

Organisation Name	Reference	
RECOOP		

Visit Date	Visited By
16 September 2022	David Loudon (Zoom call)

Grant Summary
<p>RECOOP applied for a grant of £75k over 3 years to fund the salary of a Distance Learning Coordinator and associated project costs. Grants totalling £60k have been received with the balance to be paid in November 2022.</p> <p>The Distance Learning Coordinator has redesigned and implemented a distance learning course for older prisoners to support their release and rehabilitation from prison. It is estimated that 17% (14,000 men and women) of the prison population is over 50 years old.</p>

Visit Details (People met, premises visited etc.)
<p>The call was hosted by Tracey Eadie, Regional Manager for RECOOP in the North of England. I also had the opportunity to meet Mercedes Lopez who is the Distance Learning Coordinator. ML described how she had developed the course which is wide ranging and how it's important to ensure the material is relevant to the prison residents and maybe different from prison to prison or even within groups at a particular prison. Participation is high and we talked about how much of a lifeline the courses have been during the long hours of confinement particularly during the pandemic. ML confirmed she aims for the course material to match the needs and interests of participants.</p> <p>The course is educational and gives prisoners a daily routine, responses are marked and issues arising followed up and where appropriate amended as a result of feedback.</p> <p>I met two prisoners, James and Chris, both spoke favourably about the course which had helped them with questions about benefits, TV licencing, technology and how to plan a healthy diet. I also met Les, who is a probation officer who regularly arranged for prisoners to attend the courses and was complimentary about the feedback. He also liked the flexibility of the course and gave examples of the issues covered which include, letter writing, therapy or providing details of useful agencies in the community.</p>

Information about the Organisation

RECOOP was formed in 2008 and aims to promote the care and resettlement and rehabilitation of older prisoners. It works in more than 10 prisons nationally and is making good progress with the National Probation Service and new providers managing prisons.

Its main objectives are to increase the number of services and products to support more service users, increase its income and influence local policy and practice.

Issues and Comments

A very successful initiative which has succeeded in improving prisoners' preparedness for life after prison.

Looking to the future, RECOOP has been making connections with providers such as Circle and Sodexo which are taking over a couple of 'new build' prisons in Nottingham and are adopting RECOOP's Distance Learning program.

In addition, it has just started another 6 month program of daily courses at HMP Risley

There continue to be challenges and Tracey commented on the recent strikes by Barristers which does not help those awaiting sentence who may well be held in prison for longer periods before receiving their sentence.

A very interesting call which demonstrated the good work being carried out and positive results using the grant from Triangle Trust.

Other Feedback