

ANTISEMITISM POLICY TRUST

PRISON EDUCATION

EFFECTIVE EDUCATION AGAINST ANTISEMITISM

Prison education is a “second chance [for prisoners] to learn the skills and social competences they will need in order to be reintegrated”.¹ Education plays a vital role in prison, helping prisoners to obtain employment upon release and integrate fully into social norms, consequently decreasing the probability of re-offending.²

The Ministry of Justice published its White Paper ‘Prison Safety and Reform’³ in November 2016, proposing a number of reforms to existing prison frameworks. The White Paper, following recommendations from the Coates review, stated that after the ending of current education contracts, prison governors will have full responsibility for the allocation of education funding, design of education programmes, and the commissioning of services. Education Delivery Plans for the academic year commencing 1 August 2017 gave governors complete authority to implement systems to meet the needs of their prisoners and the demand for skills in their specific areas, while following the core common curriculum.^{4,5,6} Crucially, this has decentralised frameworks for national prison education.

The Antisemitism Policy Trust believes that the following revisions to the current prison education system could promote social values, tolerance, and non-discrimination amongst prisoners, contributing to improved conduct and more effective rehabilitation.

EDUCATION COURSES SHOULD RE-PRIORITISE NON-CERTIFICATED SOCIAL EDUCATION

Most courses offered in prison are orientated towards obtaining employment upon release; courses are accredited, providing formal qualifications for recognition by employers (e.g. GCSEs or NVQs).⁷ Consequently, social education has been deprioritised, neglecting the opportunity to boost tolerance, self-esteem, non-discrimination and social awareness.

Every new prisoner undergoes a local induction programme that, in theory, promotes tolerance for protected characteristics and outlines the internal process for reporting hate crimes;⁸ however this is more of a general introduction to expectant behaviour. There is a non-compulsory Thinking Skills Programme offered, designed to develop pro-social attitudes and manage interpersonal relationships. However, there are no specific sponsored programmes for educating prisoners on racism, antisemitism, Islamophobia or homophobia.⁹

Following the empowerment of governors to allocate funds at their prerogative, governors should be strongly encouraged, if not mandated, to direct funding for specialist equality and non-discrimination courses.

¹ http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/uploads/documents/Time_to_LearnBook.pdf

² <https://www.justice.gov.uk/offenders/before-after-release/education-training>

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/565014/cm-9350-prison-safety-and-reform-web_.pdf

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/565014/cm-9350-prison-safety-and-reform-web_.pdf

⁵ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/2017-09-05/8538/>

⁶ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/2017-09-04/7023/>

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/life-in-prison/education-and-work-in-prison>

⁸ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/2017-07-06/3452/>

⁹ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/2017-07-06/3452/>

In addition, extension of the reportedly successful Healthy Identity Intervention programme¹⁰ (formerly the Motivational and Engagement Intervention [MEI] and Healthy Identity Intervention [HII] pilot) run by HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) should be considered by HMPPS.

Prisons, and particularly youth offender's institutions, should be subject to some of the same requirements for promoting British values as schools. This would include helping inmates understand a range of faiths. As part of this, continuous programmes to observe Hate Crime Awareness Week and Interfaith events, Black History Month and so on, should be encouraged within prisons, using such as an opportunity to convey messages of tolerance, anti-racism, non-discrimination.

PSHE SHOULD BE TAUGHT AT PART OF CORE CURRICULUM, PARTICULARLY IN YOUNG OFFENDERS' INSTITUTIONS.

The White Paper 'Prison Safety and Reform' references the implementation of a core common curriculum, focussing on the basic skills of maths and English. There is certainly no curriculum for Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) in prisons at present and seemingly no plans to introduce one. Though young offenders' institutions should, in theory, already be following the national curriculum, adherence appears patchy at best. Should PSHE be added to the national curriculum it might be usefully taught in young offenders' institutions, something for which preparations could already be made. As HMP Durham prisoners could attest to, sometimes the classroom setting itself can promote social skills and respect. Inmates at Durham reportedly felt safe in classrooms and were able to "develop an understanding of concepts such as democracy and tolerance".¹⁰

Education about antisemitism remains vitally important. A 2014 study carried

out by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education found that 68% of the 7,952 students surveyed were unfamiliar with the term 'antisemitism' and were unaware of its meaning.¹²

THE PERSONAL LEARNING PLANS CREATED FOR ALL NEW PRISONERS SHOULD ASSESS THOSE PARTICULARLY IN NEED OF EDUCATION AGAINST FORMS OF HATRED.

The White Paper 'Prison Safety and Reform'¹³ called for the creation of tailored Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) for each prisoner upon arrival. These Plans which are now in place, can thus highlight those in particular need of social education courses, teaching values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect; for example, such might be flagged as necessary in cases where individual charges have hate crime elements. Similarly, if a prisoner has repeatedly abused others online, social media or other IT and communications training might be appropriate. Restorative models of engagement should be actively considered where funding is not available for formal programmes; in the first instance, religious chaplains might be called on to meet inmates that have engaged in discriminatory behaviour against a particular faith community. The collection of data in relation to PLPs could help to indicate regional issues which might inform education planning in a given area.

In a Parliamentary question answered in May 2018, it was indicated that "[s]hould a prisoner's need include being educated on hate crime, it will form part of this plan".¹⁴ This is a promising statement, recognising the importance of social education in ensuring full rehabilitation. Tracking this implementation of this stated commitment will be critical.

¹⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/727966/Intervening_with_Extremist_Offenders_A_Pilot_Study.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/news/inspection-notes->

¹² UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, 'What do students know and understand about the Holocaust?'

¹³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/565014/cm-9350-prison-safety-and-reform-web_.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-04-23/136955/>

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION PROGRAMMES SHOULD BE DELIVERED CONSISTENTLY AS PART OF PRISON EDUCATION SERVICE.

There are multiple sources citing the transformative impact of Holocaust education within prisons.^{15,16} All prisons should be making efforts to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January each year) and using it as an educational opportunity. Free resources and expert advice are obtainable from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and Holocaust Educational Trust. At the very least, this would be a chance for all prisoners, including those convicted of hate crimes, to reflect on the ultimate result of unbridled discrimination. This would increase voluntary sector involvement in the delivery of probation services and, as per the case study outlined above, might have residual positive effects for the wider community. The Anne Frank Trust UK has also run its Prisons Project since 2002, teaching about the Holocaust and encouraging open dialogue on issues of prejudice, discrimination and victimhood. This work contributes to the achievement of a more inclusive and tolerant democratic society; such initiatives should be actively encouraged within prison education frameworks.

In a Parliamentary question answered in May 2018, it was reiterated that

prisons are free to decide locally how they participate in Holocaust Memorial Day and Black History Month, with no national engagement regarding Interfaith Awareness Week.¹⁷ A national policy encouraging the observance of these important days is clearly necessary to help boost tolerance, non-discrimination and acceptance of difference amongst prisoners.

¹⁵ <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/S1059-433720140000064004>

¹⁶ <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/523333/pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2018-05-17/145276/>

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