

## MERSEYSIDE PRISON LEADS THE WAY ON LEARNING

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Maghull based HMP Kennet is set to lead the way in reducing re-offending in Merseyside by implementing the LSC's new integrated offenders' learning and skills service (OLASS).

The service aims to break the cycle of failure and drive down re-offending by providing skills for employability, giving better access to employment on release. OLASS also aims to integrate offender education within mainstream academic and vocational provision to ensure offenders experience seamless provision in both custodial and community settings.

HMP Kennet is a male category C prison, accommodating 350 prisoners. All inmates are expected to benefit from OLASS, which will cover areas such as construction skills, media, catering, IT, numeracy and literacy.

Merseyside based training provider Mercia Partnership (UK) Ltd has been awarded the contract by the LSC in the North West to deliver learning and skills services to the prison.

Mercia Partnership's Managing Director, Andrew Taylor said, "Access to quality training dramatically impacts on the quality of life and the chances of employment offenders can look forward to when they leave prison and also on their

rehabilitation. We are pleased to be able to deliver what will be a very specialist high quality provision of learning that will make a real difference to a great many people.”

Helen France, LSC Director of Area for Greater Merseyside comments, “Since August 2006 the LSC has been responsible for offender learning and skills across England. In line with government targets the service aims to help reduce the re-offending rate by ten per cent by 2010. The North West was one of the first regions to deliver OLASS and Merseyside will be at the forefront of this innovative new service.”

The Governor of HMP Kennet, Steve Lawrence, said "This is the first public sector prison to open since 1996. I am looking forward to working in partnership with the LSC and Mercia Partnership (UK) Ltd. The regime at the prison is built around training and education facilities for offenders. If we get this right we should meet our targets for reducing re-offending.”

**Ends**

**Learning and Skills Council:**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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