



Prisoners
Education
TRUST

Transforming Management of Young Adults in Custody

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Summary of consultation response

- PET is concerned about the plans to move all 18-20 year olds into the adult estate without a solid evidence base to suggest that this would lead to better outcomes and without the MOJ first publishing their plans for under 18's within the Youth Justice System
- Young adults have a high rate of re-offending and evidence suggests that young adults aged 18-20 have a higher level of need for provision in diverse areas, including;
 - Personal / social and emotional wellbeing
 - Behavioural
 - Educational
- PET is concerned that learning needs are not mentioned in this consultation and that not focusing on the learning needs of young adults will create a wider gulf between the youth estate and young adults being held in the adult estate, making young adults even more vulnerable
- Change to the regime for young adults should not be simply about cost-cutting. If it is then it will be at the very least counter productive and at worst dangerous
- Until there is a solid, evidence based plan for how to deliver the higher level of support young adults need, plans to put these policy changes in place should not go ahead.

About Prisoners Education Trust

Since 1989, Prisoners Education Trust (PET) has provided access to broader learning opportunities for prisoners, to enhance their chances of building a better life after release. We do this through an advice service, peer mentor training and a grants programme which assists around 2,000 prisoners each year to study distance learning courses in subjects and levels not available in prison. We are funded by over fifty different trusts and foundations and also receive a government grant from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills.

Through our policy work, PET raises awareness of the importance of education for prisoners in aiding rehabilitation and makes the case for better access to academic,

creative, informal and vocational learning in prison. Key to this is incorporating the voices and views of prisoners towards education provision and we use their experiences to influence policy and good practice.

PET also established the Prisoner Learning Alliance (PLA) in November 2012, which has a membership of 17 organisations involved with learning in the criminal justice system and has the following aim; *‘To bring together non-statutory stakeholders with senior cross-departmental officials, to provide expertise and strategic vision to inform future priorities, policies and practices relating to prison education, learning and skills’*. The PLA has just launched its first report¹, which sets out three key principles for the future of prisoner learning; it should be outcome-focused, joined-up and value-driven. It makes 17 recommendations about prisoner learning, the first being that learning works and should therefore be at the heart of both the youth and adult estate.

Introduction to policy response

PET responded to an earlier consultation, *‘Transforming Youth Custody: Putting education at the heart of detention’* in April 2013. Within our response we stated our position that whilst we welcome the focus on education and learning for under 18’s, we believe this focus needs to extend to support lifelong learning beyond the age of 18 and should be joined up and followed through into the adult estate. We believe that time in custody should be utilised to the full to refocus not only young people but also young adults and older adults ‘back on track’. Learning needs should be accommodated in their broadest sense with the clear aim of reducing reoffending and promoting long term desistance from crime.

PET has concerns that the Ministry of Justice is now making proposals for young adults without decisions about the earlier consultation mentioned above, or the review of custodial violence that is due to report early next year as highlighted in the T2A consultation response². PET also has concerns that whilst there are many references to the particular ‘needs’ and ‘risks’ of young adults aged 18 - 20 within the government green paper, there is a distinct lack of focus and attention on the vital question of ‘learning needs’ and managing a young adult’s learner journey from youth custody to an adult prison environment. Therefore in this response we do not attempt to answer all of the questions asked, rather we draw on our expertise and prisoner feedback to make some comments relating to the valuable role of learning, both in prison and after release, towards rehabilitation and reducing re-offending. We also set out some of our concerns and why we believe that young adults aged 18-20 do still require a distinct approach to accommodate their specific needs, including their learning needs.

Methodology

In order to listen to ‘learner voice’, PET consulted with the charity Kinetic Youth, which specialises in youth work in youth justice and uses interactive, participative group work

¹ Champion, N (2013) Smart Rehabilitation: Learning how to get better outcomes. London: Prisoner Learning Alliance.

² Transition to Adulthood (2013) Ministry of Justice consultation on Transforming Management of Young Adults: Response by the Transition to Adulthood. London: Transition to Adulthood.

methodologies, focusing on increasing youth participation, providing accreditation and developing peer mentoring. Youth workers consulted with a number of young people and young adults in HMPYOI Rochester and HMYOI Cookham Wood to get their views on the current proposals. PET also sent out a survey to a number of young adults in different custodial institutions who we are in contact with through our ‘Learner Voice Panel’. A summary of the responses to the survey can be found in appendix A and a summary of the responses from Kinetic in appendix B.

PET also had a telephone interview with one former young adult prisoner who had accessed Kinetic Youth services to gain his views. Direct quotes from those we consulted with are included in this response.

In the consultation document, the government asks the following question:

‘We are proposing that our new policy accommodates young adults in mixed institutions with other adults and that we target resources on addressing the risks and needs of young adults in all these institutions. Do you agree?’

PET has concerns about the proposals to move all 18-20 year olds to adult prisons. We believe that this proposed policy is not based on any solid evidence about it leading to better outcomes such as: a reduction in reoffending, the policy goal of the plans for Transforming Rehabilitation; reductions in violence; or increased safety for young adults. We also argue that the distinct lack of provision for young adult women in the prison estate should be urgently addressed too.

There are disproportionate numbers of young adults within the criminal justice system. Whilst young people (defined here as 18 to 24) account for only one in 10 of the UK population, they account for a third of those sentenced to prison each year, a third of the probation service caseload and a third of the total economic and social costs of crime³. They also have high rates of re-offending; 58% of young people (18-20) released from custody in the first quarter of 2008 reoffended within a year⁴ compared to 46.9% of adults⁵.

Young adults have the largest potential for improvement; they are the group *‘most likely to desist and ‘grow out of crime’, thereby making it particularly important that criminal justice interventions for young adults are carefully selected and appropriately tailored to ensure they receive the support they need to reduce their reoffending and become constructive members of society’*⁶. Research suggests that using inappropriate interventions can slow down the desistance process for young adults, leading to long term

³ Transition to Adulthood (2010) Why is the Criminal Justice System failing young adults? London: Transition to Adulthood

⁴ Hansard HC, 17 January 2011, c653W

⁵ Ministry of Justice (2013) Proven reoffending quarterly October 2010 – 2011, Table 18a, 19a and 7a.. London: Ministry of Justice.

⁶ Criminal Justice Alliance (2013) Prosecuting Young Adults. London: Criminal Justice Alliance.

negative repercussions⁷. However, despite the importance of the need for tailored approaches, young adults in the criminal justice system have been described as a ‘forgotten group’ once they turn 18 and lose statutory support and protection⁸.

Government figures tell us that over half of all 18-20 year olds (including all women) are already being held in dual designated institutions. However, to date there has not been thorough research undertaken into if and how holding young people in dual designated institutions produces better outcomes than using single designated YOI’s. Furthermore, there is currently no central policy on how young adults should be contained within adult prisons leaving prisons to implement this as they wish. For example; some prisons have separate wings within the prison specifically for young adults, whilst others have young adults mixed in with other older adults. PET recommends that research into different regimes and between different institutions is conducted to look at variables such as; self-harm rates, violence levels, numbers of young people engaged in purposeful activities as a matter of urgency before going ahead with any further plans.

Violent prisons?

The government consultation argues that holding large groups of young people together leads to volatile and violent behaviour creating challenges for staff to manage. However elsewhere, in their consultation response⁹, the TZA have raised their concerns about the fall in staffing levels in YOI’s in recent years which they believe has contributed to the rising level of violence in some institutions. Certainly there have been concerns about some institutions, as highlighted in the Feltham report earlier this year, which recommended that;

‘NOMS should think radically about the way young adults are housed within the wider adult population’¹⁰

Following this report there have been changes in the population held at Feltham and some young adults have been transferred out to adult prisons such as Highdown, Pentonville, Wormwood Scrubs, Belmarsh and Wandsworth. The green paper says;

‘Governors and prison staff tell us that when younger adults are mixed with older adults there is a reduction in levels of violence among this cohort and that the institution becomes calmer. This is important because the evidence suggests that when prisoners feel safer they are more likely to engage in rehabilitative activity and actively seek to make positive changes to their lives’.

However, PET argues that this is based on anecdotal rather than robust evidence.

⁷ McNeill, F. and Weaver, B. (2011) Changing Lives? Desistance research and offender management. Glasgow: The Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research.

⁸ Prison Review Team (2011) Review of the Northern Ireland Prison Service : Conditions, management and oversight of all prisons

⁹ Transition to Adulthood (2013) Ministry of Justice consultation on Transforming Management of Young Adults: Response by the Transition to Adulthood. London: Transition to Adulthood.

¹⁰ HMIP (2013) Report on an unannounced full follow-up inspection of HMP/YOI Feltham (Feltham B – young adults) 18-22 March. London: HMIP.

Seema Malhotra MP recently asked some parliamentary questions at PET's suggestion; one asked the Secretary of State for Justice;

'How many violent incidents have been recorded against young people who are being held in each prison?'

This reflected growing concerns we had regarding young adults being moved from Feltham YOI to adult prisons. Prison education staff had reported to us an increase in gang related incidents since young people arrived and also assaults happening in the education department. There was one instance where a young person had been attending the education department but was attacked on his way there by rival gang members. Following this incident the young person is now too scared to attend the education department and is a wing cleaner instead; hence his motivation and opportunities for learning and progression have been limited, perhaps permanently.

The response published to the parliamentary question asked above, indicated that high levels of assaults involving young people under 21 had occurred in a number of dual designated adult prisons during 2012. For example; in HMP Altcourse 119 recorded assaults involving young adults occurred and there were 136 young adults housed there equalling to 0.875 incidents per young person. High levels were also recorded in HMP Littlehey and HMP Doncaster. There is no information about whether the incidents involved young adults only or whether they involved older adults also. For a breakdown of all violent incidents please see Appendix C.

HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Nick Hardwick, recently spoke at the PLA event in Parliament and said;

'You're not going to be able to learn if you are constantly looking over your shoulder wondering where the next 'thump' is going to come from. On the one hand you have to have a safe environment in which to learn, but, on the other hand, if you do have people productively occupied doing something they think is worthwhile, busy and fulfilled, that will help create the safer environment, which you are looking for and mutually reinforcing'.

In the annual HMIP report 2012-13, Nick Hardwick stressed that *'No one should fool themselves that these financial and organisational pressures do not create risks. In prisons, there are fewer staff on the wings supervising prisoners, there are fewer managers supervising staff and less support available to establishments from a diminished centre. Quite apart from the impact of the savings themselves, there is clearly a danger in all forms of custody that managers become 'preoccupied with cost cutting, targets and processes' and lose sight of their fundamental responsibilities for the safety, security and rehabilitation of those they hold'¹¹.*

PET does not dispute that there are high levels of violence in YOI institutions. However, we are not in agreement that mixing young adults with older adults will automatically lead

¹¹ HMIP (2013) HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales Annual Report 2012-13. London: The Stationery Office.

to calmer and less volatile environments without appropriate interventions in place and amidst all the current financial and organisational pressures. PET believes that prison is unsafe for young people (whether in the youth or adult estate) and therefore should only be used as a last resort with community sentences being preferable.

PET is interested in institutions that deviate from these trends, having lower violence rates for the proportion of young people held there. For example according to the information we received from the PQ, in 2012, the Young Offender Institution Cookham Wood, had 48 assaults recorded and 113 young people being housed there, which equals to 0.42 incidents per person, much lower than recorded in HMP Altcourse. A recent inspection for Cookham Wood¹² highlights the innovative practice and young people appropriate interventions taking place there, including; a youth council, professional youth workers (employed through the charity Kinetic Youth), engaging learning and positive activities through sports, the Department of Education and access to ROTL. There is also the Recode film project which works with prisoners and staff to make films about improving communication skills and de-escalating violence, as well as peer violence interrupters/mentors. These types of activities need to be invested in to ensure young people are safe (emotionally and physically) and can benefit from learning to help reduce their chances of going back into prison and to help them reach their potential. It is even more important that this type of work is continued in adult prisons if the government does go ahead with its plans to move all young adults to adult prisons.

The responses we gained from young people in various institutions about the proposed policy changes indicate that they believe they are a vulnerable group with concerns about their safety, violence levels, bullying and self-harm. The quotes below highlight this;

'It's the same as a YOI being with adults. The only difference is young offender's are blatant and will fight anywhere, anytime, whereas adults are more discreet and will do it behind closed doors. When mixed together young offender's are easily influenced by adults and are used to do their dirty work' (21 year old, HMPYOI Portland).

'In five years time, all the statistics that the government loves so much will show that this hasn't worked' (20 year old, formerly in Cookham Wood and Rochester).

'I have been in jail in all age groups; 14-18, 18-21, 21 and over and it's always the youngest that get bullied or used. Imagine an 18 year old, first time in jail being put with people 35 plus that have been in and out all their lives, how intimidated he would be and what he could be made to do' (21 year old, HMPYOI Portland).

¹² HMIP (2013) Report on an unannounced inspection of HMYOI Cookham Wood 7-17 May 2013. London: HMIP.

'It's not that adult prisoners are calmer, just smarter - older adult prisoners know the system so they do all their fighting behind doors to avoid adjudication. This happens 1000%', (20 year old, formerly in Cookham Wood and Rochester.

Self harm and suicide

Seema Malhotra MP also asked another parliamentary question at PET's suggestion;

'How many young people in each prison have been identified as at risk of (a) suicide and (b) self-harm'?

Jeremy Wright's response was;

'Establishments record and monitor locally the number of young offenders and prisoners supported through an ACCT plan; there is currently no ability to centrally report this information'.

PET is concerned that this information is not available centrally. We acknowledge that doing so may create a perverse incentive and encourage prisons not to put people on an ACCT to keep their numbers low. However by not having a central system it is hard to spot worrying trends. When PET spoke to young people at Feltham earlier in the year for the *Transforming Youth Custody* consultation, we were told by them that one-to-one emotional support was only made available if a young person was involved in a fight. There needs to be recognition that young adults do require more one-to-one support (not just when they have been involved in a fight) especially as in the adult estate they may be more vulnerable due to their age/maturity and need additional support to help prevent self-harm. Staff should be well trained to deal with this.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons annual report highlights that during 2012 - 2013 the number of self-harm incidents in male prisons had continued to rise with too many prisoners in crisis being locked up in segregation and with suicide and self-harm procedures being too frequently poorly managed, with too much emphasis on process rather than outcomes for prisoners who self-harmed¹³. This does not sound like a safe environment to be sending young adults into. Young people have concerns also;

'Self harm and suicide will go up when these changes happen. Are young offender's state of mind and lives worth saving a couple of quid?' 21 year old prisoner, HMPYOI Portland.

PET believes that care should be taken when labelling particular groups of young people, in particular making distinctions between those who are 'disruptive and dangerous' and those who are 'most vulnerable'. We agree with a Governor of a YOI who says;

'We often label young people naughty or vulnerable but in truth they are all vulnerable', (Governor of a YOI, PET visit, June 2012).

¹³ HMIP (2013) HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales: Annual Report 2012-2013. London: The Stationery Office.

PET recommends that if the government does go ahead with these plans there should remain some flexibility for discretion, particularly for vulnerable young adults, to remain in the youth estate if it is felt necessary for their own safety.

What about learning for 18-20 year olds?

The government clearly understands the value of learning, as set out in its consultation earlier this year on ‘Putting education at the heart of the youth estate’:

“Education is key to our vision. We want to see Secure Colleges providing education in a period of detention, rather than detention with education as an afterthought. It is through education that young offenders will gain the qualifications and skills for employment, as well as come to understand the importance of individual responsibility, self-discipline and self-respect. It is these things that will enable them to engage constructively in society and to lead law-abiding lives. All young people should receive a high quality education that gives them the greatest chance of success. This is just as important, if not more so, for those who have started off in the wrong direction and ended up in custody”¹⁴.

Given the importance the government is placing on education within the under 18 estate, it is surprising that learning was not asked about in this current consultation. With the proposed radical changes to the under 18 estate, which we wait to hear more about, it is likely that there will be an even greater gulf between the youth and the adult estate making young adults even more vulnerable when they turn 18, are transferred from a YOI and education is no longer compulsory. Most dedicated YOI’s, despite not having compulsory education, will have more of a culture and emphasis on learning than an adult prison. In adult prisons, there are more likely to be prison industry unskilled workshops, which often pay more than education so give an incentive to work rather than learn. Therefore planning needs to start at 17, before the young adult leaves the youth estate, to help them plan their learning as they transition from the youth to adult estate, to try where possible to help them continue their learning journey.

Information suggests some good practice on which to build, as reported in our recent PLA publication¹⁵. HMPYOI Doncaster is taking a proactive approach to supporting prisoner learning journeys. When carrying out assessments and developing learning plans, information about the prisons they are likely to go to are shared with the prisoner. If the prisoner for example wants to do rail track, then efforts will be made to transfer them to a prison with that course. If another wants to do IT then where possible, they are transferred to a prison with a PICTA academy etc. This proactive designation approach is preferable to merely leaving it to fate where they end up. This type of approach should be rolled out across the prison estate. This is something which the young people we consulted with wanted too;

¹⁴ Ministry of Justice (2013) Transforming Youth Custody: Putting education at the heart of detention. London: Ministry of Justice.

¹⁵ Champion, N (2013) Smart Rehabilitation: Learning how to get better outcomes. London: Prisoner Learning Alliance.

'My needs haven't been met at all. I feel an initial assessment and ILP should be conducted on admission as a matter of routine' (21 year old prisoner, HMP Buckley Hall).

Beyond Employability

OLASS 4 contracts which started in summer 2012 have a large focus on employability skills. However, employability skills are often narrowly identified with learning skills for a particular occupation, basic literacy, numeracy and ICT or CV writing. With learning under OLASS 4, now to all extents and purposes capped at level 2, it does not adequately prepare young or older adults for employment. As one young person said;

'Within the juvenile and adult estate learning is really poor, you end up doing the same courses two or three times and are capped at level two; not everyone in prison has low level intelligence! You want to come out and be on the same level as other people your own age, not doing level two - I wanted to be doing GCSE's and A-levels. There is no push towards getting young people to do GCSE's' (20 year old, formerly in Cookham Wood and Rochester).

This view was echoed by many of the young people who responded to the survey sent out as part of this consultation and who did want real opportunities that would prepare them for employment;

'The courses here by are appalling and a waste of time. The courses do not give you a meaningful qualification and are used purely to tick a box and get prisoners out of their cell. There is only one course here that is worthwhile and gives you a guaranteed opportunity which is the rail track course; education here is poor' (21 year old prisoner, HMPYOI Portland).

'There are minimal choices for education. There are few decent training options' (21 year old prisoner, HMP Lewes).

'We need meaningful courses including more gym courses as you can get into work with this' (20 year old prisoner, HMP/YOI Littlehey).

Young people's learning needs

There is a need to acknowledge that some young adults will have different needs to older adults. 52% of young offenders were permanently excluded from school¹⁶ meaning that many will need targeted, specific interventions, rather than a generic one size fits all approach. There will be even greater need to ensure that there are a wide variety of types of learning; informal, creative, embedded, vocational and academic. As there is such a large focus on employability within OLASS 4, there needs to be acknowledgement that

¹⁶ Stewart, D. (2008) The problems and needs of newly sentenced prisoners; results from a national survey. London: Ministry of Justice

young adults will need specific interventions to get them there. Increased opportunities to go out of the prison on ROTL to access apprenticeships and college courses should be available and actively encouraged and supported by prisons so that young prisoner's needs do not become lost within the larger adult population. The HMIP annual report¹⁷ found that despite the many benefits ROTL provides, with the exception of open prisons, it was infrequently used, even for category D prisoners.

The advantage of mixing the populations may well be that young adults are able to be kept closer to home. However, some resettlement prisons within each contract package area should specialise in working with young adults and have specially trained staff, including teachers and youth work professionals to support the young adults in that establishment. This would allow young adults to be held closer to home, but in a prison that has expertise in working with young adults. It would also ensure that those staff working in those prisons are aware of the specific needs of this group and the challenges of working with them but do have a desire to work with them. It is crucial that the positive work which has taken in place in YOI's such as Cookham Wood, through projects like Kinetic Youth which has provided a model which has led to more young people being out on ROTL to undertake learning and training opportunities and reduced the levels of violence should not be lost and should be transferred over to the adult estate.

Special Educational Needs

Ofsted have found that custodial establishments often struggle to obtain statements of special educational needs¹⁸. One Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator at a YOI told us:

“Young people who are identified with special educational needs rarely come to us with their statements. It would be good practice for information (all collated records such as detailed background information, IEPs or (ILPs), and any statement of SEND), identified by schools to be provided in time or during transfer for appropriate planning by the secure estates or the receiving establishment. It would also be useful if we could have a person in the Local Authority whom we can contact as soon as the learners are transferred to us. A close working relationship with the Local Authority would be very useful”, (SENCo at a YOI, response to PET enquiry about SEN in YOI's, March 2013).

We agree with the Standing Committee for Youth Justice that EHC plans should be extended to the youth secure estate and that the obstacles are not insurmountable. PET argues that this should not only apply to the youth estate but also to young adults who may be held in the adult estate. We also agree that funding attached to plans should be passported with the young person into custody. PET advocates for a holistic approach to working with young people with special educational needs.

¹⁷ HMIP (2013) HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales: Annual Report 2012-2013. London: The Stationery Office.

¹⁸ Ofsted (2010) Transition through detention and custody: Arrangements for learning and skills for young people in custodial and secure settings. Manchester: Ofsted.

Continuity from pre-custody education to custody

“For those who were interrupted from their learning in the community, every effort should be made to maintain their learning and not to cut individuals off from mainstream learning”, (Kinetic Youth focus group facilitator, summarising responses from young people, April 2013).

There need to be clearer requirements (followed-up and inspected) for integrated management plans linking the development in custody with the support and services that are provided by local authority services, including schools and colleges. This needs to include how continuity of education is going to be managed between pre-custody, in-custody and post-custody.

Continuity between custodial establishments is also key to avoiding repetition or disrupting learning. Distance learning and e-learning options can help reduce disruption as young people are transferred between establishments, as well as from custody to the community. We would however advocate a reduction in transfers of young people between establishments which can be unsettling and disruptive.

Effective learning assessments, information sharing between the local authority and custody and development of individual learning plans is crucial.

Continuity from custody to post-custody education

The first ten and one hundred days after - release are particularly important to set someone on the right track. Having positive activities to be engaged in as soon as a young person is released is important, as often there might be a gap between release date and the start date for a college course. Access to distance learning or e-learning could also help bridge that gap.

“My YOT worker has helped me sign up for a college course in September for gym instructing, but I’m not sure what I’m going to do during the summer after I’m released while I wait for the course to start. I want something that starts as soon as I get out”, (Young person in a YOI, April 2013).

A co-financing model between custody and community could help incentivise joined up working to ensure a smooth transition from custody to positive activities including education, training, volunteering and /or engagement in services post release.

Mentoring should begin while the young person is still in custody to help develop the relationship prior to release, rather than merely being met ‘at the gate’, to encourage continuity.

Colleges and universities should be encouraged to widen participation by having specific support services for those with experience of the criminal justice system, for example the Open Book Project at Goldsmiths University is an ex-offender led project providing

informal learning opportunities, mentoring, outreach and student support to access mainstream education provision¹⁹.

Maturity

There is also a need to acknowledge the developing maturity of young adults and how this will affect their learning needs. The Ministry of Justice acknowledge this in their green paper and cite neuroscience research^{20 21} that provides evidence that many young adults do not fully mature until later in their twenties. However, we agree with the T2A who argue that the government consultation *'appears to undermine this through a proposed abolition of a distinct approach, rather than using the growing evidence base to ensure effective, maturity-informed and age-specific treatment of young adults in custody'*²². A prison teacher that we spoke to said;

'The big focus under OLASS 4 is employability but many young people need pre-employment training, they don't have any of the life skills and will never have done things such as shopping, cooking, budgeting and are lacking in maturity. They need more focus on these age related needs to help them develop independence as well as pro-social modelling'.

There have been welcome positive developments elsewhere, such as; the recent announcement from Children and Families Minister Edward Timpson that he is placing a new legal duty on local authorities to provide financial support for every young person who wants to stay with their foster parents until their 21st birthday. Local authorities will be given £40 million over the next 3 years to put the support arrangements in place²³. Care leavers have been estimated to make up 27% of the adult prison population, despite the fact that less than 1% of under 18s enter local authority care annually²⁴. It does not make sense therefore to provide extra support to one group of young adults in the community and acknowledge that they have particular vulnerabilities requiring extra support to transition successfully to adulthood, whilst at the same taking away specific provisions for another group of vulnerable young adults held in custody. NOMS acknowledges that *'Young adults in the criminal justice system who are care leavers may need more support to help them through their transition to adulthood than other young adults'*²⁵.

¹⁹ <http://www.gold.ac.uk/outreach/open-book/>

²⁰ Asato MR, Terwilliger R, Woo J, Luna B (2010) *White matter development in adolescence: a DTI study. Cerebral Cortex* 20:2122–2131.

²¹ Luna B, Garver KE, Urban TA, Lazar NA, Sweeney JA (2004) *Maturation of cognitive processes from late childhood to adulthood. Child Development* 75:1357–1372.

²² Transition to Adulthood (2013) Ministry of Justice consultation on Transforming Management of Young Adults: Response by the Transition to Adulthood. London: Transition to Adulthood.

²³ Department for Education (2013) Press release Children to stay with foster families until 21 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-to-stay-with-foster-families-until-21>

²⁴ NOMS (2013) Practice Guidance: Working with care leavers (18-25), in custody and the community, to reduce reoffending and promote effective transition to adulthood. London: NOMS.

²⁵ *ibid*

As one young person told us;

'After release last time I was going to college but I struggled living by myself and got in trouble again. I need more help with life skills. They should teach you about having a tenancy, to keep the music volume down and stuff' (Young adult, HMYOI Feltham).

Relevant training

There is a need to have relevant and appropriate training for teachers and staff so that they feel supported to work with this age group and that they want to work with them too. As the numbers of young people in custody continue to decrease, we need to recognise that the few young people who are in custody will be the most troubled and disturbed who are therefore likely to present significant challenges and therefore require highly trained staff to work with them. Learning spaces (as well as other spaces within prisons) need to be safe. Staff must be supported appropriately in behaviour management techniques. One prisoner felt that there should be separate provisions made for young and older adults;

'Y.O prisoners are mouthy and cause problems for those who do want to learn. Separate sessions for Y.O's and adult prisoners would work. There is a lack of choice in education'(21 year old prisoner, HMP Lewes).

Long term prisoners

Between 2000 and 2010 the number of young adults sentenced to life imprisonment increased by 310%²⁶. If young adults are to be included in the plans for Transforming Rehabilitation this means that those serving longer sentences will be sent to non-resettlement prisons. Those young people should not be disadvantaged. There may need to be additional flexibility to support distance learning and higher level qualifications to enable progression for those who have time to reach higher levels. Non-resettlement prisons are also likely to be working or training prisons, therefore the contracts will need to enable providers to provide vocational and embedded learning to go alongside work activity. The young people we consulted with spoke about the difficulties in catering for longer sentenced prisoners;

'I feel that the learning needs of prisoners here are limited because of the short courses done here. If you are 18 and just been sentenced to a long time you could complete all the courses before you are 20' (20 year old prisoner, HMP/YOI Littlehey).

This is a view which was shared by an Education Manager who recently attended an event the PLA held in the Houses of Parliament;

'For young people who have already completed their level two in the juvenile estate and are serving long sentences what else can we offer them? There is no provision other than distance learning. The only thing we can offer them in the prison is peer mentoring where they can get a level two qualification and peer mentor for the next 10 years'.

²⁶ Ministry of Justice (2011) Criminal Justice Statistics, England and Wales 2010, Table A5.14. London: Ministry of Justice.

PET finds this worrying considering that there are now many more young adults receiving long sentences. At our recent PLA event we also heard from the sister of Carl, a serving prisoner who received a minimum 16 year sentence when he was 18 years old. She spoke about how crucial learning had been in helping him cope with such a long sentence and in developing his confidence. Carl is now nine years into his sentence and during the last six years has been studying for a BSc in Maths through the Open University, which he has almost completed. He plans to continue on to a Masters in maths. However, under the new OLASS 4 contracts Carl would no longer be entitled to study through Open University because he has longer than six years left to serve.

Carl says that at the start of his sentence he felt hopeless and became known as a troubled prisoner spending long periods down the segregation unit;

'I had no hope, I adopted this 'who cares' attitude and found myself getting into trouble. As a result I was sent from HMP/YOI Feltham to HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall over 100 miles away from my family.'

As time went on Carl says;

'Nothing changed, if anything things got worse...I was behind my door 23 hours a day watching Jeremy Kyle, Homes under the Hammer and Bargain Hunt...I felt my brain turning to mush and knew I needed to do something about it'.

Now Carl is a huge advocate of learning encouraging other prisoners to make the most of a bad situation and use their time to educate themselves.

PET strongly advocates that non-resettlement prisons provide additional support to young adults to support them to access distance learning opportunities. We also advocate a variety of informal and creative learning opportunities being available to longer sentence prisoners so that they may cope with their sentences. One young person also offered his view on how learning can best meet the needs of young people;

'The staff, both prison and educational have been nothing but helpful to me since I arrived here. The education staff have been very supportive in gaining PET funding and providing a place to study. If more is to be done to help young offenders, I believe more one to one support is the key. I have witnessed this for teaching lads basic literacy and numeracy and they make great progress. They are taught by volunteers from the community and their personalities rub off on the lads, giving them a positive role model' (19 year old, HMYOI Deerbolt).

Mentoring and transitions work

Many of the young adults we consulted with as part of this consultation said that they had not received any specific support to help them transition to an adult prison. One young person said;

'You don't get any support, all they say is you're going to the big boys now, right before you get transferred out' (20 year old, formerly in Cookham Wood and Rochester).

Young people spoke about the huge change in environment, where going from a juvenile environment with ‘kids being silly’ to a more serious environment with adults who often did not want any support and who officers were intimidated by, had an effect on the amount of support young people received from staff. Going from an environment where there were 30 young people on a wing in a YOI and 5-6 officers, to an adult prison where there were 100 prisoners and two officers per wing was a huge culture shock. One young person said;

‘There is no support, you’re literally just thrown in a room’ (20 year old, formerly in Cookham Wood and Rochester).

However, there are projects set up to specifically support young people around this, for example; a pilot has been taking place at HMP Rochester with youth charity Kinetic Youth, providing professional youth workers to support young adults and also training adult prisoners in youth work to become peer mentors for the young adults. They also run a ‘transitions club’ for young people transitioning over from the youth estate to the adult estate. PET understands this is going well and Kinetic is working with the National Youth Agency to roll out their model in more prisons around the country. It appears from the research we conducted as part of this consultation that those young adults who did receive support from Kinetic on the whole seemed more positive about being mixed in with the adult population and saw it as a good thing, for example;

‘It’s a good idea because adults can help with needs/keep YOI’s mature’ (young adult, HMYOI Cookham Wood).

However, many others were negative to the idea;

‘Most of the prisoners I have talked to here praise the adult prisons they were held on remand at. But this is because ‘drugs are everywhere’ and there is more ‘freedom’. They prefer those prisons and when they talk about this place they never want to come back. This place is more of a deterrent than an adult prison and YO’s should be remanded in YOI’s, not coming into contact with adult prisons at all in my opinion until they reach the right age. I think that YOI’s should remain just that with more one-to-one support on treatment and rehabilitation and resettlement back into a healthy environment upon release to reduce re-offending’ (19 year old prisoner, HMYOI Deerbolt).

The green paper states that it would like to make use of mentoring within prisons. We specifically asked young adults how they felt about being mentored by other older adults within prison and got really mixed responses;

‘I think it defeats the purpose if older prisoners are mentoring younger ones. Mentors that have stopped reoffending and are leading productive lives would be more efficient, in my opinion’ (19 year old prisoner, HMYOI Deerbolt).

‘This would be a great benefit to young adults who are suffering to cope or struggle in work and education. I am not an allocated mentor. However I am helping a few young

adult prisoners with life in prison. I would be willing to undergo courses to become a mentor' (prisoner, 22 years old in HMP Lewes).

'I feel it would be beneficial to new prisoners who come from YOI's' (21 year old prisoner at HMP Buckley Hall).

'Not interested - I am capable of most things myself' (20 year old prisoner at HMPYOI Brinsford).

PET is supportive of mentoring but would want to make sure that there is adequate training and support available for mentors and mentoring projects. Blockers to mentoring need to be removed. Earlier in the year PET held a roundtable event as part of the work of the PLA and many participants spoke about mentoring and some of the barriers;

'There needs to be much more effective use of mentors in prisons, there are too many barriers. Some governors don't seem to understand the concept of peer mentoring. They seem to fear a collaborative approach. If we engage prisoners and they start to understand making decisions for themselves, then it is positive. If not, passiveness can overcome prisoners and then when they're released from prison they are swamped. It can work though, for example HMP Chelmsford' (PLA roundtable participant, June 2013).

This response was also collected from feedback after the recent PLA event in the Houses of Parliament;

'I am now retired; sadly very little seems to change with regard to prisoner education. The very successful literacy/numeracy project which was set up 20 years ago at Feltham YOI has now closed down. We taught literally hundreds of lads very successfully with well trained volunteers working 1:1. There are many prospective volunteers waiting in the wings, but the work needs a skilled co-ordinator and trainer to run well'.

Conclusion

PET has concerns about the proposals to move all 18-20 year olds to adult prisons. We argue that young adults aged 18-20 have higher levels of risks, reoffending rates and levels of need, which is backed up by solid evidence suggesting that many young people do not finish developing and maturing until their later twenties. The case for investment is very high.

Young adults have the largest potential for improvement being the group most likely to desist and grow out of crime. However they require more provisions to ensure that their personal /social, educational and behavioural needs are met. If the government's proposed policy changes are simply about transporting young adults into the adult estate in order to cut costs we argue that this is at the very least counter productive and at worst dangerous, possibly leading to increased levels of self-harm, suicide and a high risk

of reoffending. There needs to be age specific interventions and provisions which take into account the particular vulnerabilities of young adults.

We do not believe this proposed policy is based on any solid evidence about it leading to better outcomes such as: a reduction in reoffending, the policy goal of the plans for Transforming Rehabilitation; reductions in violence; or increased safety for young adults. There is no research available on the best way of working with young adults in an adult context. We therefore propose that until there is a solid, research based plan for how to deliver the higher level of support young adults need, plans to put these policy changes in place should not go ahead.

Appendix A

Quotes from the young people: responses to survey

Mentoring

'This would be a great benefit to young adults who are suffering to cope or struggle in work and education. I am not an allocated mentor. However I am helping a few young adult prisoners with life in prison. I would be willing to undergo courses to become a mentor' (prisoner, 22 years old in HMP Lewes where formal mentoring does not currently take place).

'Here at Portland it is mixed adults and Y.O.'s - about half and half. Both Y.O's and adults are used as mentors / insiders / listeners and orderlies' (prisoner at HMPYOI Portland, age 21).

'I feel it would be beneficial to new prisoners who come from YOI's' (21 year old prisoner at HMP Buckley Hall).

'Not interested - I am capable of most things myself' (20 year old prisoner at HMPYOI Brinsford).

'I think it defeats the purpose if older prisoners are mentoring younger ones. Mentors that have stopped reoffending and are leading productive lives would be more efficient, in my opinion' (19 year old prisoner, HMYOI Deerbolt).

'I would want help with my anger issues and being stressed and depressed' (21 year old, HMYOI Aylesbury).

Safety for prisoners already in a mixed adult prison

'It's the same as a YOI being with adults. The only difference is Y.O's are blatant and will fight anywhere, anytime whereas adults are more discreet and will do it behind closed doors. When mixed together Y.O's are easily influenced by adults and are used to do their dirty work' (21 year old prisoner, HMPYOI Portland).

Self harm / bullying

'I have been in jail in all age groups; 14-18, 18-21, 21 and over and it's always the youngest that get bullied or used. Imagine an 18 year old, first time in jail being put with people 35+ that have been in and out all their lives, how intimidated he would be and what he could be made to do. Self harm and suicide will go up when these changes happen. Are Y.O's state of mind and lives worth saving a couple of quid?' (21 year old prisoner, HMPYOI Portland).

'The idea is stupid in my opinion as there will be a lot more bully victims' (20 year old prisoner at HMPYOI Brinsford).

Young adults needs

Learning needs

'All young people want more education' (20 year old, HMYOI Aylesbury).

'The courses here by Weston College are appalling and a waste of time. The courses do not give you a meaningful qualification and are used purely to tick a box and get prisoners out of their cell. There is only one course here that is worthwhile and gives you a guaranteed opportunity which is the rail track course. Education here is poor' (21 year old prisoner, HMPYOI Portland).

'My needs haven't been met at all. I feel an initial assessment and IEP should be conducted on admission as a matter of routine' (21 year old prisoner, HMP Buckley Hall).

'There are minimal choices for education. There are few decent training options. Some lecturers don't want to tell off a prisoner as they may feel threatened themselves, therefore other members of the class suffer' (21 year old prisoner, HMP Lewes).

'Y.O prisoners are mouthy and cause problems for those who do want to learn. Separate sessions for Y.O's and adult prisoners would work. There is a lack of choice in education' (21 year old prisoner, HMP Lewes).

'The staff, both prison and educational have been nothing but helpful to me since I arrived here. The education staff have been very supportive in gaining PET funding and providing a place to study. If more is to be done to help young offenders, I believe more one to one support is the key. I have witnessed this for teaching lads basic literacy and numeracy and they make great progress. They are taught by volunteers from the community and their personalities rub off on the lads, giving them a positive role model' (19 year old prisoner, HMYOI Deerbolt).

'I feel that the learning needs of prisoners here is limited because of the short courses done here. If you are 18 and just been sentenced to a long time you could complete all the courses before you are 20' (20 year old prisoner, HMP/YOI Littlehey).

'At this moment of time there is always at least a class cancelled a day. Also there is confusion over the new regime and communication between staff and prisoners is not helpful. But there is a high level of safety with all prisoners. But we need meaningful courses including more gym courses as you can get into work with this' (20 year old prisoner, HMP/YOI Littlehey).

Lack of purposeful activity

'Y.O's here are treated like shit and spend nearly all their time behind a door. The adults here are all mixed in with the Y.O's on a Y.O.s regime. There is one adult wing which is 21 and overs, this wing has its own regime which is a lot better than the Y.O's but is poor compared to other C-cat prisons. Y.O's and adults should all be treated the same in a mixed prison because when they are not it causes problems' (21 year old prisoner, HMP Portland).

Resettlement needs

'I think the government saying they want to move Y.O's from YOI's to adult prisons so they can be closer to home for resettlement reasons is rubbish. It's to save them money and that's it. I was transferred to an adult jail miles away from home without any appropriate support to help me adjust. There are many jails closer to home. Things will only get worse when this mix happens' (21 year old prisoner, HMP Portland).

'I need help with housing! I will need help finding housing; a flat not a hostel as with hostels comes the chance of re-offending! (20 year old prisoner, HMPYOI Brinsford).

Concerns from young adults about transferring to an adult / mixed prison

What do you think of government plans?

'The government's plans are great! There is some issue's with it, like, the adult prisons are calm so when yp's go to adult prisons it won't be calm. Fights will lower as adult's don't fight! There will be more officers to support yp's and finally there is more training / education in adult prisons' (20 year old, HMYOI Aylesbury).

'I think it is a bad idea. I think that putting lads in an adult prison won't mature them and they will either be just as disruptive as they are now or become vulnerable to being influenced by more serious, experienced criminals' (19 year old prisoner, HMYOI Deerbolt).

'I think it is a good idea because some or a lot of the men in here would prefer to be in an adult jail, as would I, I can't wait to get out of here' (21 year old prisoner, HMYOI Aylesbury).

Do you have concerns about being moved to a prison with older adults?

'Yes, I am settled where I am now and a move would be disruptive. I use the mental health team here who are specialised to work with young adults and I don't think the facilities will be as good elsewhere. I am studying A-level maths via distance learning and the exams are already booked for June 2014. In addition, I am in the process of applying to university through the resettlement team here and I believe that this would be disrupted. I feel safer around prisoners my own age rather than being with men twice my age and I believe YOI's are essential to their purpose' (19 year old prisoner, HMYOI Deerbolt).

'Most of the prisoners I have talked to here praise the adult prisons they were held on remand at. But this is because 'drugs are everywhere' and there is more 'freedom'. They prefer those prisons and when they talk about this place they never want to come back. This place is more of a deterrent than an adult prison and YO's should be remanded in YOI's, not coming into contact with adult prisons at all in my opinion until they reach the right age. I think that YOI's should remain just that with more one-to-one support on treatment and rehabilitation and resettlement back into a healthy environment upon release to reduce re-offending' (19 year old prisoner, HMYOI Deerbolt).

What kind of learning would you like to continue / have access to?

'I would like to have a classroom where I can go on a full-time basis to study on my own via distance learning and assistance with my UCAS application to continue' (19 year old prisoner, HMYOI Deerbolt).

'Motor mechanics and cookery and anything else that would benefit me when I'm out' (21 year old, HMYOI Aylesbury).

Appendix B

Feedback from Kinetic Youth at Rochester

Young people residing at Rochester Adult Prison thought it was a good idea to mix young people (18-21 year olds) with adults. The reason they gave for this was they found it to be a more relaxed and calm atmosphere. Young people liked the idea that, if they had an adult friend/family they would be able to have contact with them. They also felt they had opportunities to learn from the adult residence.

The young people expressed the most interest in resettlement; this is the main thing they worry about. They felt they would benefit from support in how to apply for housing and benefits. The young people also asked for guidance in how to do a CV and apply for a job or college. The young people told Kinetic that **many of them have no knowledge or experience of managing money including bank accounts and debt management**, and would benefit from support in this.

The young people said they had undertaken GCSE's and life skill courses. A few said, even though they had done maths and English, while in YOI, they still felt they would benefit from further tutoring in this area. Young people also expressed wishes to do A levels and excesses to courses including accounting.

Feedback from Kinetic Youth at Cookham Wood

Adults can keep us in touch

It's a good idea because adults can help with needs/keep YOI's mature

Appendix C

<i>Establishment</i>	<i>Predominant Function</i>	<i>Under 21s</i>	<i>Assaults</i>	<i>Number of assaults per person</i>
All		7,048		
Feltham	YOI	567	675	1.190476
Glen Parva	YOI	553	325	0.587703
Lancaster Farms	YOI	457	166	0.363239
Brinsford	YOI	423	275	0.650118
Deerbolt	YOI	376	146	0.388298
Isis ⁽²⁾	YOI	310	166	0.535484
Littlehey	Cat C Trainer	304	148	0.486842
Aylesbury	YOI	290	83	0.286207
Swinfen Hall	Cat C Trainer	259	97	0.374517
Portland	YOI	250	93	0.372
Doncaster	Local	247	155	0.62753
Wetherby	YJB	223	478	2.143498

Reading	YOI	194	24	0.123711
Parc	Local	186		0
Hindley	YJB	174		0
Rochester	YOI	165	78	0.472727
Thameside	Local	153		0
Moorland / Hatfield	Cat C Trainer	152	8	0.052632
Altcourse	Local	136	119	0.875
Werrington	YJB	117	216	1.846154
Cook ham Wood	YJB	113	48	0.424779
Warren Hill	YJB	112	291	2.598214
High Down	Local	105	44	0.419048
Forest Bank	Local	99	60	0.606061
Elmley (Sheppey cluster)	Local	75		0
Stoke Heath	Cat C Trainer	73	45	0.616438
Chelmsford	Local	58	52	0.896552
Hull	Local	58	24	0.413793
Nottingham	Local	52	6	0.115385

Norwich	Local	50	27	0.54
Cardiff	Local	45	2	0.044444
Preston	Local	41	11	0.268293
Peterborough ⁽³⁾	Local	40	37	0.925
Thorn Cross	Open	40	3	0.075
Swansea	Local	39	4	0.102564
Exeter	Local	38	11	0.289474
Northallerton	YOI	34		0
Bristol	Local	33	10	0.30303
Holme House	Local	33	6	0.181818
New Hall	Female	30	1	0.033333
Woodhill	High Security	28	10	0.357143
Holloway	Female	25	13	0.52
Bedford	Local	23	10	0.434783
Eastwood Park	Female	23	7	0.304348
Bronzefield	Female	22	19	0.863636
Styal	Female	22	4	0.181818

Downview	Female	20	14	0.7
Foston Hall	Female	20		0
Lincoln	Local	18	7	0.388889
Dorchester	Local	18	4	0.222222
Lewes	Local	17	10	0.588235
Hollesley Bay	Open	13		0
Low Newton	Female	8	4	0.5
Manchester	High Security	5		0
Drake Hall	Female	4	3	0.75
Belmarsh	High Security	3	5	1.666667
Lowdham Grange	Cat B Trainer	3		0
East Sutton Park	Female	2		0
Usk/Prescoed	Cat C Trainer	2		0
Askham Grange	Female	1		0
Frankland	High Security	1		0
Hewell ⁽¹⁾	Cluster	1		0
Onley	Cat C Trainer	1		0

Swaleside (Sheppey cluster)	Cat B Trainer	1		0
Wandsworth	Local	1		0
Wealstun	Cat C Trainer	1		0