who will work with the YJBT and at what level?
- No mention of the under 16's and the funding
- Is the funding currently used for young offenders that will eventually go over to Local Authorities, be ring fenced and how will it be managed?
- Will the OLASS funding for young people lever in more support for the process of young people through custody and then into community?
- Support for mentors in custody and community needs more consideration
- It is critical that the CJARS are taken on board seriously - not lost as were the Strategic Area Reviews

2.1.5.2 Priority groups

Do you consider our proposed priority groups for offender learning in custody at Annex B to be appropriate? What might be the impact on different groups?

- The proposal for young people needs to be aligned to the appropriateness of placement of young people - YJB Placements Team need to be part of the discussions
- Investment in the infrastructure for custody must sit alongside the proposal. Support for bids to the YJB for capital funding.
- The transition arrangements for young people 18+
- LLDD young people in the Proposals are deemed as a Medium priority - we view that this should be seen as a high priority and need some clarification here as to the thinking behind this.
- The prison estate for young people has had an uphill battle to secure appropriate Learner support - need to employ more Assistants. High turnover in the Estate due to the cohort and environment.
- Some of the priorities are set as a low priority for adults in general but we see all as a high priority for young people

2.1.5.3 Additional support

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce a formal method of supporting offender learners in custody and in the community with additional learning support needs? This will have significant budgetary implications on a finite resource. How can the varying learning needs be most appropriately supported within that finite resource?

- 1:1 learning support for young people is seen as an essential requirement. Learning needs to be reinforced by community supervision and license periods.
- Multi agency approach to the use of support resources
- More consideration for work with families and communities. The 'whole' of the young person needs to be worked on
- In custody a young person is finally 'nailed down' and a structure of support is put around them. this support is currently not replicated in the community and many young people are lost for lack of a 'mentor' to join this up

2.1.5.4 Clarifying the role of learning and skills

In relation to custodial provision, do you agree that the role of learning and skills as part of purposeful activity within prison regimes needs urgent clarification? How can learning and skills work in harmony with other interventions?

- In custody there are not enough funded hours to deliver what is needed for the young people. This is also further strained by lack of rooms etc
- What specific links are being made with Employers? Need to ensure that Young people are given the consideration necessary

2.1.5.5 Delivery through mainstream provision

In relation to community supervision, we do not believe that commissioning significant levels of offender-specific provision in the community would be beneficial. Is our intention to harness delivery through mainstream LSC-funded post-16 provision the most appropriate route? How can we best take this forward?

- There needs to be a process of sharing information. Risk management and a duty of care must be considered by all involved
- Clearer protocols regarding disclosure
- An appropriate route, but there must also be room for discreet provision- what is most appropriate. There are high levels of support needed that some Mainstream providers have little passion for
- Many young people have been through a plethora of interventions and custodial placements - are Providers prepared for this?
- Safe-guarding young people. A commitment to ensure the needs of the young people are protected. Is there the capacity for this with Providers, baring in mind the particular set of difficulties presented by some of the young people? The young people we are talking about require a whole new set of thinking

2.1.6 Table 6 - Prisons

2.1.6.1 Objectives

Do you consider that our proposed four broad objectives, as contained in paragraph 30 of the Prospectus, are appropriate? Should there be any other considerations?

- Will this address needs of all learners? Difficult to determine at this stage. None of this will work unless all 'buy into it'; prison, education providers and employers
- Need to scan environment to identify skill gaps.
- Analyse through oasis to determine appropriate pathways for individuals to ensure right interventions. E.g. cohesion between skills for life provision and other. Need whole organisation approach, meet needs of prison.
- General consensus that right objectives but how to turn into reality
- General comment: where do foreign nationals fit into this?

- General comment: gap for level 1 provision.

2.1.6.2 Priority groups

Do you consider our proposed priority groups for offender learning in custody at Annex B to be appropriate? What might be the impact on different groups?

- Some assumptions being made that offender learning needs identified may not necessarily know are true.
- For some development of personal skills will be high priority.
- Employability skills; developing the right environment to learn the skills rather than teach it.
- Early intervention and the right intervention programme.
- Shouldn't just be ploughing money into keeping people active. If priority given to people who are amenable to help and short term then there is tension with those in prison long term.
- Need to focus on being able to catch those from the gate into the community. Shift focus to community but need to put in place right provision.
- Need to work with agencies in the prisons as all competing for same level of offenders. Need to integrate regime.
- If unemployment levels change then impacts on effectiveness of OLASS?

2.1.6.3 Additional support

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce a formal method of supporting offender learners in custody and in the community with additional learning support needs? This will have significant budgetary implications on a finite resource. How can the varying learning needs be most appropriately supported within that finite resource?

- Use prisoners to provide learning support through buddying / mentoring programmes (but expensive in the community). Need to ensure this is located in the right place. How could this be structured? Also provides employment opportunities for those on release or can they? Difficulty on employing ex-offenders to work with offenders
- Chicken and egg by taking resource for additional learning support reducing funding for other facilities/resources. Further research or let's just go for it and trial a programme.

2.1.6.4 Clarifying the role of learning and skills

In relation to custodial provision, do you agree that the role of learning and skills as part of purposeful activity within prison regimes needs urgent clarification? How can learning and skills work in harmony with other interventions?

- Term purposeful activity has been lost to meet KPTs at present. Need to incentivise prisons to buy into developing the right activities with true learning and purpose
- Recognition that OLASS does not hold monopoly of all provision, joined up discussion with education, prison resettlement and other provision. Stop competing with each other.

2.1.6.5 Delivery through mainstream provision

In relation to community supervision, we do not believe that commissioning significant levels of offender-specific provision in the community would be beneficial. Is our intention to harness delivery through mainstream LSC-funded post-16 provision the most appropriate route? How can we best take this forward?

- Providers not ready for offenders and offenders not ready for providers.
- Need to change perception of providers. Support systems not in place.
- Concerns that way ahead will be to access mainstream funding but funding will not increase.

- Awareness building with providers and employers. Building relationships.
- Some provision offender specific but how much?
- Not enough detail re employer engagement within prospectus. Strategy needs to be considered
- More detail re self-employment, enterprise and female ex-offenders. Little consideration within prospectus.
- No link in prospectus with mental health provision. More development needed. Wouldn't be employable.
- No reference to OAPs.
-

2.1.7 Table 7 - Prisons

2.1.7.1 Objectives

Do you consider that our proposed four broad objectives, as contained in paragraph 30 of the Prospectus, are appropriate? Should there be any other considerations?

- We think that the objectives gives the opportunity for comparison w mainstream i.e. quality and funding (additional learning support) Broadly speaking we agree with the broad objectives however there are concerns about - differentiating between employment and employability, importance of language - branding to engage not turn off - risk of screening out the hard to engage.
- A branding such as 'get out and get on' might be good for getting offenders on board and take the emphasis away from 'learning' which may have been synonymous with failure for many.
- There should be more funding allocated to OLASS.

2.1.7.2 Priority groups

Do you consider our proposed priority groups for offender learning in custody at Annex B to be appropriate? What might be the impact on different groups?

- Lack of progression for long termers and lack of aspiration for others. Need at level 3 and above is important for long termers
- It's not just the learners with difficulties or disabilities that need social behavioural support - more emphasis on social and behavioural support which is a generic need for many offenders.
- Full level 2 difficult to achieve unless funding really does follow the learner ...prison to prison and beyond.
- Priority groups need to be mindful about employability and work place disciplines for job retention not just getting the job. This runs across groups and is reoccurring theme.
- A question: have the prospectus writers considered the implications for foreign nationals do these need to be reviewed.
- Short sentences can have even more damaging effects on people than long ones. More valuable work can be done in custody as it is the longest / only opportunity to reflect.

2.1.7.3 Additional support

Do you agree with our proposal to introduce a formal method of supporting offender learners in custody and in the community with additional learning support needs? This will have significant budgetary implications on a finite resource. How can the varying learning needs be most appropriately supported within that finite resource?

- We do agree the question is how - id needs and offer generic learning to groups leaving sufficient funding for those needier for 1-1 support but also using peers for support - creative approach to 1-1 support. Importance of IAG and diagnostic and self-assessment of needs. Embed learning and skills in all the pathways.

2.1.7.4 Clarifying the role of learning and skills

In relation to custodial provision, do you agree that the role of learning and skills as part of purposeful activity within prison regimes needs urgent clarification? How can learning and skills work in harmony with other interventions?

- Firstly need to clarify the term 'purposeful' which appears to mean numbers. It needs to mean constructive and leading to something... If an activity is not so stimulating it should include the soft employability skills i.e. punctuality etc. and look for added value and be pro-active in adding value to it.
- Learning should not be around bums on seats - purposeful activity should work in harmony with other interventions. Effective timetabling of learning and outreach to enable not compete for funding.

2.1.7.5 Delivery through mainstream provision

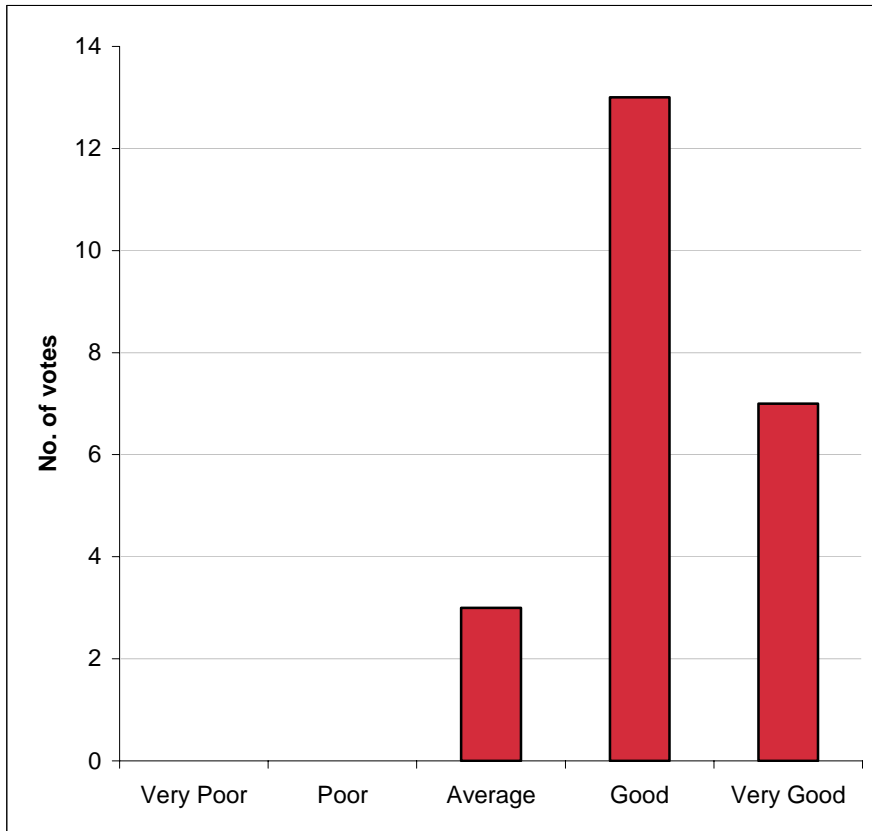
In relation to community supervision, we do not believe that commissioning significant levels of offender-specific provision in the community would be beneficial. Is our intention to harness delivery through mainstream LSC-funded post-16 provision the most appropriate route? How can we best take this forward?

- For particular sector groups you can't get them into provision. Removing barriers to the most appropriate solutions especially where policy forms a barrier i.e. 14 year old entry to E2E. Rural areas have access/travel and other issues. More work is required with colleges and employers
- Health warning - it is considerably more difficult to deliver in the community and it might be idealistic to assume that the funding shift will make matters better (rather than worse).

3 End of day feedback

The group was invited to give their feedback by answering a number of questions. The questions together with the responses are shown below.

Q1: Overall how did you rate the event?



Q2: What did you like about this event?

- It was interactive, and took account of all our respective views
- Very informative, opportunity to hear views of others,
- Sharing of ideas & working in groups
- Immediate feedback via tablets. Good mix within groups from prison, probation, providers, Isc. Time to think and reflect. Good representation at the panels.
- Timings and range of speakers
- Opportunity to discuss issues with a range of colleagues both internal and from partners
- Very informative good networking opportunity very good day
- Delivered at a good pace
- Interactive and useful, round table discussion
- Discussions
- Time to consider and reflect with likeminded colleagues. Panel input
- Venue and food venue ok
- Explanation of prospectus, networking, chance to formulate ideas and feed back
- Good representation and availability for input and feedback
- Generally good speakers. Valuable table discussions although not entirely led by the questions. Like crystal tablets.
- All of the event was good- could of had more time to discuss proposals
- Learning more about the implications of class
- Information and the chance to reflect and influence

- Time to discuss, with a well structured agenda
- Meeting people from all areas of the class project and how we all fit in the bigger picture
- Good to meet colleagues from a number of disciplines and discuss a common agenda

Q3: What could be done differently and/or better?

- Overall the event was OK good mix of HOLS, providers etc
- More time for questions at the end, as not enough knowledge at the beginning to identify what I needed to raise
- More emphasis on young people - YOT/Connexions input missing
- Would have liked copy of the prospectus sooner
- Lack of prison representation at final panel
- Why not a football stadium?
- No employer involvement
- More on young people
- N/a. The whole day was exactly as it should be
- Less breaks
- Less emphasis on speakers, more round the table discussions to interpret prospectus.
- Venue ok but not brilliant. Otherwise fine.
- More of an overview of prospectus as part of early presentations would be useful as a refresher of what's in it.
- It was good for me
- Nothing at all
- More input from providers may give people in Offender Services a better idea of what barriers there are between the two perspectives and then perhaps, a more informed way forward may be found.
- More interaction

Q4: What is the one thing you would like us to bear in mind going forwards?

- To take into account the views of all organisations. the problem is that one size does not fit all, but we need to get the best for as many offenders as we can
- Timescales, current pressures on staff in establishments and area offices etc.
- need to get HMPS on board at grass roots level, needs to be something in it for them
- Young offenders specific needs Transition of LSC funds to Local Authorities in future - needs timely consultation on this
- To use feedback and comments to inform the final prospectus. Consult on the technical detail as well.
- getting the balance between custody and the community right with funding
- plain English, avoidance of jargon/acronyms where possible explicit mention of the community side workloads of local LSC partnership teams and therefore our capacity to deliver on the ground
- Operational impact on providers (TUPE) friendly and easy to breakdown
- More connections with colleges and joined up thinking involving colleges. Colleges were specifically targeted during the morning presentations; there are broader issues that colleges need to take into account.
- the learner
- To seriously consider the enormous amount of feedback.
- Keep the language simple and the focus on the offender. Be realistic with your expectations from providers.

- Nothing
- Keep the learner as the focus, not the target
- If the Head of Learning and Skills are going to be crucial in future planning, the role really needs to be looked at. HoLS do not exist as per the 2003 model.
- Keep in mind the individual - offenders are often 'pigeon holed' they all have different needs at different times
- listen, include in feedback and celebrate what we do well
- Avoid duplication of information and as much alignment of processes.
- Open communication is key to the success of so many organisations working together to make a real difference to the learners that we all care about.
- Timescales for change!

4 Warm-up Activity

The group was introduced to the crystal technology by inputting their answer to the question:
 “If this meeting was a book, film or TV series, what would it be and why?”

- Great expectations
- Prison break
- Brave new world
- Hitch hikers guide to the galaxy
- Cinderella and the seven pathway dwarves
- Lost
- Life on mars
- The good the bad and the ugly
- Yes minister
- Heroes
- Carry on educating
- Cold comfort farm
- Bad girls
- For a few dollars more