Dyslexia Behind Bars
Final Report of a Pioneering Teaching and Mentoring Project at Chelmsford Prison – 4 years on

Project Director: Jackie Hewitt-Main

published by Mentoring 4 U  July 2012
“The scale of illiteracy in the prison – that was an eye-opener … It just seemed so simple to involve literate prisoners to help mentor, encourage and assist prisoners who had problems with dyslexia …

Simon Burns MP
March 2012

Acknowledgements

Because the Project Director is severely dyslexic herself, this report was partially drafted by her son Richard Main and edited by Jacquie Buttriss. However, it is based entirely on Jackie Hewitt-Main’s own detailed notes and assessments, a series of recorded interviews and appearances, press and media contributions and the personal testimonies of many prisoners, prison officers, ex-offenders and others involved in this project. Jackie thanks them all for their support.

Special thanks go to Sue Blackburn, who first identified Jackie’s dyslexia and turned her life around.

© Jackie Hewitt-Main
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Published by Mentoring 4U, 40 Kents Hill Road, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 5PL.
“The work that Jackie Hewitt-Main undertook in Chelmsford Prison was a complete eye-opener in so far as it not only identified half of the prison population as being dyslexic, but also showed that many of this group could be reached by the radical process of simply talking with them and getting them to engage.

The revelation about the improved atmosphere, described by the prison staff, has the potential to make prisons not only more productive, but also safer places.

Jackie’s approach of not teaching in the classroom, because the dyslexic prisoners wouldn’t go into the classroom (and why should anyone who has repeatedly failed in it), is both breathtakingly simple and groundbreaking.

The remarkable drop in reoffending rates of the project group suggests that somebody should have done this long ago.”

Lord Addington
House of Lords
May 2012
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SECTION 1

THE PROJECT
INTRODUCTION

“Jackie Hewitt-Main approached this scheme with dedication, passion and enthusiasm which has really paid off to the benefit and enhancement of the lives of many prisoners. Her project has been officially recognised in the House of Lords and her achievements will undoubtedly continue to grow and develop as she begins her work in other prisons and areas. Jackie is a good example of how a little funding can really help to go a long way.”

David Morrall, Head of Productivity
Government Office for the East of England

Having struggled with learning throughout her school days, Jackie Hewitt-Main had been made to feel a failure. She left school with no qualifications and faced her next obstacle – finding a job, when she couldn’t fill in forms, read, spell or write more than a few words.

It was only when she was 40 that she was diagnosed with severe dyslexia. With huge determination, hard work and some invaluable support, Jackie learnt to read and write, studied for a BA degree in special needs, qualified as a teacher and turned her focus on the needs of others with learning difficulties. She was still dyslexic, of course, but she had found ways to cope with this and wanted to help others who, like her, might not be aware that their difficulties with learning had a diagnosable cause.

“Looking back over the years I realise that my learning disabilities have been a great problem in my life. If somebody had just helped me to understand my difficulties with learning, I would have found life so much easier.

So many of the prisoners I worked with in my project ‘Dyslexia and Mentoring’ showed such great change and wanted to help others with the knowledge they had gained.

I feel that my experience in this project is there to share and help other people, to enable those individuals to develop the confidence in themselves, to pass that same help and guidance on to others.”

Jackie Hewitt Main

The prison authorities at Chelmsford gave Jackie permission to interview individually every inmate at the beginning of the project, 826 prisoners in total. Later, she interviewed many more – a combined total of 2,029 prisoners. What she learnt from so many of them alarmed her.
The evidence gathered by Jackie shows that those learners who had experienced difficulties in the classroom when they were children, moved through low self-esteem, a sense of failure and frustration, leading to behaviour problems, school exclusion, inability to find jobs, apply for benefits or pass theory driving tests, spiralling into petty offences, a life of crime, prison and serial reoffending. This was a story she heard again and again.

Shocked by the scale of these problems, Jackie took on the mammoth task of individually assessing every one of the high number of prisoners who had experienced difficulties with literacy in their school or adult lives. Not all of them were dyslexic, of course, but she was astonished to discover the extent of dyslexia within this one prison. Her findings have since been corroborated by a Dutch study into the extent of dyslexia in prisons.

Spurred into action, Jackie developed her Mentoring 4U (M4U) not-for-profit organisation, which won recognition and awards for Jackie’s work. Through M4U, Jackie secured funding to set up a teaching and mentoring programme for individual prisoners at Chelmsford. The success of this project was evident in the way that literate prisoners, and those who had themselves been helped by Jackie’s work, eagerly undertook her training to become mentors for other prisoners. Within weeks, her multi-sensory programme of teaching and mentoring, together with computer-based assessment and learning, was being delivered throughout the prison, with impressive results.

_Such a greatly reduced re-offending rate as Jackie achieved is excellent – fantastic._

Simon Burns MP

This report outlines the project’s aims and methods, its development and its outcomes, supported by case-studies and accounts of outreach work, letters from prisoners and supportive testimonials from members of both houses of Parliament, Jackie’s international involvement and recommendations for the future. (There is also a profile of the Project Director, Jackie Hewitt-Main, at the end of this report.)
SUMMARY of KEY FINDINGS and RECOMMENDATIONS

INTERVIEWS with all 2,029 prisoners at Chelmsford Prison (from 2006-2008) discovered that:

- Before this project started, 60% of incoming prisoners opted to do neither work nor training for fear of revealing their illiteracy.
- Many of those refusing to opt for basic skills training said they did so because of their fear of classrooms and/or reliving the failures of their school days.
- Many prisoners complained of the difficulties in going straight because even building work required the passing of a basic test and almost everything required the filling in of application forms or passing of theory tests. They couldn’t even apply for benefits without admitting they needed help.

THE ASSESSMENT of prisoners demonstrated that:

- Overall, 53% of (2,029) prisoners at Chelmsford during the project were diagnosed as having dyslexia, compared to 10% of the UK population (data: British Dyslexia Association).
- 21% of prisoners had suffered traumatic head injuries, compared to 2% of the population (data: ‘Headway’).

THE PROJECT ITSELF

- Jackie Hewitt-Main began work with 20 prisoners with exceptionally low literacy levels.
- Literate prisoners came forward, wanting to learn how to teach and mentor greater numbers of inmates.
- Gradually, those prisoners who had themselves been taught by Jackie to read and write, now offered to share their difficulties and their experiences to mentor other prisoners.
- Jackie identified and trained 40 new mentors to support prisoners through this project.
- Her multi-sensory teaching and mentoring programme spread to all wings of the prison.
- 238 prisoners were individually taught and supported over the first part of the project period by Jackie and her trained mentors. This figure quickly grew as the project developed and spread.
- A further 70 prisoners were successfully helped by mentors who transferred to Wayland Prison to extend the reach of this project across another prison.
- 50 other prisoners went through Learning Workshops with Jackie. These were all men whose literacy levels were at the lowest pre-school level, who needed to develop early learning and life skills. Jackie and her mentors helped these prisoners to recognise they had a range of strengths and they could build on these to develop their learning and gain...
self-esteem. Each of these prisoners was helped to make his own Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and to understand how to manage his own life, his attitudes and behaviours.

OUTCOMES

- The great majority of prisoners were now either working or in education, so had a purpose to their days and a sense of achievement.
- Within weeks, several prisoners with the literacy skills of an average four-year-old had learnt enough to write their first letters home and read the letters they received back.
  
  “Jackie has shown me things that no one else has ever been able to do before: reading, writing and sums. I have learnt more in 8 weeks that in all 41 years of my life.”  
  
  Prisoner J (who had been in and of prison repeatedly, but has not reoffended since)
- The work Jackie and the mentors did to help prisoners learn how to read and fill in forms, to take and pass the theory driving test and to take and pass the building site construction skills test, helped give a sense of optimism and direction to prisoners in preparation for their release.
- The impact on the prison as a whole was transformational. Prison officers commented how much calmer even the most violent prisoners became as their self-esteem rose alongside their progress, resulting in a calmer and happier atmosphere across the whole prison, requiring less intervention from prison staff:
  
  “Since Jackie has been working with the prisoners, you can see a huge difference in them – much calmer and frustration levels are less, resulting in being a happier prison with less problems on the wings.”  
  
  Vicky Blakeman, Deputy Governor
- All prisoners involved in this project improved their literacy skills to a level of reading and writing advanced enough to extend their choices of leisure activities and prepare more effectively for their lives outside. They would always be dyslexic, but now they could achieve in their own ways.
- The follow-up support Jackie personally gave several prisoners and their families after release has been instrumental in giving them the confidence to take on new lives and careers, transforming their futures.
- Of the 17 prisoners in Jackie’s first two groups who were released four years ago, only 1 prisoner has reoffended. This represents a 5.9% proven reoffending rate within 4 years, compared to the national rate of 55% within 2 years, or 68% within 5 years (data from the Ministry of Justice). Clearly this sample is too small to be statistically reliable. However, it is a useful indicator that the reoffending rate of these project participants is less than a tenth of the national average.
- One example of this reduction of recidivism is the case of three serial offenders who had each been in and out of prison over 40 times. Since their release 4 years ago, none of these three has reoffended.
Of those 17 prisoners first released:

- 4 employed in trades (2 in building, 1 fork-lift driver, 1 film producer)
- 2 employed by charities (1 teaching disabled people the skills to get into work, 1 mentoring young offenders)
- 2 voluntary workers (1 mentoring adults with learning difficulties; 1 supporting men on probation)
- 2 have started their own businesses (sunbeds/furniture and gardening)
- 5 are currently unemployed
- 1 is at a top University, doing an engineering degree
- 1 is back in prison.

40 prisoners were trained as mentors in the first part of the project to support other prisoners. They, and others who later joined them, became the backbone of the programme, ensuring its continuation for some time after the project itself ended.

10 prisoners were trained to become adult-learning teachers to other prisoners – all 10 finished the course and all 10 passed their exam to achieve the PTLLS qualification.

When prisoners who had been trained as mentors were moved to other prisons, they took with them their skills and Jackie sent learning materials, so that they could spread and continue the good work. Indeed, six Chelmsford prisoner-mentors volunteered and were trained to introduce this project in the Induction wing of Wayland Prison.

The two-day visit of a secondary school Literacy Adviser to shadow Jackie and her team, observing and learning about Jackie’s approach to teaching and mentoring dyslexic prisoners, filled Laura with enthusiasm and ideas to take back and introduce in her school. Over the next six months, Laura led the school and its staff in changing the way they approached dyslexia to better address the needs of all their pupils. This school reformed the whole school’s curriculum and approach to students with learning difficulties, with highly successful outcomes for all. (See Appendix 9)

Chelmsford Prison was now receiving many personal requests to transfer there, in direct response to prisoners and their families hearing on the ‘grape-vine’ the success of Jackie Hewitt-Main’s project and hopeful this could be their way out of prison for good.

There were many other positive and informative findings of the project (see main report) and only two less successful aspects.

1. For two three-month periods, the funding dried up completely, which meant Jackie couldn’t be paid or her expenses and materials reimbursed. However, she continued the project as best she could on a voluntary basis each time. Both the prisoners and the staff, knowing this, were highly appreciative and supportive of her, which of course became a positive feature.

2. Difficulties in the outreach intended to support prisoners’ families. Although quite a few families were visited and supported, the distances and time involved in travelling the length of the country made this impossible for one person to do, especially in her unpaid periods. It would have been easier if prisoners were inmates in their local prisons, or if extra funding could have been found to facilitate this work.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Mentoring of one prisoner by another, who has a personal understanding of hidden disabilities and its effect on lives, is a powerful tool for the advancement of both. It also changes the often hostile attitudes of prisoners to staff and to each other. Couple this peer-mentoring with multi-sensory learning; the progress prisoners make raises their self-esteem and their capacity to live an honest working life.

This approach could be encouraged and spread across all prisons, with sufficient investment of initial funding (see page 16) to:

- Train prisoners to be teachers, mentors and mentor-trainees in each prison
- Provide briefings for prison officers on hidden disabilities such as dyslexia, how they affect people, how to identify them and how to help meet prisoners’ needs.
- Provide appropriate one-to-one spaces for teaching and mentoring
- Enable the use of laptops in cells wherever possible, or at least in accessible quiet areas
- Develop prisoner-friendly and multi-sensory learning materials for all levels of learning
- Purchase software and reusable learning materials.

This cost would be more than balanced by the extensive savings that could be made by:

- The potentially huge reduction in reoffending rates, saving billions of pounds
- The calming of prison atmosphere and resulting reduction in need for interventions by staff (reduced overtime costs and potentially reduced staffing needs)
- The use of ex-prisoners to mentor young offenders and those at risk in the community to prevent crime and further reduce the prison population
- The use of ex-prisoners to mentor recently released prisoners through the probation period, to help them settle into jobs and new lives for themselves and their families, and prevent them returning to crime.

NB Corresponding reductions in government costs would also be made as a result of fewer ex-offenders’ families requiring state support and lower rates of family breakdown, etc.

Real Potential to Save the Government (and Taxpayers) Billions

If each prisoner costs up to £100,000 per year to keep in prison (including policing, court and prosecution costs, the probation service and state support of his/her family on the outside), rolling out Jackie Hewitt-Main’s teaching and mentoring programme across the UK’s prisons could save the government and the taxpayer billions of pounds in a relatively short time. Indeed, evidence suggests that Jackie Hewitt-Main and her trained prisoner-mentors have already saved the prison service millions through this pioneering project, by decimating the reoffending rate and greatly reducing the need for staff interventions inside.
International Outreach

Jackie herself responds to some invitations to give key presentations at international conferences (USA, Ireland, Sweden, Australia, Holland) and is in demand to help organisations in other countries reform their prison systems with her approach.

National Advisory Role

Despite all her international acclaim, Jackie Hewitt-Main would be far happier to act as an Adviser to the Government or to the Prison Service in this country, with funding to put her ground-breaking approach in place across our own prisons and aftercare services. This would result in a far greater saving of taxpayers’ money, within a relatively short period of time, than any initial investment of funds that might be required. What is more, from what she has seen when touring prisons in many other countries, including the USA, Sweden and Australia, and speaking to international experts, Jackie and many of her supporters are convinced that we in the UK could lead the world in prison reform and reoffending rates.

Educational Outreach

Although this report focuses particularly on dyslexia in prisons, Jackie's approach to teaching and mentoring dyslexic adults has enormous educational potential and could easily be adapted for use in schools, as in the case of its successful introduction at Sittingbourne Community College (see Appendix 9).

CONCLUSION

Everyone has problems of some sort in their life. Prisoners’ problems may have been the cause of their offending, but there is often a more fundamental reason for their situation. Identify their hidden learning disabilities, their sense of failure, frustration and low self-esteem; devise a way to meet their individual needs ... and help them transform their lives.

This project was based on the principle that one-to-one mentoring will act as a catalyst for the learner to see learning as non-threatening and meaningful. Once introduced and extended across a prison, it’s like a rolling tide. This doesn’t just stop at the prison gate. Jackie has sought, wherever possible, to continue the learner/mentor relationship to the ex-offender and his wider community.

“Mentoring raises prisoners’ self-esteem to a level where they realise they are not a forgotten few, and they can learn something. For too long, most of them have just been numbers behind a door. Now they have something positive on the other side of the door. Let them out.”

Prisoner Colin, head of mentors
This project has helped turn many people’s lives around, both in prison and following release. It is hoped that these highly successful results will attract and encourage funding to address the otherwise constantly increasing number of individuals returning to prison.

“What I hoped after this project was that, across the prison population, through all the other prisons, more work could be done to identify people who have problems. Then to bring in a system that is suited to the individual prisoners, to help them tackle their dyslexia.”

Simon Burns MP (March 2012)

Building on the lessons learnt from the Chelmsford pilot project, a new version of the M4U* programme is now being developed for potentially wider use across more of the nation’s prisons. As ever, funding will make all the difference. Jackie and her team of trained ex-prisoners are ready, able and highly enthusiastic to lead this initiative. All they need is the support and encouragement of the government and the prison service, together with a commitment of funding to take their work forward. The remarkable outcomes of this project show that any such commitment would be a high-return investment.

The final recommendation should perhaps come from a dyslexic prisoner, one of the very many at Chelmsford Prison who was helped by Jackie Hewitt-Main’s mentoring and multi-sensory project and felt indignant that this project hadn’t yet spread across other prisons:

“I think there should be more of this type of work within the prison system and others would benefit with this type of constant help available. I was happy to receive this type of help. I think this would benefit many others like me. Thank you.”

Prisoner K

FOOTNOTE – 4 years on ...

Sadly, Chelmsford Prison, now under new leadership, has terminated the individualised peer-mentoring work, practical multi-sensory activities and individual learning plans introduced by Jackie Hewitt-Main, which had been continued for a while by her trained prisoner-mentors after she had to leave due to a serious illness. Jackie is now well again, but the prison has expressed no interest in revitalising her project and has instead gone back to a commercial scheme, with mixed reviews. However, induction staff are still using her identification questionnaires and check-sheets to assess newly arrived prisoners.

* M4U (‘Mentoring 4U’) is Jackie’s not-for-profit organisation which attracted regional government and local NGO funding to undertake this project in Chelmsford Prison. In the absence of any current funding, she is publishing this document at her own expense, so that all the project’s mentors, supporters and prisoner-students can see for themselves the successful outcomes of their work.
THE PROJECT – DYSLEXIA BEHIND BARS

“This unique project, organised by the remarkable Jackie Hewitt-Main, is a vital way of helping prisoners with their education problems – particularly dyslexia – which could contribute to preventing re-offending.”

Simon Burns MP, House of Commons, 24th May 2007

TEACHING AND MENTORING PRISONERS WITH DYSLEXIA

AIM OF THE PROJECT

This is the report of a unique mentoring scheme, aimed at identifying and supporting prisoners with hidden disabilities, especially dyslexia, the most prevalent learning difficulty in the prison.

The ‘Dyslexia Behind Bars’ project is built on the principle that one-to-one mentoring will act as a catalyst for the learner to see learning as non-threatening and meaningful. This, together with his improved literacy skills and the continuation of mentoring beyond the prison gate, will enable the offender to reintegrate into society upon release and choose not to reoffend.

OBJECTIVES

a) The combined objectives of the project as a whole were to:

- Assess the real extent of dyslexia across the prison population
- Establish how effectively prison staff (officers/tutors) could identify hidden learning disabilities such as dyslexia when new prisoners arrived
- Investigate how knowledgeable and trained prison officers were about prisoners’ hidden learning disabilities, including dyslexia, and their effects on inmates’ self-esteem
- Discover the ongoing effects on inmates of any lack of understanding of their hidden disability by prison officers or staff
- Ascertain why so many prisoners declined to undertake classroom learning
- Explore how prison tutors could most effectively deliver a learning environment where inmates would want to take part and improve their literacy levels
- Introduce, establish and monitor in this prison a combination of new educational strategies, including:
  - individual computer assessment and remediation
o individualised multi-sensory learning
o one-to-one peer mentoring by and for prisoners

- Assess the impact of these new teaching and learning strategies on prisoners’ self-esteem, confidence, achievements and behaviours.

b) In the course of the project, Jackie additionally set out to:
- Discover what percentage of prisoners had gone through the care system and how this had affected their attitudes and behaviours
- Ascertain the extent of traumatic brain injury suffered by prisoners and how these injuries have affected their learning and behaviours
- Assess the prevalence of ADHD amongst prisoners, how many of them were on Ritalin, its efficacy and the effects on prisoners of ceasing to take this drug
- Investigate what proportion of prisoners had come into prison as ‘Neets’ – 18-24-year-olds not in employment, education or training
- Explore the reasons for many prisoners’ high reoffending rates, what factors might it be possible to address and how
- Investigate the hereditary nature of dyslexia amongst prisoners and their families

c) In response to some of her findings, Jackie developed a programme to:
- coach prisoners before their release on how to:
  o pass a driving theory test
  o pass the CSCS test for working on building sites
  o read and fill in job-application and benefit forms
- mentor former prisoners and their families for the first year after their release.

THE CONTEXT

Overall, the project ‘Dyslexia and Mentoring’ began in January 2006 and ended in June 2008. There were three separate tranches of short-term funding for stages of the project. In the two unfunded intervening periods of three months each, Project Manager Jackie Hewitt-Main continued to work without pay, in order to ensure continuity and momentum for prisoner-learners. Thus, through her goodwill, and despite the inevitable financial hardships for her personally, the project survived and continued its success.

This stop-start funding was a serious constraint, and might have halted the project before its findings could be fully analysed. However, prisoners and prison staff alike were highly appreciative of Jackie’s determination and cheerfulness throughout these periods, when she continued to mentor the prisoners and train new mentors without interruption or impediment to their progress. This difficulty therefore turned into an unexpected boost to the project as a whole and enabled a full ongoing assessment to be made of its success.
Of all the challenges presented by this project, funding was the greatest. There were three distinct funding strands:

- **Mentfor (The East Mentoring Forum) from November 2005 to June 2006.** *The main purpose of this funding was to identify and support men with hidden disabilities, to be known as the ‘Dyslexia and Mentoring’ project.*  
- (followed by 3 months of NO funding)
- **Next Step (the National Careers Service) from September 2006 to July 2007.** *This included as part of Jackie’s role to be an IAG worker (Information, Advice and Guidance).*  
- (followed by 3 months of NO funding)
- **St Giles Trust from October 2007 to June 2008.** This required Jackie to take on the job title of ‘Peer Trainer Developer (Hidden Disabilities)’, in which role she implemented the City and Guilds ‘Delivering Learning 7003 course (PTLLS).’ She also developed and delivered other M4U mentoring courses to prisoners and community volunteers.

Due to Jackie’s substantial amount of voluntary work required to keep this programme ongoing between periods of NO funding, this project survived and achieved impressive results. However, the fact that there were periods without funding indicates the lack of financial support for hidden disabilities in prisons. As this project shows, hidden disabilities, especially dyslexia, are a big problem in our prisons, and the needs of these inmates are often overlooked, leading to the greater inevitability of their reoffending soon after release.

The UK claims to aspire to the reduction of offenders and reoffending rates, both on the street and in courts and prisons. Yet, without sufficient funding, the ‘revolving prisoner’ will continue to be the norm. The remarkable success of this project demonstrates what could be done. But it is paramount to identify and maintain funding streams so that we can expand the success of this work across the UK. Not only will we save a great deal of money every year, we will open the doors by identifying and building everyone’s potential to live a useful and fulfilling life.

In the House of Commons on 24th May 2007, there was the following exchange:

> “This unique project, organised by the remarkable Jackie Hewitt-Main, is a vital way of helping prisoners with their educational problems – particularly dyslexia – which could contribute to preventing reoffending ... The problem is that once prisoners are released, there is no system by which individuals can continue to receive help.”  
> Simon Burns, MP for West Chelmsford
“He is absolutely right to say that many of those people in the prison population have not had the educational opportunities – often because they are dyslexic, have not been diagnosed properly and have not got the extra help they need. We are looking specifically at how the early intervention programmes help these people.”

Tony Blair, Prime Minister (See fuller text in Hansard – see Appendix 3)

Sadly, we have not seen evidence of such a report being published, nor of any additional funding being made available to address these needs.

It is estimated in the latest available figures that each prisoner costs the country £50,000 per year to keep him in prison. Add to that the costs of supporting his family, the policing, court and prosecution costs and maintaining the probationary and young offenders’ support services, it is estimated that this figure must be approaching £100,000.

An investment of funding equivalent to £10-£20 per prisoner per year (approximately £850,000 - £1,700,000 in total) over the next five years would not only enable this programme to be rolled out gradually across prisons, it would also have a huge impact if spent on the approach developed during this project, including support for prisoners and their families, for some time following release.

Even in the first year, it could save £99,990 per prisoner released who doesn’t reoffend, multiplied across a high proportion of the country’s approximately 85,000 prisoners.

This project has demonstrated the potential for up to 94% reduction in reoffending rates, which would save billions of pounds every year and improve our society incrementally.

Mentoring 4 U, the publisher of this report and vehicle for the whole project, is currently developing courses. Funding would enable Jackie Hewitt-Main and her team to write learning materials and organise courses in order to roll out the M4U approach across the UK’s prisons.

Training prisoners to act as mentors for other prisoners is not only enormously effective, it is also a particularly economical approach, and it produces impressive results. All Jackie and her core team of mentors need is the commitment of funding and the goodwill of senior leaders and officers over a given period of time to make it happen.

Ultimately, this project is self-perpetuating – the learners themselves become mentors for new learners and spread good practice across prisons through voluntary transfers.
PROCESS

There are three major strands to this project:

- **An individual interview/assessment for each prisoner** as part of his induction programme, to identify any hidden disabilities and, if appropriate, to plan a learning programme for him.

- **A multi-sensory teaching approach**, supported by computer-based assessment and learning, that is delivered one-to-one or in small, mutually supportive groups in distraction-free non-classroom environments.

- **A unique mentoring scheme** that empowers prisoners to reach their potential through their understanding of how they themselves learn and the impact of their own learning on their attitudes and behaviours.

This also involves:

- Training prisoners to be mentors to other prisoners inside prison, further realising their own potential and helping others to do the same.

- Training ex-offenders and others to mentor newly-released prisoners and their families.

- Providing briefings for prison staff on the nature and impact of hidden disabilities, such as dyslexia, on prisoners’ self-esteem, confidence, achievements, attitudes and behaviours; how to identify them and how best to support and meet their needs inside.

- Providing ongoing support and mentoring for prisoners’ families.

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND ASSESSMENTS

Jackie began by interviewing every prisoner individually to investigate a number of issues:

- Has he experienced learning difficulties or does he display signs of a hidden disability? (to be formally assessed in a following session)

- If so, how this has impaired his educational and life experiences?

- Might it have been part of the cause of his turning to crime?

And more specifically:

- What age-range was he?

- How many times had he been in prison?

- What was/were his reason(s) for offending?

- Did he have any qualifications when he left school?

- Was he ever expelled or excluded from school?

- Did he attend a special school or unit, or did he have special needs support?

- Had he been in care?

- Was he self-employed?

- Had he been a ‘Neet’ – 18-24 year-old not in employment, education or training?

- If he’d done any building or construction work, had he gained the CSCS certificate?
Had he passed his theory driving test?

The next stage was to undertake detailed assessments of all those prisoners who had experienced learning difficulties or who displayed characteristics of a hidden disability. This Jackie did over an extended period as prisoners came into custody.

**FINDINGS of interviews and assessments**

2,029 prisoners were interviewed altogether (826 in the first six months of the project, plus another 1,203 as new inmates were taken into the prison).

*[NB In the following tables, the percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.]*

**Age-range**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-23</td>
<td>24-29</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>36-41</td>
<td>42-47</td>
<td>48-53</td>
<td>54-59</td>
<td>60-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of times in prison**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-11</th>
<th>12-16</th>
<th>17-21</th>
<th>22-26</th>
<th>27-39</th>
<th>40+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reasons for offending**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drugs</th>
<th>Money</th>
<th>Drink</th>
<th>Violence</th>
<th>Driving</th>
<th>Breach</th>
<th>Firearms</th>
<th>Homelessness</th>
<th>Recall</th>
<th>Not stated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning disabilities** (some prisoners have more than one of these)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dyslexia</th>
<th>Traumatic brain injury</th>
<th>ADHD</th>
<th>None of these but other learning disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Learning styles** (How do they learn best – what is their easiest method for learning?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual (seeing/reading)</th>
<th>Auditory (hearing)</th>
<th>Kinaesthetic (Practical)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Literacy – Basic skills level**  
76% of UK population are Basic Skills Level 1 (12+) or above

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QCA Adult Literacy Basic Skills Levels</th>
<th>Equivalent average age – (in whole UK population)</th>
<th>On entry to prison – % all prisoners at each level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-entry</td>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry 1</td>
<td>Age 5</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry 2</td>
<td>Age 7</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry 3</td>
<td>Age 9</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Skills Level 1 or above</td>
<td>Age 12+</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB This table excludes prisoners who preferred not to state their level

**Other findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners who left school with no qualifications</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners who were expelled or excluded from school</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners who went to SEN schools or had SEN support</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(despite 53% dyslexic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners who had been in care</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners who classified themselves as self-employed</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners who came into prison as ‘NEETs’ (18-24 year-olds not in employment, education or training)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners who had gained the CSCS (construction skills certificate), needed for employment in building trade</td>
<td>0.5% (or 11% of those who have worked in construction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners who had not passed their theory driving test</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisoners who had been in prison at least 40 times</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the results of individual assessments were analysed and formed the basis for this teaching and mentoring project.

**INITIAL FACTORS TO BE ADDRESSED**

Jackie soon realised that, in order to mould the project to meet the prisoners’ needs and motivate them to take part, certain factors would require attention:

- Offenders need to have mentors from their first arrival in the induction wing, where they spend their first few nights in prison.
- A room on the induction wing is needed to talk with, interview and assess prisoners on arrival and to begin their learning programmes (individual sessions, learning workshops and/or one-to-one mentoring).
- The availability of quiet rooms or spaces on each wing of the prison, free from distraction, where learning can take place in individual or small group situations.
- There needs to be access in that room and/or in inmates’ cells for the use of laptops/computers for assessment and learning.
• The importance of working with and gaining the support of prison officers must be recognised, by providing some briefing sessions on how to:
  o recognise hidden disabilities
  o understand how they are likely to affect prisoners’ behaviours and attitudes
  o support and/or address the special needs of individual prisoners, not only for their own sake, but for the benefit of all inmates and staff.

• The importance of regular meetings with prison officers to gain their feedback and communicate progress.

• The need to pay trained prisoner/mentors, in line with payment for other jobs undertaken by inmates in the prison, to ensure they feel valued, to encourage them to gain a work ethic by taking responsibility for their duties and to boost satisfaction in their work.

• Purposeful use of the existing prison’s resources for mutual benefits – such as the help given by Chelmsford prisoners working in the PICTA computer workshop, who produced leaflets and handouts. With guidance, they could potentially produce customised learning materials.

• Making good use of individual prisoners’ skills – for example, one prisoner/mentor at Chelmsford did some very useful data-processing and analysis of project work on behalf of M4U.

With her characteristic drive and determination, Jackie was able to address and resolve every one of these obstacles during the project.
HOW THE PROJECT DEVELOPED

THE PLACE TO START

INDUCTION WING

A prison officer on the induction wing at Chelmsford Prison wanted to understand why some prisoners smash up their cells. He explained that he had put a prisoner in a cell, and walked away. After a few minutes, the prisoner had smashed up the cell. The officer could see no reason why this had happened.

Jackie Hewitt-Main asked: “Did you give the prisoner any paperwork?”

“Yes,” said the officer. “I gave him a letter while we walked to his cell.

“Do you know if he can read?” asked Jackie. “It could have been a letter from his solicitor, bad news from his family or a ‘Dear John’ letter. Sitting in a cell, with a letter in his hand, addressed to him, that he cannot read – that would make him so frustrated and angry.”

Jackie placed two orderly/mentors on the induction wing to greet prisoners when they first came in. Head prisoner/mentor Colin met a new prisoner with Asperger’s Syndrome. Many of the staff were unsure how to work with this prisoner. Colin helped the prisoner to settle in and follow the daily routine within the prison. This helped allay his fear of change and uncertainty, However, after a few days, Colin spotted that this prisoner was being bullied by another prisoner. Colin spoke to the other prisoner and sorted out the problem. The new prisoner was so pleased with the help and support he had received from our mentor, Colin, that he wrote a letter to the Governor of Chelmsford prison:

“This is just a short letter concerning Mr N (Colin). Since my arrival on E wing, Colin has been a real source of comfort and strength to me and also helped sort out a problem I was having with being bullied from another prisoner. He is a real credit to ‘Mentoring 4 U’ and you need more people of his calibre in the prison system.”

One of the biggest challenges while working on the induction wing was with the Offender Management Unit (OMU) team. The OMU consisted of several separate agencies: Tribal, St. Giles Trust, Nacro, Milton Keynes College and M4U. All of these organisations (bar M4U) had to send a representative to speak to the prisoners on a kind of carousel arrangement, with the new prisoner seeing each of the agencies’ representatives working in the prison for a matter of less than 5 minutes at a time.

To begin with, we worked with the OMU for 17 months. But throughout that time, none of the agencies (except Jackie’s own M4U) had a clear understanding of the purpose of mentors, or the part they were playing in the prisoner induction process. It therefore became very frustrating, working with people, many of whom did not have any
understanding of hidden disabilities or how to work with them. Each agency had its own agenda.

We tried to show the agencies’ representatives that having mentors on the induction wing took pressure off the staff and ensured optimum induction for offenders. The mentors were trained, to have a clear understanding of the new prisoners’ needs. They could help offenders fill in any necessary forms or read their letters, and ensure that prisoners understood all the relevant information. This helped new inmates settle into prison life more easily and quickly. It also helped alleviate the often hostile attitudes of prisoners to staff and to each other in those early weeks.

The IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) advisor team from Tribal interviewed 282 prisoners in one month - March 2007. They advised prisoners about work and education in the prison, and administered a Basic Skills Test. The idea was that the prisoners’ needs should be met by their being referred to the right agency, Yet, during that one month, despite a high percentage of low entry levels in both English and Maths, only two prisoners were referred to ‘Mentoring 4 U’ (or M4U) for support with reading and writing.

Jackie now became the IAG adviser herself, making more detailed assessments of prisoners’ needs and setting up appropriate teaching and mentoring programmes for them. The mentors working with prisoners on the induction wing now had three assessment forms that they would help prisoners to answer:

• 18 questions about their education, qualifications and employment records
• 20 questions about learning disabilities and a dyslexia checklist/questionnaire
• A Traumatic Head Injury questionnaire

RESOURCES

Problems and solutions

In the pilot scheme Jackie had been forced to take pot luck regarding teaching spaces. On many occasions she had to teach in unsuitable rooms, corridors and spaces where there was too much distraction which made it difficult for the prisoners to learn. But she did her best, with what she had.

Gradually, she began to find more suitable spaces to work in and was thereby able to create better learning environments for the prisoners. On the induction wing, Jackie worked with Senior Officer Dawn Amey to locate a room that was under-used – the library. So, one weekend, Jackie and her mentors volunteered to clean and redecorate the library. It would now be used during the working hours of each day to deliver mentoring training courses, interview and assess prisoners, hold learning workshops and to provide much-needed office space in which to store prisoners’ learning and progress records, plus administrative files. Here Jackie also taught her mentors to type, to use the computer and to process data.

During the pilot scheme, Jackie had a special needs class in the education wing, She found
that many of the prisoners did not like the classroom they were given, or the rigid way in which the wing was run. It was not surprising therefore that prison officers would watch through the windows during each session. They said they were looking, to see if anyone was smoking or playing around. But what they didn’t understand was that Jackie was using multi-sensory methods to make learning fun. None of the prisoners wanted to ‘play about’ as the officers expected, but rather to play with learning in Jackie’s constructive way. This caused a real challenge to the prison officers, some of whom were incredulous. They had not seen this creative type of teaching, and were not sure how it worked. But they could see that the prisoners were enjoying this new approach, lapping it up and, in many cases, enjoying their first ever educational successes.

The Learning Workshops where run from G wing, over three sessions, for those at the lowest stages of basic literacy, often equivalent to pre-school levels. The prisoners on this wing were all at work or in education during the daytimes, so nobody was left in their cells. In these sessions there were nine people: four mentors, four prisoners and Jackie Hewitt-Main herself. The aims of the Learning Workshop session were for prisoners to meet and work alongside their mentors, in order to develop the strategies that enabled inmates to identify their most effective learning styles. Jackie worked with the mentors to help them teach some of the lessons themselves.

Vulnerable Prisoners (VP), those convicted of antisocial crimes, do not mix with other prisoners and have their own wing. On Jackie’s pilot project she would find any space she could on the VP wing and work with prisoners there. Finally, she gained permission to take them out of their wing and work in the Library one morning a week. She started to teach some of the VPs to become mentors to help others on their wing. Working with the VPs in the library was really useful.

A VP success story: One of the prisoners in the VP group had suffered his first head injury through a road accident at four years old. He then went on to have another five road accidents, with additional head injuries. At the age of twelve he was diagnosed with ADHD, and shortly afterwards was put into care. He had come into this prison so many times, yet nobody had understood his educational needs. On Jackie’s first sessions with him, she showed him how to use her laptop to source information, and to look at books he enjoyed in the library. Sometimes he would be engaged for ten minutes, and then walk around the library. All the time his confidence was building up as he was able to remain alongside the other learners in the library, whereas before his lessons with Jackie he had always been taken out of the class, and sent back to his cell. He was learning that he could learn, but only in small chunks. This was a revelation to him. As time went on this prisoner came off the VP wing and went into the mainstream prison, he was holding his own, with other prisoners and working well with the mentors. He understood his disabilities at last, and could see that his former educational failures were not all his fault. For the first time in his life, he could see a future for himself, with his family.

Jackie taught the City & Guilds Delivering Learning 7303 (PTLLS) course at The Foundation Training Company (FTC) cabin, in two consecutive sessions on Fridays. This was the only day Jackie had been allotted this room. She had been working very closely with the FTC within her groups, helping prisoners with their resettlement courses, raising their self esteem,
building their confidence and addressing their learning disabilities. However, it was an almost impossible challenge for Jackie to do this on Fridays. It was the one day of the week when prison lessons finished at 4.00 pm, instead of 4.30. Even more of a problem was that Friday was the over 35s’ turn in the Gym. It was their final exercise opportunity of the week as they were not able to do any sports activities at weekends. It was the last time Jackie organised any day-long courses on Fridays.

**Teaching Aids and Security**

In 1999, when Jackie had been working with her younger son’s severe head injury, she came across the multi-sensory techniques of Dr. Samuel Orton (1879-1948). His multi-sensory approach focussed on the ways auditory, visual and kinaesthetic learning could be used to reinforce each other. For example, an individual can more easily learn a letter of the alphabet by being taught to look at the letter, say its name, make its sound and write it in the air, all at the same time. The use of practical accessories to shape the letter by hand consolidate that learning and embed it in the brain.

Teaching in a prison rather than a school has its challenges. Jackie would normally use plasticine, clay and pipe cleaners, which can help learners remember the shapes of letters. However, these simple resources could be used to copy keys or unpick locks, so they were not allowed for use in the prison. Jackie therefore looked around for alternative items that were available inside the prison, or at relatively low cost outside. She started with soap. She taught a man to write onto a bar of soap, which helped him remember how to spell his sons’ names. With another learner she encouraged him to write with toothpaste on wallpaper, and taught him to sound out his vowels within the words. Some prisoners used the letter-shaped pastry cutters in the sand technique, to help them look for words within words. For example, the word ‘vegetable’ has GET and TABLE within it. Jackie used many of these techniques in the lessons she taught in the ‘Teachers TV’ programme from the ‘Beyond the Classroom’ series – ‘Literacy Behind Bars’ (available on the internet and see the ‘educational outreach’ section below).

One prisoner in that programme joked that Jackie’s ‘wacky’ ideas were what had helped him learn. As a result of her many ‘wacky’ ideas to teach prisoners, Jackie was called to explain to the Head of Security & Operations how this or that item could help a prisoner learn. She had to make many applications for resources and tools to be used in her teaching. This in turn meant that Jackie now had to have a secure locker in the mentoring office in which to lock away all these things. There had to be an inventory kept in the Security office, and also at the front gate of the prison.

Once they understood what Jackie was doing and how successful her approach was, the staff really got on board and were thinking of other ideas of engaging prisoners with their learning. One officer was helping her and the mentors, working with a group of prisoners who told the officer how much they liked tattoos and motor bikes. So this was a new opportunity to engage their interests to help with their learning by bringing in magazines, pictures and videos of their subject choices for the prisoners.

While continuing to work with ideas for engaging learners, Jackie realised that some of the
prisoners related best to holding the physical shapes of the letters. So she came up with the idea of approaching the wood workshop. She explained what she wanted and the woodwork teacher and prisoners produced the alphabet letters in wood. Now learners could decorate the letters or cover them in sand paper. This helped them to feel the letters’ shapes, their forms and textures, and say the letters all at the same time.

By engaging staff and prisoners who had previously had no idea of hidden disabilities, they all began to understand how people have different ways of learning. It was great to see everybody beginning to ‘think outside the box’. Staff and prisoners alike were getting involved in delivering the project and working together as a team. It was at this stage that Jackie noticed a huge change. Those prisoners who still found it challenging to read, no longer felt scared to admit they had a problem. They had gained so much confidence that they knew they could get help and that they could learn to overcome their difficulties in time. They took it all in their stride – a very long way forward from where things were at the beginning of the project.

The other obvious security issue relating to teaching aids was how to access the computers and/or laptops when and where they were needed and how to ensure their safe use and storage. Jackie’s research in Sweden had led her to be the first UK user of ‘Lexion’ software, designed specifically for the assessment of dyslexic students and the provision of practice and extension activities to meet their individual needs. This software was a major factor in ensuring prisoner-learners could see and celebrate the progress they were making.
WIDER RECOGNITION

PUBLICITY AND MEDIA EXPOSURE

- **NEWSPAPERS** - Project-leader Jackie Hewitt-Main has collected together an extensive range of press coverage, both locally and nationally. Her Dyslexia and Mentoring project was documented by such prestigious newspapers as The Guardian (twice) and The Times Educational Supplement (TES). (See Appendix 7 for press cuttings and extracts)

- **TV AND RADIO** – This project also attracted considerable media attention on both TV and radio. This included two BBC TV ‘Look East’ interviews, a programme on BBC TV ‘Essex Life – Behind the Scenes at Chelmsford’ and the Teachers’ TV programme ‘Literacy Behind Bars’, which linked Jackie’s ‘Dyslexia Behind Bars’ project with a secondary school in Kent (See Appendix 9).

- **FIRST REPORT of the Project** – Entitled ‘Dyslexia and Mentoring in Prison’, a report of the first funded section of the project was written by Jackie Hewitt-Main, published by Mentfor, 16th January 2007 (ISBN 0-9551984-1-0), and launched on that date in the House of Lords. (See 5* review on Amazon). Although it is now out of print, this second and final project report includes and builds on the main points of Jackie’s first report.

- **JUSTICE AWARD** – In October 2007 Jackie Hewitt-Main was awarded the Essex Criminal Justice Board Award for her ‘Outstanding Contribution to Working with Offenders”. She was nominated for this prestigious award by a senior prison officer at Chelmsford. (See Appendix 2 for citation.)

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE – “the remarkable Jackie Hewitt-Main”

On several occasions in 2007/8 Jackie Hewitt-Main was publicly praised in both Houses of Parliament for her work in this successful project. In particular, Jackie’s work was championed by Lord Addington in the House of Lords and by Simon Burns MP in the House of Commons, both of whom made personal visits to observe and report on the project, as did David Hanson MP, Prisons Minister and Simon Russell MP. Simon Burns MP, who visited the project twice, also took Jackie to have a meeting with David Lammy MP, Sec of State, Innovations. One parliamentary debate in the House of Commons, including input from Prime Minister Tony Blair, extolled Jackie’s work and discussed its possibilities on a wider scale. Sadly, though a government report was promised, it was not forthcoming, as far as we are aware, and no further action transpired, possibly due to the government’s change of leadership. (See Appendix 3 for extracts of these speeches and debates.)

HIGH PRAISE FROM OFSTED

“The very well managed project ... a very skilled tutor ... highly individualised learning support ... learners make significant developments ...”

Ofsted Inspection Report, July 2007

See Appendix 4 for unabridged extracts from both Ofsted Inspection Reports.
MENTORS

“The basic component of the exercise is prisoners. Prisoners are told that they can help someone else because they have the same type of condition and so can understand the problem and explain it to others. ... The fact that you can bring people to the point where they will access the help provided must be a great step forward.”

Lord Addington, House of Lords, 1/2/2007 (see Appendix 3 for full text)

WHO?
Mentors are prisoners who can be either:
- Literate prisoners who may have experienced earlier learning difficulties or problems at school, perhaps resulting from head injuries or other disabilities, and who therefore feel they can form an easy empathy with dyslexic inmates, still struggling to become literate.
- Prisoners who have developed an interest in helping their fellow inmates and volunteer to become mentors. (Some have also gone on to train as adult literacy teachers.)
- Those dyslexic prisoners who have become successful learners and whose potential has been identified as suitable to take on the mentoring role.

Prisoners in this project either volunteered or were invited to become mentors. They were then trained to mentor and support other inmates on a one-to-one basis within the prison or in other prisons.

WHAT?
The Mentoring 4 U (M4U) approach is one of trained peer-mentoring (see page 39 - 40) in which one reasonably literate or newly literate prisoner, who may himself have experienced learning difficulties of some kind, now mentors and supports another prisoner whose dyslexia has been responsible for exceptionally low literacy levels and a resulting inability to fulfil his potential. (This can be a damaging situation in which the prisoner’s low self-esteem and sense of failure may have caused him to self-harm, attempt suicide or turn to crime in his youth in order to appease his frustration and resulting anger.) The peer-mentoring which is at the core of this project opens the door to aspiration and learning for prisoners, often for the first time in their lives.

HOW?
Jackie Hewitt-Main set up an extensive training course (see page 39) to prepare mentors for their roles, taking them through all the different aspects of peer-mentoring. Some of the mentors then go on to study for a qualification in teaching adults, which Jackie also runs within the prison for them. This allows them to take on the tutoring role alongside their mentoring work, at very little cost but to great effect.

WHEN?
The beauty of mentoring is that it isn’t confined only to the time when Jackie, or any course leader/tutor is present in the prison. It can be done at any time when prisoners are free to associate and as often as the learner wishes to have support, which in some cases is daily.
WHERE?
There is no need to set aside separate spaces to work in, because most peer-mentoring takes place in prisoners’ own cells.

WHY?
There are many reasons why this peer-mentoring approach has such a high success-rate:

- Peer-mentoring in this project transformed learners’ lives and opportunities.
- Prisoners helping other prisoners has a huge credibility factor for those inmates who are wary of authority and/or ‘do-gooders’. It is about mutual self-help by those who are or have been in the same situation and thus understand and can express genuine empathy with the learner’s previous failures, his resulting low self-esteem, anxieties and fears.
- Mentoring is highly cost-effective, since prisoners are encouraged to take on education or work within the prison, and this mentoring work can be remunerated in the same way as any other prison job.
- Mentoring has been shown in this project to have had a very positive and calming impact on inmates’ morale, attitudes and behaviour within the prison, resulting in a greatly reduced incidence of the need for staff-interventions, thereby easing the workload of prison officers.
- Mentoring is sustainable and self-perpetuating. New mentors are trained and ready to take the place of those who have either been released or moved to other prisons. In turn, those mentors can either introduce mentoring in their new prisons or mentor young-offenders, those at risk of offending or ex-offenders outside prison, as several from this project are now doing.
- Experience during this project indicates that a relatively high proportion of mentors will go on to undertake further education or training.

“These are people who have been failed by the education system years ago, ... They are now so excited about this project of having a mentor, realising that they aren’t stupid; that they are actually quite clever people. They just need to have this particular learning style approach for them, so that they can go forward.”

Susan Clayton, Head of Learning Skills, HMP Chelmsford.

THE ROLE OF A MENTOR
At the outset of the project Jackie had talked to the education department of the prison about their approach to mentoring. Her initial intention was to work with their scheme at first, whilst gradually refining it to introduce her own mentoring programme (M4U). However, she soon realised this would not be viable, when she was talking to a prisoner with the title ‘education mentor’. He quickly told her that he had received very little training for the role and that he spent most of his time as the cleaner on the education wing.

Indeed, the prison’s attitude to education was inclined to be very negative, with officers feeling prisoners didn’t like education.
For example, during the August Bank Holiday 2006, Jackie went into the prison to set 17 prisoners their homework. She needed to give it out herself at that point, with very few trained mentors yet in place and all the homework individualised – different for each prisoner, according to his particular level and needs. One officer seemed bemused by the explanation she gave for her visit. He told her she was the only civilian in the prison that Bank Holiday, “Are you getting paid for doing this?” he asked. When she said ‘no’, he wondered why she had bothered as “Nobody will do it.” Jackie went back in the next day, Tuesday morning, very gratified to find that all 17 pieces of homework were handed in!

At the outset there was no money allotted to pay mentors for their work. So Jackie liaised with the prison management and persuaded them to agree her mentors’ job-specification and to pay each mentor 98p per session. However, despite having this in writing, it didn’t always happen. As Jackie discovered in the weekly mentoring meetings, the paying of mentors’ wages seemed to be at the whim of senior officers on each wing. Despite her intercessions, this continued to cause problems throughout the project. Fortunately, the mentors were so keen and felt such a sense of satisfaction in their work, they didn’t want to stop, so they were happy to tell Jackie and let her deal with the situation.

The principle aims of the mentoring role within the prison were to:

- Develop the mentor’s own learning and teaching skills
- Provide support to enhance mentors’ own learning
- Extend the range of activities in Learning Workshops
- Provide one-to-one mentoring support throughout the prison
- Develop prisoners’ understanding of their preferred learning styles
- Help prisoners to prepare for their life outside prison
- Help prisoners to develop their own individual learning plans (ILPs).

“The mentoring of one prisoner by another, who has a personal understanding of hidden disabilities and its effect on lives, is a powerful tool for the advancement of both. It also changes the often hostile attitudes of the prisoners to staff and each other.”

Vincent Hagedorn, Executive Director ‘Mentfor’ and the East Mentoring Forum

The mentors’ training course, led by Jackie, consisted of learning to help prisoners to leave their failures behind them, to build on their strengths and understand their most effective learning styles in order to set their own personal targets for a crime-free life following release. (See more details of the mentors’ training course on page 39 onwards.)

Now prison officers could begin to see the benefits of mentoring across the prison and were enthusiastic about its impacts on inmates:

“The benefits are huge for the prisoners, who have previously often had no educational encouragement. Prisoners who have struggled and have not been able to communicate are finding ways to do this and it’s not just through reading and writing. They find they’re able to communicate by mentoring other prisoners and supporting and talking to them.”

Vicky Blakeman, Deputy-Governor Chelmsford Prison (2005-2007)
Mentoring creates traits of empathy which can transform an offender into a contributing member of society.

This has been shown to be effective when a small group of prisoners who were mentors in Chelmsford Prison volunteered to be transferred to Wayland Prison in order to introduce this project on their induction wing. Feedback from Wayland prisoners and staff describes a calmer and more relaxed living environment, together with a greater understanding of hidden disabilities amongst prisoners. This mirrors the situation in Chelmsford Prison.

Unforeseen outcomes of mentoring have included such a transformation in many offenders, as a result of their greater understanding of themselves, their needs and the impacts of their behaviours and attitudes, that broken families have been repaired. This provides new impetus and support for ex-prisoners to change their lives.

MENTOR TRAINING

40 prisoners were trained to become mentors as part of the Mentoring 4 U (M4U) programme in Chelmsford Prison. Jackie Hewitt-Main’s comprehensive training course comprised 8 separate modules:

- The role of a mentor
- Hidden disabilities – What are they and what are their effects? How to identify them.
- Social skills
- IT skills – Using computers to assess and support dyslexic learners
- Multi-intelligences and Learning Styles
- NLP – Neuro-Linguistic Programming
- Multi-sensory learning
- Using DVDs to help teach prisoners to pass driving theory and CSCS (construction skills) tests

When Jackie first met many of the prisoners she noticed that they had few basic skills. They were frustrated and lacked self-esteem; they thought they were useless, they were “only prisoners”, and “nobody cares”. But through their own learning, followed by mentor-training, they learned that by helping other people they get something back themselves. Through mentoring, they have become confident and in control of their own lives.

Many prison officers wanted to spend extra time and put extra work into helping and supporting these prisoners with hidden disabilities, outside their normal work hours, This was a major factor in moving the project forward. They too gained a great sense of achievement. Staff were becoming less cynical and great relationships were being built in all directions. At one point there were 14 offices wanting to take a mentoring course, and some of the
officers wanted to set up a charity organisation with Jackie to establish the uninterrupted running of the programme at Chelmsford prison.

MENTOR MEETINGS

Regular mentors’ meetings were held every week in Chelmsford Prison and mentors were encouraged to come up with their own ideas for improving and extending their working practices. They discussed and evaluated activities and shared problems, seeking workable solutions. (See Minutes of a Mentors’ Meeting in Appendix 14)

For example, a concern expressed by one of the mentors was that many of the prisoners on arrival at the prison were given the wrong forms for education. If there were no mentors available at the time, the prisoners tried to fill in these wrong forms, not knowing what they said, so didn’t realise they were inappropriate. This resulted in some prisoners waiting a long time for the classes they wanted to attend. With the help of Senior Officer Colin Brown, the mentors designed an education slip that could be attached to all education forms. This helped a great deal.

Following this, several of the mentors worked together to design their own leaflet. Then they arranged with a work agency within the prison to design and print their leaflets. (Appendix 15)
CASE-STUDY
Frank, aged 67

Father of four children, grandfather of seven and great-grandfather of two, Frank was convicted and sentenced to three major sentences and one minor sentence, to run consecutively – a total of more than 40 years. He had served 22 years at the beginning of this project.

Originally from the East End of London, he says his education was very poor, though he never missed one day of school.

At the age of 11, Frank became a boxing champion and won the Festival of Britain Boxing Championships in 1951. He left school at 15 and went to work in the fruit markets. At 21 he was called up for his national service, but he didn’t want to do it, so he ran away and worked on building sites around the country.

Following some family trouble, Frank returned to the East End to run his father’s snooker hall. He feels this was the biggest mistake of his life.

When Jackie Hewitt-Main started her project and interviewed Frank, he told her he couldn’t do education as he was “dopey”. Jackie told him about her own failed education at school and her severe dyslexia. She explained to him about how the brain works and that his worked in its own way. Frank just needed to put that to use. He confessed that he didn’t even know his ABC. He said it “didn’t make any sense” to him. Jackie explained about the alphabet and showed him different ways to learn it. Over the next two days, Frank practised and practised in his cell until he knew it. He was very proud of his achievement and Jackie was highly impressed that he had mastered it in such a short time.

Frank’s wife always told him, every visiting time, she would love to get a letter from him between visits. He had never told her he couldn’t write! Now he did one of Jackie’s Learning Workshops and started working hard on his basic literacy skills with a mentor. Within a few weeks he had learnt enough to write his first ever letter ... to his wife. It was only three or four lines, but it was his own. He was very proud of himself. His wife burst into tears when she received that letter.

Frank feels that the learning method that helped him most was hearing the computer. He says it made him concentrate on looking at the words on the screen and listening to the voice reading them. He could recite every word the computer said. Since he learnt his basic literacy skills, Frank has gone on to do a number of IT courses, but wishes the prison had more computers for the prisoners to use.
FRANK’S LETTER OF SUPPORT

Frank was very keen to write about his experiences to the politicians who visited Jackie Hewitt-Main’s ‘Mentoring 4 U’ project in prison. With a little support from his mentor, Frank typed this letter himself, just a few months after he first learnt his ABC.

H.M.P Chelmsford
200 Springfield Road
Chelmsford
Essex
CM2 6LQ

RE: Mentoring the hidden disabilities in Chelmsford Prison.

Dear Sir/Madam

Some time back I was doing the F.T.C course which took 5 weeks, it took me a lot longer because my education is not too good. But the help I got from inmates and teachers gave me was very good.

One day in the class I spoke to a lady and that was Jackie Hewitt-Main and she told me about Dyslexia, ADHD and Head injury. I told her it was no good talking to me about reading and writing, because I don’t even know my ABC.

When I went back to my cell I thought that she was right in what she told me. I went along and started to learn my ABC which I learnt in two days. I must say it’s been a great help to me talking to Jackie which helped me with the F.T.C. I would like to say that we need a class like this because a lot of people don’t know what Dyslexia and ADHD and head injury is about.

I thought I was dopey but it’s not true because I’m willing to learn so please help me and others and keep this going.

Yours Truly

P.S. I’m 67 years old, it just goes to prove you are never to old, Thanks for every thing and every one’s help and lets keep the good work going.
It was an opportunity that the Project Director Jackie Hewitt-Main did not miss. Six trained prisoner mentors volunteered to be transferred on a pre-arranged basis to Wayland prison to introduce the project there, starting on Wayland’s Induction wing. One of these took on the role of project facilitator, to lead the initiative. Four volunteers from the local community came forward to help these trained mentors to teach with the multi-sensory approach. With no funding, Jackie took these volunteers through the mentoring course and materials in her own home.

Jackie sent them the materials they needed and liaised with the prison to provide suitable computers and work-spaces. This plan was implemented very effectively and mentors went on to support 70 more dyslexic prisoners at Wayland. Staff there reported that our mentors helped prisoners with other learning difficulties too.

On his unexpected transfer to Belmarsh Prison, Colin, the prisoner who was Head of M4U Mentors at Chelmsford Prison, wrote about his experience of introducing mentoring at Belmarsh:

“In August 2006 I was sent to Belmarsh Prison to continue my sentence. I started to help inmates on the wing with legal letters. I started to work in the hospital wing, where I was writing letters and helping inmates to read and write. The educational department were so pleased with my work and the support that I was giving to the other inmates that they phoned Jackie to see if she could set up the project at Belmarsh. I was told that due to lack of funding, this could not take place in this prison. I helped as many inmates as I could in the year that I was at Belmarsh.”

Four years on, there are still a few small pockets of this project continuing.
2. Maintaining contact after release

“The problem is that once prisoners are released, there is no system by which individuals can continue to receive help.”

Simon Burns MP, House of Commons 27th May 2007

Simon Burns MP urged ministers to provide funding to assist individuals who have been released from prison so that they can continue to improve their “educational capabilities” and reduce their potential for reoffending. (see full text of this exchange with Prime Minister Tony Blair in Appendix 3)

Despite Simon Burns’s plea and the Prime Minister’s encouraging response, no government funding has been made available for this purpose.

Notwithstanding, and with no funding at all, Jackie Hewitt-Main followed the first 17 project participants to be released from Chelmsford Prison four years ago. Depending on their circumstances and locations, she maintained regular and ongoing contact with them, visiting and working with those ex-prisoners’ families who lived within two hours travelling distance, supporting them as well as the ex-offenders themselves, healing family rifts wherever possible, providing advice and encouragement over the phone or by letter, helping them to fill in job applications, housing and benefit forms, to manage their limited income, and generally re-integrate into their communities.

The majority of these ex-offenders have become useful and enthusiastic members of society, holding successful jobs or voluntary work, mentoring others to avoid crime and improve their literacy levels. Only one of these 17 has re-offended over the four years – a remarkable achievement. (See Outcomes section on page 8 for a full breakdown.)

3. Secondary School liaison

Jackie Hewitt-Main was approached to make a programme for Teachers’ TV. This was filmed over a two-day period, during which Laura Jewiss, a secondary school teacher and leader of literacy at Sittingbourne College, Kent, came to visit. She observed Jackie and her mentors in action in the prison. Laura watched multi-sensory teaching, computer assessment and learning sessions and one-to-one peer-mentoring. She also talked with Jackie, her mentors, several prisoner-learners and prison officers.

At one point of the TV programme, Laura is standing by a glazed door, observing Jackie teaching a small group of prisoners:

“I’m watching Jackie and the boys through the door now, and they are totally engaged in what she’s talking about, animated, listening to each other. She’s got them totally spell-bound.”

Laura Jewiss, SENCo at Sittingbourne College (Secondary School), Kent

Impressed with everything she saw and learnt, Laura went back to Sittingbourne with renewed enthusiasm to devise a completely new programme of multi-sensory learning for her Year 9 boys with literacy difficulties. This proved to be so beneficial, that she led some
inset sessions for all the school’s staff, led the redesign of the curriculum and re-zoning parts of the school to make everything more dyslexia-friendly. This work has revitalised the school, transformed morale, attitudes and behaviour and helped a higher percentage of students to fulfil their potential and achieve useful qualifications before leaving school. (Read about this initiative and its outcomes in Appendix 9.)

4. International Outreach

As part of her initial research into prison education and resources, Jackie visited the USA and studied Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences with him, as well as some allied research into learning styles and multi-sensory learning. Aspects of all these studies were incorporated into the planning of her Chelmsford Prison project.

During this project, Jackie was invited to visit Skogome Prison in Sweden to help educators there to assess what proportion of that prison’s population had hidden disabilities, to discuss her project with them and to explore the possibility of them implementing something similar. Soon after, a group of Swedish prison educators came to Chelmsford Prison to observe Jackie and her mentors at work, interviewing them about mentoring, their use of ‘Lexion’, multi-sensory learning and their hidden disabilities. They talked with a large group of prisoners in Jackie’s project, some of whom stood up and told their stories, described their learning needs and spoke about their experiences of mentoring. The Swedish delegates stayed all day and attended some learning workshops. They left with a better understanding of the work needed in their own prison in Sweden. (See Appendix 10)

The Deputy Governor at Chelmsford Prison, Vicky Blakeman, asked Jackie to go and speak about the outcomes of her Chelmsford Prison project at an international conference in Ireland in 2007, organised by the European Prison Education Association. Her enthusiastic presentation attracted much interest and invitations to visit the USA and Australia to tour their prisons and schools, research their prison education systems and discuss her project. What she discovered on these trips made Jackie realise her multi-sensory teaching and mentoring approach could help prisoners in many other countries as well as across the UK.

Jackie made a second visit to Sweden to speak at a conference there and to advise prison staff on implementing a similar project at Skogome Prison. (She has recently been asked to return for a third time.)

In April 2012, Jackie was invited to be the key speaker at an international conference in Holland, entitled ‘Dyslexia in Detention’, attended by delegates from governmental and voluntary organisations in several different countries. This was a great success, with a queue of delegates wanting to discuss with her how she might be able to help them to improve prison education in their own countries.

Jackie has now been in discussion with prison organisers and educators from ten different countries outside the UK: Ireland, Sweden, Holland, Finland, Norway, Italy, Estonia, Turkey, Australia and the USA. (For more about international outreach and how one collaboration worked out, see Appendix 10.)
TRAINING COURSES AND LEARNING PROGRAMMES

This project included the following courses of training and learning opportunities:

- Briefings for prison officers and tutors on dyslexia and its impacts
- Six-week course on dyslexia for prison staff and interested literate prisoners
- Ten-week Mentoring 4 U course for prisoners identified or aspiring to be mentors
- Learning Workshops (three sessions per group) for prisoners at the lowest literacy levels
- IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance), working with individual prisoners
- 30 sessions City & Guilds Delivering Learning 7303 level 3 course (PTLLS) training prisoner volunteers to be adult literacy teachers
- Training course for volunteers from the community to mentor dyslexic prisoners
- Peer-mentoring ongoing in all wings of the prison throughout the project on a needs-led basis for as long as the prisoner-learner wanted to continue with his prisoner-mentor
- Multi-sensory learning sessions for dyslexic prisoners – ongoing for as long as needed, either individually or in small groups

**Dyslexia Briefings for Prison staff**

At the outset of this project, Jackie Hewitt-Main quickly realised that many of the staff having daily contact with the prisoners and their problems, did not understand dyslexia, could not identify those prisoners who might be dyslexic, had no awareness of the impacts of dyslexia on behaviours and attitudes, nor any knowledge of how to meet dyslexic prisoners’ needs.

Her early briefings for prison staff aimed to address these basic areas as quickly as possible, especially for officers on the induction wing who could be helped to learn how to identify and flag up any new inmates who might be dyslexic and help them fill in their induction forms.

**Six-week Course on Dyslexia**

As part of the initial pilot scheme, Jackie developed a six-week course on dyslexia for prison staff and interested literate prisoners, one morning a week, with a presentation at the end. The presentation was to prison management and other invited guests from the community. Twenty literate prisoners became mentors on completion of this first course and were awarded certificates at the presentation ceremony, at which several of them spoke to the audience of their experiences. This was filmed for further training purposes.

In this six-week course, Jackie Hewitt-Main covered Learning Styles, Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, Skills for Life and Lexion (dyslexia progress assessment and learning) software.
The need for more extensive mentor-training to work with dyslexic prisoners

In her initial interviews with prisoners, and as she began working with those who had dyslexia, Jackie could already see that she would have to develop more in-depth courses, including social skills – such advice as don’t listen too much to criticism, treat officers as you would want them to treat you, and at all times maintain a positive attitude. These guidelines were sometimes very hard to put into practice in the prison environment.

Whilst working with her first group of prisoner-mentors, Jackie could identify many challenges that faced prisoners with learning disabilities. Mentors needed to help prisoner-learners to find ways of overcoming these problems. So many of them had been excluded from school by the age of 12, and they were often less mature than their peers. Many of them didn’t have an understanding of how to manage their own emotions and behaviours.

Outside the prison, relationships and domestic violence seemed to be high on their list of difficulties, along with holding down a job, or passing any type of test, such as the driving theory or construction skills tests. These too would need to be addressed in future mentoring courses. Jackie now set about devising a more comprehensive mentor-training programme – the Mentoring 4 U course (see below).

Learning Workshops

Three sessions of two and a half hours each. Four prisoner-learners, together with four prisoner-mentors, led by Jackie Hewitt-Main.

The aim of the learning workshops was to help the prisoners attaining at the lowest literacy levels, often pre-school level, to understand that they are not failures, that they have a different way of learning and to give them strategies that enable them to identify their own sensory learning styles. Jackie helped all learning workshop participants to design their own individual learning plans (ILPs) with their mentors.

50 Prisoners (4 mentees with 4 mentors at a time) went through these learning workshops. They covered the following areas of learning:

- What am I good at?
- Learning Styles (Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic)
- ‘Lexion’ Assessment
- Where am I now?
- My qualities and skills
- Driving theory test
- Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS)
- Draw up my Personal Action Plan (leading to an Individual Learning Plan)
- Targets I can work towards
- Interview with Jackie (project director) and my mentor
Role play is a great way to give learners an opportunity, not only to practise skills they are learning, but also to teach them to evaluate each other’s or their own performance or skills. **Modelling** is another strategy used in learning workshops. Jackie would ask one of her mentors to enact the social intercourse skills she wanted the prisoners to observe and learn.

Following these activities, by the third workshop, a change in the learners was clearly noticeable to Jackie and the mentors. Many of the participating prisoners became less self-centred. They grew more willing and open to the mentoring process, and were glad to help other learners to follow them through the Learning Workshops in their turn.

Meanwhile, the project’s trained prisoners, as they began mentoring others, demonstrated a step-change in self-awareness, responsibility, confidence and self-esteem.

Jackie Hewitt-Main discussed the outcomes of these learning workshops with her team of mentors.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LEARNING WORKSHOP feedback forms</th>
<th>Excell/ vg/ gd</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>How useful was this session?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much did you learn?</td>
<td>77% 27% 45% 5% 23% 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding

What did you gain by attending these sessions?

“Getting to know more people and learning more about me.”

“It calmed me down.”

“I had a good interview with Jackie.”

“Able to talk to someone about my problems.”

“Computer knowledge.”

“The fact that I have the opportunity to become a mentor.”

(See Appendix 12 for individual Learning Workshop case-studies)

**10-week Mentoring 4 U Course**

The journey in planning this course took Jackie many weeks to complete, but immediately she began to train the new group of prisoner-mentors she realised it had been worth the extra work to ensure a comprehensive preparation for all mentors working with dyslexic prisoners. This became the successful model for the duration of the project.

The Mentoring 4 U course ran for ten sessions of two and a half hours each and covered the following modules:

- Role of the mentor
- Social skills
- Multi-intelligences
- NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming)
- Hidden Disabilities, with a particular emphasis on dyslexia
- Multi-sensory teaching and learning
- IT skills and the use of the ‘Lexion’ software for assessment and learning
- The driving theory test
- The Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS)
- Brain-friendly nutrition

Jackie took small groups of mentors through this course, to ensure optimum conditions for mentors’ own learning and development in preparation for their roles.

On the first run of this course, the first day went well. On the second morning one of the prisoners did not turn up. He had seemed so keen on the first day so this seemed strange. Worried about him, Jackie asked a prison officer to try and find out why he was not there. Officer Amey found out that he had not been able to come as he’d been given one hour’s notice of moving to another prison, much against his wishes. She went to talk with him while he was waiting for the transport. She found him very upset. He had greatly enjoyed the first day of the course and wanted to continue, but this was not allowed. What really shocked Dawn Amey was how much knowledge he’d gained in just the one day and how frustrated he was not to be able to continue. However, he was permitted to take his Mentoring 4 U course notes with him to the next prison, so that he could read them through and put them into effect in another induction wing.

On this Mentoring 4 U course, Jackie trained a further 40 prisoners to be mentors. Six more were trained by Jackie to extend the mentoring to Wayland Prison on a planned transfer.

Many of the mentors at Chelmsford Prison met with Lord Addington during his fact-finding visit to see Jackie Hewitt-Main’s project in action. Some of the mentors subsequently wrote to thank him for coming. Other parliamentary visitors were Simon Burns MP (twice), David Hanson MP, then Minister for Prisons, and Bob Russell MP. Several press and media visits followed and were subsequently reported on and televised. (see prisoners’ letters to Lord Addington in Appendix 5, media in Appendix 7 and prisoners-mentors’ feedback in Appendix 13)
MENTORING 4 U Course to train mentors - feedback forms

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<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>39%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<td>9%</td>
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<td>82%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding

What did you gain by attending these sessions?

“Being bad at one thing doesn’t mean I’m bad at everything. I can improve myself.”
“Lots of new ideas which stimulates my brain and makes me think healthy.”
“I was able to help other people today. Also I got a mind map done for myself.”
“Learning how people have problems with learning and taking on board how they feel.”
“Confidence.” “Patience” “More about me. Also the goals I want to achieve.”
“I have a better understanding about Dyslexia and Mentoring.”

Following a later mentoring course, Jackie asked 40 mentors for some additional feedback on their mentoring programme and activities:

- 100% had enjoyed the course (ticking either good or excellent).
- 100% also rated the resources to be either good or excellent.
- 100% ticked the yes box for the helpfulness of the tutor and her ability to give clear answers to their questions.
- When asked how they thought the mentoring programme sessions could be improved, 40% thought they could be and suggested: more computers, more classes and longer sessions.
- 100% of mentors ticked the yes box that they would recommend the course to others.

Mentors’ additional comments re the ‘Mentoring 4 U’ course

“Keep project in prison, because it’s helpful to help inmates to learn and understand their needs, also helping build confidence.”
“I think there should be more of this type of work within the prison system and others would benefit with this type of constant help available. I was happy to receive this type of help. I think this would benefit many others like me. Thank you.”

IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance)

When funding for the pilot scheme ended, Jackie continued to work in the prison on a voluntary basis. Behind the scenes, realising how valuable this project was, the Deputy Governor, Vicky Blakeman, was sourcing further funding, which required Jackie to take on the additional role of IAG worker. The main part of this work was to help individuals to overcome their barriers to learning and support them in making realistic, well-informed choices. Her target group was prisoners with disabilities. So, this was not after all an
additional role – it was something Jackie was already doing with great enthusiasm and energy. Now she could once again be paid to continue with her project!

Jackie developed an individualised service, tailored to prisoners’ needs. She interviewed prisoners on a one-to-one basis, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, designing their learning plans and equipping each of them to become lifelong learners.

During this phase of the project, Jackie was also working at the local college where she studied for an additional qualification. Because of her own severe dyslexia, Jackie had to work so much harder than the average student and devise ways to overcome her own learning difficulties. Her determination greatly impressed her tutor:

“Through the course duration, Jackie taught me things in terms of how ‘hidden’ disabilities affect people and I have taken what I learnt into my career. She was and continues to be a very inspirational person to myself and to others.”

Ann Centeno (Adult Learning Tutor)

City & Guilds Delivering Learning 7303 level 3 Course (PTLLS)

PTLLS = Preparing To Teach in the Lifelong Learning Centre.

This is a long course – 30 day-long sessions. 10 prisoners signed up to train as adult literacy teachers. Four of these were Mentoring 4 U mentors, two were mentors in the PITC computer workshop, one a wing cleaner and mentor, one was an insider from the induction wing and one was a gym orderly. Half of this group had learning disabilities. The aim was to ensure that all participants gained a greater knowledge and understanding of how to work with challenging learners in a group or classroom environment. Ten prisoners began the course, ten completed it and all ten passed.

The PTLLS course is organised in five units of work, spread over 30 sessions:

Unit 1 – understand own role, responsibilities and boundaries of role in relation to teaching
Unit 2 – understand teaching and learning approaches in the specialism (dyslexia)
Unit 3 – demonstrate session planning skills
Unit 4 – understand how to deliver inclusive sessions which motivate learners
Unit 5 – understand use of different assessment methods and the need for record-keeping

In assessing the ten participants and passing them all, the PTLLS verifier commented:

“It was obvious Jackie had fully prepared them and built their confidence enormously.”
City & Guilds 7303 (PTLLS) teaching course feedback forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback Question</th>
<th>Excellent/good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Blank</th>
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<tr>
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<td>35%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much did you learn?</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding

What did you gain by attending these sessions?

“I learnt how tactile learning activities help people who find it hard to read more than normal curriculum.” “Team-work skills.” “I enjoyed talking about learning methods.”

“I learnt about equal opportunities ways of teaching, praising students and being a good teacher.” “I learnt how to micro-teach and stay calm whilst teaching.”

Additional comments from prisoners taking the City & Guilds 7303 (PTLLS) course/exam

“It would be helpful if the prison library had books on the subject.”

“It could only be improved by more sessions and extra help for the tutor.”

“Our teacher needs more assistance herself by way of funding. She gives 100% all of the time ... It would be nice to know that other areas of the UK could benefit.”

(See Appendix 13 for fuller extracts of PTLLS participants’ self-evaluations.)

**Training Volunteers from the Local Community**

Four volunteers from the Chelmsford area came forward and asked Jackie if she would train them to be mentors for prisoners or ex-prisoners with dyslexia or other hidden disabilities. As there was no additional funding for this, Jackie ran these training sessions in her own home. One volunteer explained in writing her motivation to help Jackie with her work:

“I believe it to be an excellent opportunity to learn how Jackie has implemented this revolutionary scheme on the floor level, so that we can begin to understand the bigger picture. I don’t think these guys are looking for the sympathy card, but the chance to be supported in their learning, progress, achieve and become confident and in control of their lives. I feel passionately that, without these fundamental skills, any given human being is inevitably going to develop frustrations and a very low esteem. To help create a little window of hope has got to be a good thing!”

Deborah Harris, Dyslexia Co-ordinator

Whilst the main focus through all these training courses was on dyslexia, Jackie also ensured that participants had an understanding of other hidden disabilities, including ADD/ADHD, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, Asperger’s Syndrome and head injury. Many of these conditions go hand in hand, under an umbrella of hidden disabilities, with a range of different needs. For example, someone who has suffered a head injury may have personality changes that can manifest themselves in anti-social ways or that may get them in trouble with those in
authority. It is vital both to identify this problem and to help the prisoner recognise that there is a cause of his behaviours and that he can be helped to build on his strengths and adopt strategies to address his difficulties.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX 1

A PRISONER’S EXPERIENCE OF DYSLEXIA

The following extracts are from a moving letter written by a Chelmsford Prisoner to Jackie Hewitt-Main, Project Director of Mentoring 4 U’s ‘Dyslexia Behind Bars’. The letter was difficult to read, but extracts have been rearranged and printed here as a précis of the handwritten letter. They are the writer’s own words, including his own spellings. But punctuation has been inserted where necessary, to help the reader.

“DISLEXCIA

I wish to give you this letter as example of Dislecia – a man who couldn’t write his own thoughts on paper ... Do you know on My Education Test I couldn’t even add to & Two. Yet I play piano to grade 7 ... Yet (I’m) still treated as an IDIOT.

The Key Issue is lack of understanding the prevalence of dislexia. I know I have it but for the life of me cannot spell it as many other words I see totally as a jumble ...

I read (a long list of Greek, Roman, Russian, Chinese and European classics in several genres) ... but I hope this may help you as an example, as the frightening (thing) as you are trapped by your knowledge. In my case (it) has set me free – free to be a good person, free to show compassion. Free to understand my victims, free, to do all I can in Reform ...

I have had lately a problem ... But I found People at last listen ... Without people & those who support you there will be Incarsaration of mind & body ... Understand the mind. Education ... makes us see humanity, our weekness, our falls. It shows up compation, it strengthens. Education is the key to Crime & Community. Understand Dixleia & you have the key.

Without education, we are lost people because they cannot see beyond the Mask of Dixlecia.”

For the first time in his life, this prisoner found himself in a supportive situation where his intelligence was recognised, his strengths were nurtured; his literacy skills developed and he could plan for a positive future.

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In October 2007, Jackie Hewitt-Main was awarded the Essex Criminal Justice Board Award for her ‘Outstanding Contribution to Working with Offenders.”

Jackie was nominated for this prestigious award by senior prison officer Dawn Amey, who recommended her as follows:

“Jackie is herself dyslexic. She has one son who suffered a serious head injury and another who is dyslexic and attends university. She has spent many hours developing easier ways of teaching herself and her sons to read and write to a high standard, and also to deal with the day to day problems dyslexia brings to each person.

Jackie came into the prison to look at the way prisoners learn and the problems they faced with education. A large percentage of the prison population cannot read or write and a simple test showed than many were in fact dyslexic.

Since then, Jackie has spent many hours teaching prisoners how to read and write and restore their self-esteem. She has worked with young and old. Including some men who have spent most of their lives in and out of prison and are now able to write to their wives, children and grandchildren.

Jackie has also taught other prisoners to become mentors so that her teaching methods are now spread throughout the prison population in Chelmsford.

She has helped staff identify prisoners that display certain types of behaviour that could indicate they are dyslexic, and refer them to Jackie for help. She is also forging links with outside agencies to continue the support for prisoners on their release.”
APPENDIX 3

PARLIAMENTARY RECOGNITION

Jackie Hewitt-Main’s Mentoring 4 U ‘Dylsexia Behind Bars’ project in Chelmsford Prison was the subject of at least five separate parliamentary debates. The extracts below are taken verbatim from the Hansard records of these debates in both the House or Lords and the House of Commons.

Both Lord Addington and Simon Burns MP (for Chelmsford) visited Chelmsford Prison to observe and discuss the project with Jackie, her mentors, prisoner-learners and prison officers. Indeed, Simon Burns made two visits, a year apart, to observe progress. David Hanson MP, then Minister for Prisons, and Bob Russell MP (for Colchester) also visited the project in the prison. David Hanson MP, Minister for Prisons, and the then Under-secretary of State for Innovations, David Lammy MP, had a meeting with Jackie and Simon Burns MP about the Chelmsford dyslexia and mentoring project. Prime Minister at the time, Tony Blair, was also aware of Jackie’s project and promised a government study on its impacts, but as far as we know this was not forthcoming, perhaps due to a change of leadership.

Key sections of the parliamentary extracts below are emboldened where they are directly linked to Jackie Hewitt-Main’s dyslexia and mentoring project.

House of Lords, 1\textsuperscript{st} February 2007

Lord Addington

“My Lords ... There is great consensus in this field about the fact that, unless we do something to stop the cycle of reoffending, we cannot build enough prisons—not until we have taken away rather more of the green belt than is planned for housing. We do not seem to be able to stop it. Governments get tough to deal with problems or perceived problems. They flex their muscles; they shout at the judiciary; the judiciary puts a few more people in prison; the papers then decide to run a few more scare stories; and the cycle goes on.

We must look at why the same people are going through the system more quickly, which is what we are trying to address. I turn my attention to a component of the prison population: the number of dyslexics. Almost everyone in the debate will agree that many prisoners have few qualifications and skills and little training capacity. This is particularly common among repeat offenders. The Minister may sigh inwardly as I go into this subject again, as I have mentioned it in the past. ...

A new study was just brought to my attention. It was undertaken by Jackie Hewitt-Main at Chelmsford Prison, where a new approach has been taken. The study found that 53 per cent of prisoners going through that prison had dyslexia or dyslexic tendencies—a high enough figure to cause alarm and draw attention, anyway. The main problem was how to access support and help. Jackie Hewitt-Main went on to note that six out of 10 people were not
accessing support, and that most of them were dyslexic. She found that the process of studying and support for someone who has failed in the classroom was a problem. Such people do not like the classroom, because they have been told in their childhood that they are a failure, and, indeed, that their brain is no good, because everyone knows that the measure of intelligence is the ability to master reading and writing. Their dislike is probably understandable. The group gained access to studying through mentoring. Initially, Jackie herself acted as a mentor to people by explaining the problem to them and then encouraging them to enter the system. But one person, no matter how inspiring, has limitations. The real revelation here was successfully training other inmates to be mentors and getting them to speak to other prisoners so that they could enter the education system, too.

A system like this deserves careful study, because it does not have the usual fallback of throwing more resources at the problem. The basic component of the exercise is prisoners. Prisoners are told that they can help someone else because they have the same type of condition and so can understand the problem and explain it to others. This seems to be working. It is a new project, and has to be studied long-term. Will the Government give an undertaking to consider such a self-help system? The fact that you can bring people to the point where they will access the help provided must be a great step forward. If six out of 10 prisoners would rather be in their cells than take classes, is that not a condemnation of what is going on now? People who are unemployable, and who will therefore always be at the bottom of the economic pile with very little respect and very little stake in society, are almost guaranteed to reoffend or at least be at great risk of reoffending. If the Government could indicate to me that they are prepared to consider this type of self-help scheme, I would be very grateful and interested to see how it goes. Unless we take a slightly more sideways approach, we get into an argument in which the Government have to be tough on crime and build a few more prisons, but we say, “No, you must throw more resources at it”. Surely this is one way in which we can square a circle.”

(see www.publications.parliament.uk for full text of debate in Lords Hansard, 1 Feb 2007, columns 394-5)

House of Commons, 23rd May 2007

Mr. Simon Burns MP (Con: West Chelmsford)

“Will the Prime Minister consider commissioning reports and investigations into early interventions and the potential link between suffering from dyslexia and criminality later in life? Is he aware that there is a unique pilot scheme in Chelmsford Prison that has identified that more than 50 per cent of prisoners suffer from dyslexia? Help is being provided in the prison to allow them to overcome or minimise their problems, but there is no help once they leave prison, which could lead to ongoing problems and a return to criminality.” (NB Jackie subsequently extended her mentoring to beyond the prison with a small group of released prisoners, cutting their reoffending rate to 10% of the national average.)
The Prime Minister (Tony Blair)

“The point that the hon. Gentleman makes is good and valid. The Government are now looking at the links with some learning disabilities – dyslexia is an obvious one. He is absolutely right to say that many of those people in the prison population have not had the educational opportunities – often because they are dyslexic, have not been diagnosed properly and have not got the extra help that they need. We are looking specifically at how the early intervention programmes help those people. He is absolutely right in what he says, and when we have the results of the investigation that we are carrying out at the moment we will of course share them with the House.”

(See www.publications.parliament.uk for Hansard text of 23 May 2007, column 1270)

House of Commons, 24th May 2007

Mr. Simon Burns MP

“I welcome the opportunity to raise two issues of importance in my constituency. I raised the first with the Prime Minister yesterday during Prime Minister’s Question Time: the link between learning disabilities and educational difficulties such as dyslexia, and criminality.

Two Fridays ago, I was fortunate enough to be invited by a remarkable woman in my constituency, Jackie Hewitt-Main, to visit Chelmsford prison and observe a unique project called ‘Mentoring 4U’ In a voluntary capacity, rather than as an employee of the Prison Service, she had come up with a scheme involving her interviewing all 452 prisoners between the beginning of February and the end of April this year. She discovered that 104 had been to special needs schools or received private tutoring during their educational years. Significantly, 224 of the men—it is a male prison—had learning disabilities. She found that 185 suffered from dyslexia, 30 from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder—15 as a result of head injuries—four from learning disabilities, one from dyspraxia and one from Tourette’s syndrome. As part of the wider educational scheme, she established that 324 men had not passed their driving tests—which I must confess surprised me—and 276 had been excluded from school. (NB These figures have now been superseded by a much larger study – see findings, page 18 of main report, showing 53% of all prisoners over 2½ years had dyslexia).

The trouble with dyslexia is that until relatively recently many people did not recognise its existence. When I became a Member of Parliament 20 years ago my county council, Essex, would not acknowledge the condition. If a condition such as dyslexia is not recognised, there is obviously no provision to help dyslexic people to minimise or overcome their educational difficulties. All too often, owing to a failure or refusal to recognise the condition, people were written off as stupid or thick. That is hardly a productive or sensible way to try to help people. Fortunately, things have moved on. There is now a greater recognition and understanding of the problems, and a desire to provide help.
The mentoring project in Chelmsford prison, run by that remarkable woman Jackie Hewitt-Main, not only identifies prisoners who suffer from dyslexia or other learning disabilities, but—using other people in the prison environment—helps them with literacy problems. It guides and mentors them to ensure that they can make progress.”

Mr. Nigel Evans MP (Con: Ribble Valley)

“Many parents look for smaller schools when they realise that their children suffer from dyslexia. Should not local authorities try to provide some form of mentoring or extra assistance for dyslexic youngsters in larger schools, so that they too can be helped?”

Mr. Simon Burns MP

“My hon. Friend is right to raise the problems of dyslexia and special needs education in mainstream schools. When it is decided that a child requires a statement, it is crucial that local education authorities ensure that it is done swiftly rather than being put off for what are effectively money-saving purposes. When a statement recommends help and extra tuition, that recommendation should be honoured, and again there should be no delay as part of a cost-cutting exercise. It is crucial that, during school years, children are provided with the help and the aids that they need....

The project in Chelmsford prison takes that work beyond the school environment. It is gratifying to go into a prison to see not only dedicated people offering their services to provide that help, but how they have reached out and involved other prisoners, who give their time and experience to help mentor and advise prisoners who suffer from dyslexia. It is an important scheme not only for the immediate benefits that it will bring to individual prisoners, but because, if it can help to minimise prisoners’ educational learning problems, it will encourage them to get a better start when they leave prison. However, that depends on help being provided once they are released back into society, having served their sentence.

The trouble facing the scheme is that first it is, to my knowledge, the only such scheme in the country. I think that what is going on in Chelmsford prison should be analysed and introduced in other prisons, so that other prisoners can benefit. Secondly, there is, in effect, a cut-off. When prisoners finish their sentences and go back into society, they have no way of being able to continue the work they have been doing and the help they have been receiving. More should be done to ensure that they can access help, including continued educational help, when they are released. That will help to enhance not only their self-esteem and self-confidence, but their ability to integrate into the work force and society. It will also help to minimise the possibility of reoffending and their returning to prison. I urge the Minister to urge his colleagues in the Ministry of Justice to see what can be done through practical aid to ensure that the good work that has been generated by the project in Chelmsford is not lost completely following the release of a prisoner and whether such projects can be extended to other prisons for other people to benefit.
I was heartened by the answer that the Prime Minister gave me yesterday. Not only is he aware of that matter but research has been commissioned across the area of learning disabilities and criminality. He gave a commitment that, when the work had been completed and studied—presumably by Ministers in the Ministry of Justice—it would be released. It will be interesting to see the conclusions and results of that work. I hope that more attention will be given to the matter to ensure that we can build on it.

The Prime Minister, when in opposition, both as shadow Home Secretary and as Leader of the Opposition, created—with, I think, the help of the Prime Minister-elect—the catch-phrase “Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime.” We can be tough on the causes of crime by identifying a problem of which many people will have been oblivious, because they think more about mainstream problems with criminality and so will not have given the matter much thought”.

(See www.publications.parliament.uk for Hansard text of 24 May 2007, columns 1481-3)

House of Commons, 4th February 2008

Mr. Simon Burns MP

“I personally believe that prison serves two purposes: punishment for the individual and, equally importantly, an opportunity for rehabilitation. However, rehabilitation can be achieved only if prisoners reach a certain level of education. The HMI report showed that nearly a third of people in Chelmsford prison had been unemployed and a further third had been involved in activities that provided no skills or qualifications. It is critical, to assist with rehabilitation and minimise reoffending rates, that levels of literacy and education be raised among prisoners. That will give those prisoners a golden opportunity to make a fresh start on release and to minimise their opportunities to reoffend. They will have gained a level of literacy and education that not only incentivises them to try to find employment but makes them more attractive to employers, so that in the very difficult circumstances of released prisoners, they can secure jobs.

In that respect, Chelmsford prison has been extremely fortunate, because it has benefitted from the work of Jackie Hewitt-Main, who has created the Mentoring 4 U programme. Using research on the prisoners, she has identified that a significant number of them suffer from dyslexia, which is, of course, the root of a great deal of illiteracy in the prison system and, for that matter, outside the prison system. She has established a programme in which other prisoners are engaged to help prisoners who suffer from dyslexia and dyspraxia to overcome or minimise their literacy problems as an exciting and potentially very beneficial programme, but like many other good ideas, it suffers from funding problems.

I urge the Minister to liaise with her colleague the Under-Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Lammy MP) – I hope to do so too, personally if I can secure a meeting with him. He is responsible for the funding of such programmes in our prison
system, and we could try to persuade the Department to provide funding for that imaginative and important scheme. I also urge her to study the reports that have been conducted on the Mentoring 4 U programme in Chelmsford Prison, because they are very positive and hopeful. If she were to agree with my analysis, and that of Ofsted, that the project is positive and worthwhile, she should consider rolling out the programme to other prisons, so that other prisoners can benefit from that sort of programme and enjoy the same benefits as those enjoyed by prisoners in Chelmsford prison. That will help to enable prisoners with dyslexia and dyspraxia to reduce their illiteracy and give them an opportunity to take positive steps forward, so that when they are released there is the beneficial impact of minimising the likelihood of their reoffending.”

(See www.publications.parliament.uk for Hansard text of 4 February 2008, columns 764-6)

House of Commons, 29th April 2008

Mr. Simon Burns MP

“I pay tribute to the Minister and to the Under-Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Lammy), for their commitment to helping to enhance the education of prisoners who suffer from dyslexia and dyspraxia. Will the Minister work with other Departments to seek to spread to other prisons the pilot scheme that has been going on in Chelmsford prison, from within the prison system, to reduce levels of illiteracy and to enhance the ability of those suffering from dyslexia to learn to read and write so that when they leave prison their enhanced educational capacity means that they are less likely to reoffend?”

Mr. David Hanson MP (Minister for Prisons)

“I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising that point in that way. He will know that I visited Chelmsford prison in July last year and met here in the House later in the year some of his constituents who are involved in schemes in the prison to help to raise literacy and numeracy levels. The work that is undertaken in Chelmsford, often by voluntary organisations, is key to helping the prison service to raise the basic level of literacy and numeracy for individuals in prison. The House will know that many prisoners enter prison with low levels of literacy and numeracy, and low levels of self-esteem as a result. One way to help prevent them reoffending is to ensure that we raise their skill levels, especially if they have conditions such as dyslexia. We focus especially on how to raise their skill levels to help them to obtain employment in the community.”

(See www.publications.parliament.uk for Hansard text of 29 April 2008)
APPENDIX 4

OFSTED INSPECTIONS DURING THE PROJECT

INSPECTION DATE: 13 July 2007

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL – Achievement and Standards

Quality of Provision

The prison has developed its provision to identify and support learners with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties very effectively. The very well-managed project has supported 96 learners since it started in January 2006. Initial screening for dyslexia is now a systematic part of the prison’s learning and skills induction process. Training for learners to become mentors and carry out this initial screening is particularly good. Mentors develop a good understanding of dyslexia and are skilled at reassuring potential learners and encouraging them to take part in the assessment. A very skilled tutor effectively uses a wide range of diagnostic assessments and learning resources to provide highly individualised learning support. Learners make significant developments in understanding the specific nature of their disabilities and learn how to identify and build on their existing abilities to help them achieve tasks they have previously found difficult and frustrating. Many increase their confidence and self-esteem and progress to other classes of work. However, the other learning and skills staff and learners are not included sufficiently in this area of work.

REINSPECTION DATE: 9 October 2008

NB. This inspection was several months into Jackie’s serious illness, with the trained prisoner-mentors running the scheme without her, yet still managing to keep everything going very well.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL – Achievement and standards

Quality of provision

1. Support for learners with dyslexia is very effective. Staff from across the prison establishment, including residential offices, workshop supervisors, library staff, and education and training staff are sufficiently aware to refer offenders to the specialist dyslexia and learning difficulties team. Peer mentors, trained within the information, advice and guidance programme sponsored by the St Giles Trust, act as key referral agents by giving offenders confidence to come forward for assessment. Within the last 12 months over 300 men have been referred to the team. Peer mentors have been trained to recognise potential signs of dyslexia, reassure potential learners and encourage them to take part in the assessment. Skilled and experienced tutors effectively use a wide range of learning resources to provide individualised learning support. Much of this support takes place within the training workshops and on the residential wings.
Dear sir or madam

I would like to thank you for this pilot scheme mentoring the hidden disabilities. It has really helped me. I took my folder to court and the judge gave me 17 months. Because I have helped myself in prison. If I didn’t help myself I was going to get 4 years. I have not only helped myself I have been helping other people with their problems. So thank you for all your help.

Yours sincerely
DEAR LORD ADDINGTON

RE YOUR VISIT ON TUESDAY 27TH FEB 07

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO SEE US AT CHELMSFORD JAIL. AND FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN THIS INOVATIONAL PROGRAM. I ENJOYED YOUR QUESTIONS. YOU MAY REMEMBER THAT THREE OF MY FAMILY HAVE DYSLEXIA. I DO HOPE TO BE ABLE TO HELP THEM WITH THEIR PROBLEMS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

IM SO IMPRESSED WITH THIS PROJECT THAT I WOULD LIKE TO OFFER MY SERVICES TO IT, ON MY RELEASE. I DO MAKE THIS OFFER VERY SINCERLLY. I WILL BE KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH MS H MAIN THROUGH THE PROPER CHANNELS AS SHE COULD HELP ME WITH MY FAMILY. I REALLY DO LOOK FORWARD TO BEING HELPFULL TO THIS SCHEME.

your Sincerly
Dear Jackie

Thanks for the letter and card. It was a nice surprise to hear from you again. It was great to receive the certificates to the T303 its another string to my bow, I would like to thank you for giving me the chance to take part in such a good course & what a good teacher you are. You do a great job for us prisoners.

All the best
Take care
EXTRACTS OF PRISONERS’ LETTERS TO EXTERNAL AGENCIES

“The course I have been doing with Jackie Hewitt-Main has been a real educational experience ... we have had the opportunity to observe how to effectively deliver learning to a person with hidden disabilities ...

Jackie Hewitt-Main is taking an active role at the moment in helping men with hidden disabilities to get over their hindrances and get them to learn something constructive. I feel that if Jackie Hewitt-Main is given the right amount of funding of which she is not getting at the moment she could do a lot to change men’s lives for the better by helping them to learn how to read and write and overcome their hidden disabilities. I can only hope that you find it in your heart to give support to those who try and help people like me to educate ourselves and become active members of society.”

(This ex-offender is now doing a BSc degree at a top University)

“Jackie Hewitt-Main has shown me ways to teach people with dyslexia that I did not know existed and was very interested to learn more about this form of teaching as many of the prisoners I come into contact with seem to have left school early due to whatever difficulties they were having and never went back. Jackie has some amazing ideas and I feel that if someone really listened to her, and took them on board it would help curb some of the problems that teachers have. Another problem is funding that people like Jackie have encountered, a common problem is that they get funding for six months and the prisoners are encouraged to take the course then all of a sudden the funding disappears and the prisoners are left totally disheartened thinking what is the point.

It also has a negative effect on the people who come into prison to do good and they get disheartened as well. I feel that this should be addressed because people like Jackie are of great benefit to the prisons and prisoner and it would be a great shame and waste to lose such a valued member of the civilian staff.”
“I had a negative experience at school. I was excluded from most schools in the Grays area and was labelled a problem child. As I heard this term so often used to describe me I started to live up to the label.

Once I started working with Jackie I realised that given the right support I could achieve something with my life.

Jackie gradually eased me into working in the construction sector where I gained new skills. I developed a talent for bricklaying and went onto study for a qualification at my local college.”

Dear Sir/Madam

Part of my in prison was due to lack of confidence a belief in myself which has affected my most of my life but being on this scheme has change my life dramatically and am doing things I dare not do before, more confident more outward spoken and still living in the force of things that use to cause me pain.

If this scheme worked for me it will definitely work for others but I hope it continues because there’s much more for me to gain from it. Thanks

N.B. who said you can’t teach an old dog new tricks am 37 yrs old and proud
“After about 20 minutes talking to Jackie I was very interested in helping her and getting involved in the mentoring side of things. She explained to me she had a dyslexic written test, for people to fill in and then she could see what individual needs that prisoners might need. By then I understood some of her problems with getting the forms filled in.

I started with going round the cells with the forms and asking the inmates to fill them in and on numerous occasions helped them fill them in. I found out that doing it that way (one to ones) the response and replies were a lot better and easier to identify the inmate who needed the help. Also with that little bit of personal contact you can get a lot more information from the inmates.

Jackie has given me lots of information on hidden disabilities and about mentoring. She taught me different ways of teaching people with special educational needs and to match their individual learning styles. Since then she has been running some classes and I have been helping her with them. I have helped prisoners do their work and recognize where they need help to learn.

Also we have been doing individual work on the wings and doing one to one with different learning styles for the individual. Whilst doing this I have noticed a big improvement with some of the inmates and watched some of them come out of their shells.

In August 2006 I was sent to Belmarsh Prison to continue my sentence I started to help inmates on the wing with their legal letters, I started to work in the hospital wing where I was writing letters and helping inmates to read and write. The education department were so pleased with my work and the support that I was giving to the other inmates they phoned Jackie to see if she could set up the project in Belmarsh. I was told due to funding this could not take place in this prison. I helped as many inmates as I could in the year that I was at Belmarsh.

I believe that so many inmates have enjoyed being a part of this pilot scheme and feedback from other inmates are saying that they would love the project to continue in prison and to find a way for the project to run on the outside so that they would have a place to go to when they come out of prison.

One prisoner painted envelopes for his own use and was asked to design some for other prisoners he was mentoring as well!
APPENDIX 6

A CARD FROM A COLLEAGUE
Relating how much she has learned from working with Jackie

15th September 2008

Dear Jackie,

I have been thinking if you wanted to find the right time to call you. Thank you for your letter with confirmation that all 10 Chelmsford 7303 candidates passed. That is a huge achievement, and which you are right to be very proud. It is a great note to end this phase of your work with St Giles’.

I hope this will not be the end of our collaboration, but only the beginning of the next chapter, whatever that may be.

It’s been very rewarding and interesting working with you. I have learnt a tremendous lot from you, and you have opened my eyes in an important way. I will certainly view the world differently in future, and it is not an exaggeration to say that you have changed how I work and how I will live in future for me better. Thank you and very best wishes,
APPENDIX 7

PRESS COVERAGE

Over the two and a half years, Jackie Hewitt-Main’s project was featured many times in a variety of newspapers and magazines, both national and regional.


A two-page spread in the Prison Service News, the national monthly magazine, April 2007

A feature in the East Anglia Life newspaper, 8 December 2007
APPENDIX 8

EXTERNAL FEEDBACK

IAG COURSE TUTOR’S VISIT TO JACKIE’S PROJECT

“I was fortunate enough to shadow Jackie for an afternoon in Chelmsford prison and observe some of the work she was doing there. What came across from the shadowing experience was Jackie’s non-judgemental approach and her belief in the people she was working with.

What became apparent in just a short shadowing experience was that Jackie listened to the prisoners and presented/offered to them a new approach which they identified as worth trying. The approach being offered demonstrated to them that what they had been experiencing throughout their lives was partly because of their learning difficulties and that there were solutions that could change their future.

Through the course duration, Jackie taught me many things in terms of how ‘hidden’ disabilities affect people and I have taken what I learn into my care er. She was and continues to be a very inspirational person, to myself and to others.”

Ann Centeno

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER’S APPLICATION FORM

“I am dyslexic, but didn’t make that discovery until I was 30, when my daughter was diagnosed! I am very familiar with the daily struggles ... It was through Jackie’s radio broadcast, I was immediately inspired and encouraged to learn that we were singing from the same hymn book. I was determined to track her down.

I believe this to be an excellent opportunity to, in the first instance, learn how Jackie has implemented this revolutionary scheme, at floor level, so we can begin to understand the bigger picture. I don’t think these guys are looking for a sympathy card, but the opportunity to be supported in their learning, to progress and achieve and become confident and in control of their lives. I feel passionately that, without these fundamental skills, any given human being is inevitably going to develop frustrations and a very low esteem. To help create a little window of hope – that has to be a good thing!”

Deborah Harris
APPENDIX 9

OUTREACH – TEACHERS’ TV

Jackie Hewitt-Main was featured in the ‘Teachers’ TV’ programme about her project, entitled ‘Literacy Behind Bars’, still available to view on the internet, in which a secondary Literacy/SEN teacher, Laura Jewiss, from Sittingbourne College, Kent, spent two days shadowing Jackie at the prison and talking with her, prisoners and prison officers about the impact of her work there and how to adapt it for disaffected students with dyslexia.

Laura was delighted at the successful impact of her school’s subsequent changes on her students. She recently sent Jackie an email update on how things had improved”

Date: 15 February 2012

“Hi Jackie. Sorry it’s taken me a while to get back to you; now it’s half term, I have the opportunity to catch up!

After I spent the time with you at the prison, we began to look at the way that we provided for our students with severe literacy difficulties. Each year, we have 20-30 students who are unable to access the curriculum because their literacy skills are so poor. We spoke at length to many of these students about how they felt because they knew only too well that they were not coping and this often manifested itself in poor behaviour.

We asked them how we could improve things so that they would feel valued and also ensure that we were able to teach them the basics, whilst also following the expected curriculum.

Out of this was born our Literacy Pods – purpose-built suites of rooms, decorated to a high standard with new furniture and equipment (and a dog!). The students are taught, in small classes, by a specialist teacher and TA for almost half of their timetable (the TA accompanies them to all other lessons outside the Pod.). The focus for all teaching and learning is literacy, delivered in multi-sensory ways, so that we can ensure that no student ever leaves us unable to read and write. This was so successful that, this year, we opened another Pod. Students are making outstanding progress and most behavioural issues with these students are now a thing of the past.

Unfortunately, I think that for the boys who took part in the video, this may have come too late but the legacy of my visit will hopefully be that many students will now be provided with the literacy skills they need to become successful in the near future and so avoid turning to crime.

Take care.
Laura”
APPENDIX 10

OUTREACH – SKOGOME PRISON, GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

In December 2006 I was invited to visit Skogome prison in Gothenburg to investigate whether any of their prisoners had hidden disabilities and the effect this had on their lives.

When I arrived at the prison, I had an interview with the staff. They explained that when prisoners first arrive at the prison, they are interviewed, have a basic assessment and are then processed onto an educational course. The prison’s teachers are facilitators and all the prisoners work on computers linked to colleges outside the prison. There is no assessment for hidden disabilities. When I talked to prisoners in their classroom, I asked if any of them had trouble with reading or writing letters to families. Their answers indicated which men might need help.

The prisoners with learning difficulties were in the high security area and the laundry which was a full-time paying job; the money they earn is saved and put towards accommodation when they leave prison. Thereby lies the problem. When these prisoners are released, they go into their accommodation, but they have no training and are unable to get a job. The money saved soon runs out and, with the fear of losing their accommodation, they return to crime, thus resulting in their subsequent return to jail and a vicious circle begins again.

The following year, on the 29th November 2007, the Swedish teachers came to Chelmsford prison. They wanted to speak with the prisoners doing mentoring jobs and working with people who had hidden disabilities, so that they could find solutions for their dyslexic prisoners working from a distance (i.e. online).

The eight delegates started the visit to Chelmsford by attending a lecture about how Jackie’s mentoring project started. Some prisoners stood up and talked about their own life stories and their own individual learning needs. Prisoners then explained what the Learning Workshops are and how they work. They talked about their job roles and the various training they have undertaken to help them recognise and help other inmates who have hidden disabilities. The morning finished with an informal discussion amongst the prisoners and visitors and the presentation of newly trained mentors’ Awards. In the afternoon the visitors were shown around the prison and workshops and went away with a better understanding of the work needed to be done in the Swedish prison.

Feedback from Per-Anders Bengtson, Leader of Project/Students with Special Needs:

“I find it most important that you have a common basic outlook on people among the staff working together, which I noticed among your group. I am convinced that this work consists of 75% good relations and 25% certain skills and competences.

The warm feeling you generate I remembered from your visit here. The guys find confidence in you and rely on your competence to guide them making progress in reading and writing. I could see there were many good results. What I especially noticed was your timing in engaging the prisoners from the start. I also found the assessments they started with
effective and want to know more about the evaluation from these and then how you continue working, keeping them motivated."

**Feedback from Annika Boreson Hallsvik, Speech Therapist and Lexion Project Leader:**

“We, the whole Swedish team, are most impressed with your dyslexia project. The workshops gave us such an insight and listening to the inmates’ testimonials about how the dyslexia/mentoring project has changed not only their views of life but on themselves, made an impact on us all.

I personally felt that is has a lot to do with the way you have created, what would be called “the good meeting,” i.e. between you and the inmates, the warders and the inmates and amongst the inmates.

I believe the project could not have been the success it is, if it had not been for you. It is your understanding and own experience of the problems of dyslexia and your sensitivity and ability to adapt to the problems and hinders that come in the way, all the time finding solutions, that has made it.

Being a speech therapist myself I know all the theories but it takes someone to put it all into practice. As I said, we will need quite a few people to replace you.

As the project leader of Lexion Software for Dyslexics which is being used for the dyslexia project by Jackie, I was most impressed with how Jackie has managed to implement Lexion and trained the mentors in using the program. I must say that is quite an achievement as the Lexion program is most comprehensive.

We are aiming at implementing Jackie’s Dyslexia project in Sweden starting with a pilot study at Skogome prison in Gothenburg, the same prison Jackie visited a year ago. We are aware it will take quite a few people to replace Jackie.”
APPENDIX 11

CASE-STUDY - N’s STORY

In December 2007 Jackie-Hewitt-Main was asked to give a talk at the University of Essex for their 'Inspiring Leadership' session entitled: ‘Common Purpose Leading Real Change’. This prisoner wanted Jackie to read out and share his story, in his own words, for participants to understand his journey and see how he had changed his life.

“Some people say that your life is laid out before you, and what happens is fate. When I think about that somebody must of been some schizophrenic comedian planning my life.

I’m not saying thats what I’ve been through in life is anybody’s else’s fault, as you grow older you do have that choice.

Choice is the question you have to ask yourself. From my point of view, did I understand at the time about my choices of what I done. Looking back from how I think now. No I didn’t. Why not, you might be thinking. There wasn’t a person I could turn to, to share what I was going through, for me to understand others and myself in things that was happening around me.

I was born in an institution for unmarried Irish Mothers, I spent the first five years of my life in a children’s home, I lived my school days in Colchester. My adopted parents adopted me because of their Christian beliefs, feed the hungry, home the homeless etc. There was no love given to me, which any child needs. To me I was taken away from my family with the children in the home, to a strange house on my own, and no one to be with.

When I was eleven years old I was sent to a council run boarding school. There I was first bullied, beating up at nigh, to scared to sleep. This then lead to sexual abuse. At the time it was easier with the sexual abuse at least I could sleep at nights. The abusers would make out they were your mates. They gave you the attention I hadn’t had. They made you feel that they cared giving you presents etc. But they were just using you for sex or to do crime.

One of these boys through his own abuse targeted me for his abusers so between the age of eleven to fifteen I was used with him by older people to do photos and films of us.

So at that time the crime got worse, my anger and frustration went out of control. I would scream out to myself to be heard but sadly no one was there to listen.

As I got older my trust in people went I hated the way society was as I knew that some of those people you should trust had position of power, were abusing their position with kids like me.

Crime became a habit it was a way to get away from the life I had, it was a cry for help in the end I was living day to day. I remember in a relationship my girlfriend said that all her friends were my friends there wasn’t anyone she knew that I knew and if I walked out of the door she knew nothing about me. Even though I cared and loved her I still held up barriers because I didn’t know how to tell her and trust her about me and my life.
In 1987 things got worse I got six years for robbery after serving three half years I was given six months parole but within the same month of getting out I got arrested for murder.

What happened was that on 25th December 1990 I was walking home in the early hours where a bloke tried to sexually assault me. I lost my temper and the result was that I had killed this guy within a few minutes.

I never believed in red mist until that night all the anger, hate, frustration and disgust came out of me. As a child I wasn’t able to fight back that night this guy had received all that others had done to me.

In a way it was the crossroads of my life, it was a relief getting ride of the anger inside of me. Yet I couldn’t believe that I had killed someone. For the first seven years of this sentence I denied the crime not coming to terms that I done it, justifying what I had done.

I started doing courses in prison but I felt that I couldn’t go deep because I was in denial. Then one day I spoke to a Senior Prison Officer on my wing and told him that I had done it, I know it would open a can of worms about my past.

I put my trust in the prison to help me but more important I put trust in my self, in the end I was able to do courses with open honesty I also done three half years in therapy talking and understanding myself.

In prison I’ve done diplomas in fine art, art history, National Union of Journalist, and a number of other courses. I’ve won awards for my art, writing and drama.

Yet prison becomes the children’s home again I have to leave one day but this time even though its someone that decides that hopefully I will have that support.

I was in an open prison before coming to Chelmsford I didn’t return to the prison thats why I ended up here. Even at this stage I was screaming for help about going back into that big world you all live in.

But being here at Chelmsford has made me see that people do care like Jackie-Hewitt-Main and Miss Amey that in their own roles do their best.

I’m now doing an level 3 NVQ in Advice and Guidance through St Giles Trust which also gives support on my release, its quite interesting really I’m now doing work in advice like my job in prison as an insider given new lads in prison advice, it’s all that I needed years ago. My past I can’t change I can only work to the future and if I can be there to give advice and guidance to someone then I hope I can make a difference but thats what we all need to do,

I’ve got the rest of my life to look forward to find and share my thoughts and feelings.

I hope you can all do the same."

The ‘NVQ in Advice and Guidance’ that this prisoner mentions he was doing, was taught by Jackie Hewitt-Main, sponsored by funding from the St Giles Trust.
APPENDIX 12

CASE-STUDIES from LEARNING WORKSHOPS

Case-study 1 – TERRY was 32 years old, with very low levels of literacy when he began the Learning Workshops. He has been in and out of jail since he was 14. It was only after joining Jackie’s project that he found his urge to self-harm diminished.

“I never had the help I think I should have been offered. I wanted to go for jobs, but I knew I didn’t stand a chance. I always found paperwork hard. Jackie was the first person ever to have come to me and given me one-to-one help. It’s about time something like this happened in jails. It’s blinding!”

90% of participants in Jackie’s Learning Workshops express an interest in helping other inmates. Terry was so thrilled with his own progress that he volunteered and was trained to be a mentor.

“There was a self-harmer I spoke to the other day who told me he was frustrated because he found it difficult to read and write. I calmed him down and am now going to mentor him. The governor praised me. I used to be a proper rogue, but I’m turning.”

Terry was released from prison four years ago. He had constantly reoffended following his previous releases, but this time it was different. Jackie kept in touch with him from time to time. His life has had more downs than ups since his release from Chelmsford, but despite his problems, Terry has not reoffended in the past four years.

Case-study 2 – CHRIS was 32 when Jackie met him on the induction wing. He told her this was his fourth time in prison. He had been told by a teacher in a previous prison that he was dyslexic, but he had not been given any help to understand or cope with his problem.

Chris had a reading age of 7 and was unable to use a computer when he came to Chelmsford. Jackie assessed him as being severely dyslexic. He had tried to get jobs on building sites between crimes, but was told he needed to pass his driving test to drive a digger and his Construction Skills Certificate to do other building jobs. With such a low reading age, he was unable to take either of these tests. He felt sure he would fail.

Within 3 months of joining Jackie’s Learning Workshops, he had improved his reading and writing so much that he was ready to take both tests. Indeed, after some direct teaching in driving theory, Terry scored 98% in his mock test.

“I thought I was good-for-nothing. I couldn’t work without the pass and my CSCS. I resorted to the high life and a life of crime. Then these techniques of Jackie’s came along. I have amazed myself with how much I have improved. I have been about a long time and no one had sat me down and listened, or told me I had dyslexia. When I take those tests, it’ll be goodbye to prison for ever!”
PRISONER-MENTORS’ FEEDBACK
AFTER THEIR ADULT LITERACY TEACHING COURSE (7303 PTLLS)

1. “I have learnt to think like a teacher and not like a criminal like I have done for most of my life. This is the biggest thing I have learnt on this course. I used to enjoy the buzz of crime but now I just get so much enjoyment from helping learners to read and write.”

2. “This is the first time I have learned to spell 100 words. I have enjoyed myself working on the computer with the bigger numbers and I can now write 1 to a million.” (aged 43)

3. “My overall development and strengths have dramatically improved after completing this course ... I feel that I have greatly improved my confidence and communication skills ... As a person I feel that this course will enable me to become more sensitive to the area of ... hidden disability. Working with Jackie Hewitt-Main has taught me a lot about hidden disabilities.”

4. “I have developed a level of patience and compassion much higher than I had managed to portray previously. In short: I am much more eager to view other people’s approach to any given problem, from varying degrees of perspective, opening up a wider spectrum of how one could assist them in teaching.”

5. “Since starting this course, I am able to recognize people with learning difficulties and refer them to specialised teachers within the prison, this has enabled certain prisoners to get the correct type of help and they have been able to further their learning potential. Also since starting this course I have had a lot more patience with people. I am able to sit with my students and explain the subject they are studying. A few months ago, I would not have been able to do this and feel that not only my students have benefitted, but I have as well. The classroom is a lot calmer place to work and the students have been able to progress further than previously.”

6. “I have learned that I’m a kinaesthetic learner. I took part in the multiple intelligences test and found out that my highest score was my interpersonal skills, followed by bodily-kinaesthetic and spatial-visual. I have learned more about understanding the learners individual needs to take more time to assist their difficulties and to find coping strategies for them to deal within their learning plans.”

7. “I have learned that each learner is individual and they all need their own learning plan.”
MINUTES OF A MENTORS’ MEETING

Meeting notes from; 27th July 2007
The meeting began at 2.20.

This week’s Learning Workshop group was discussed. It went well and was very relaxed, only three inmates attended, but they all did very well. In spite of the fact that one of them had a few severe personal problems, he settled down and joined in well. All in all, another successful group. Added new software to sessions: “The official DSA theory test”, “Hazard perception” and “Brain Trainer”.

C gave the library a good clean out over the last weekend and started to work with prisoners.

Jackie asked how A’s stint in the industrial cleaners’ workshop was going. He replied that it was going really well; he is helping inmates with their health + safety certificates and any other paperwork that they have to deal with. He is also assessing inmates and passing on referrals to Jackie.

B and Jackie are going to C Wing to having a look at the computer suite. There are brand new computers in there, but only 2 power-points so only one computer can be used. This will obviously have to be sorted out.

Funding – Jackie is still working on a voluntary basis, as funding has stopped. She explained what is going on with the Learning Skills Council. A letter was read, which said that they would be in touch, (John Mcleod M.B.E). We than had a general discussion about funding and what Jackie was doing and proposing. No decision was reached, but everyone is thinking!!!

Jackie will be in on Tuesday and Wednesday and get all the mentors organised with what we would be doing next week:

C will go into Lit/Num class and any other classes that need him.
D will concentrate on his mentees on F Wing.
A will continue in the industrial cleaners’ workshop.
F and G will go to induction wing to review prisoners’ sheets.
H will fit in when his gym job allows.
B to work on G Wing, hope to get computer on wing.
All those on the I.A.G. course will attend this on Monday.

We then discussed training J as a mentor. He’s still doing the F.T.C. course. But Jackie will ask Ann if C can come in and train him up in the porta-cabin. If not other arrangements will have to be made.

The meeting came to a close at 4.20 p.m.
APPENDIX 15

MENTORING 4 U LEAFLET

This 8-page leaflet was designed and printed by inmates of Chelmsford Prison to promote the project and to appeal for any prisoners who might be interested in becoming mentors for others to come forward and apply for Mentoring 4 U training.

These four pages give a flavour of the leaflet.
SECTION 3

PROFILE OF PROJECT DIRECTOR

Jackie Hewitt-Main
In her own words

From day one I always felt that I was ‘different’ from all my friends. I was always day-dreaming, looking out of the window and just wanted to play. Learning was so hard, and so much of it made no sense to me, it all seemed too complicated.

I can recall weekly tests at school and how hard it was for me to learn the spelling, where my sister could learn them in a day. I found academic subjects impossible but excelled at sports and especially within the Brownies and Girl Guides. I found it easier to create and maintain friendships out of school where other children were unaware of my learning difficulties. I left school without taking any exams. I then failed my typing course at college as I could not guess the spellings of the words. I attended many interviews. I always did very well orally, but if there was a written test I would fail. Once I offered to work for free for a week to prove I could do the job!

I married a military man and had the biggest incentive to learn to write so that we could stay in contact while he was away. I could wallpaper and paint the house, cook and clean, make clothes and knit jumpers, but I could not write a letter. We had two beautiful children, but my marriage ended after seven years. I now had to provide, so I decided to support his education myself. I researched everything I could find. That’s how I discovered the whole multi-sensory approach to learning and taught him myself at home.

In 1998 my younger son was involved in a car crash in which he sustained severe head injuries. As a result of his head injuries and his behavioural problems he was referred to a special education unit. The funding was low and he only received one hour tuition a day. From then on I knew I had to support his education myself. I researched everything I could find. That’s how I discovered the whole multi-sensory approach to learning and taught him myself at home.

Then he attended college, where the teachers had some knowledge of disabilities and a carer was on hand. In one year my son gained a GNVQ in Business Studies. But by the second year, all funding had gone, so there was no carer and a teacher who had no idea of his injuries. She told me she had not read his notes and that this was the second student in her class with a disability.

While my son was at college I decided to take some part time courses in numeracy, literacy and computers at our local adult college. I found the written instructions very hard to follow, Fortunately, an IT engineer was prepared to demonstrate and talk me through the processes of the course. I did not cope well in the exams because the wording and terminology was different to what we had been working on all through the course. However, I repeated the exams and passed at the second attempt.

While I was on a literacy course, my college lecturer, Sue Blackburn began to suspect that the difficulty I had with written work was the result of dyslexia, so she
arranged for me to be tested and I was diagnosed as severely dyslexic – a ‘classic case’. This was a major revelation that explained so much of my life up till then.

I went on to do many more courses and eventually studied for a BA degree in Special Needs, with a lot of help and support, funded via my statement of special educational needs. At one point, Sue Blackburn asked me to teach some other dyslexic students how to pass their exams. I taught them for one afternoon and they all passed. That gave me such a buzz that I did a PGCE teaching qualification.

As part of my BA I had decided to focus on what hidden disabilities there might be amongst prisoners and how they were being taught. I visited a nearby women’s prison to do this work. I found that most of the prison teachers had no idea how to work with these learners, so many of the prisoners would kick off because they were not understood and this made them very frustrated.

I spent the next few years as a training adviser and development manager in various organisations, working with a range of people, including disaffected youngsters with learning disabilities. But I hadn’t forgotten the plight of the prisoners. I managed to get some regional and European funding to enable me to start a project in Chelmsford Prison, investigating the prevalence of hidden disabilities there. When I found such a high percentage of dyslexic prisoners, I developed assessment, teaching and mentoring programmes to meet their individual needs, along with those prisoners with other learning difficulties. That’s how the Mentoring 4 U project started.

At this time, having given up well-paid and interesting jobs to get my short-term-funded project started at Chelmsford prison, I was always being asked “Why do you want to go into the prisons? Prisoners have had their chance; lock them up and throw away the key.”

I took no notice. To me this was a journey. The evidence shows that many learners who start with difficulties in the classroom, move through low self-esteem, poor behaviour and school exclusion to end up offending and in prison.

Many of the prisoners I met in my dyslexia and mentoring project at Chelmsford, including those with the most challenging behaviours, showed such great transformation and went on to help others with the knowledge they had gained.

Looking back over the years I realise that my learning disabilities have been a big problem in my life. If somebody had just listened and tried to understand me as a child at school, and helped me to understand that I wasn’t a failure, that I was good at some things, I would have found life so much easier.

I feel the knowledge I have gained is here to share, to help other people, to enable them to develop self-confidence and rebuild their self-esteem. In this way, they in turn are able to give that same help and guidance to others. That’s what good mentoring is all about.
Dyslexia Behind Bars – 4 Years On

The final report of a pioneering teaching and mentoring project at Chelmsford Prison, with a Foreword by Lord Addington, House of Lords, plus contributions from Simon Burns MP and many others.

Directed and led by Jackie Hewitt-Main inside the prison, this individualised teaching and mentoring project identified 53% of prisoners with dyslexia. Jackie’s innovative approach helped them to succeed where they had always failed before, in learning to read, write and spell; to recognise and build on their own strengths. This enhanced their self-esteem and transformed their lives, both inside prison and after release.

By training some of her first student inmates as mentors to support others through their learning, Jackie Hewitt-Main’s project achieved astonishing results for comparatively little financial outlay. Even more remarkable was the impact of this project and Jackie’s continuing support outside for some of her first student-prisoners after their release.

This project has decimated the re-offending rate of these ex-prisoners to 5.9% within the past four years. This amounts to a reoffending rate of less than 10% of the national average.

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Essex, SS7 5PL.
Tel: 07761 478079
dyslexiabehindbars@gmail.com

ISBN: 978-0-9572901-0-5 £10.00
Costs per Prisoner per Year in England and Wales

Costs to all the various government departments (with sources) £

Prison Service and NOMs  (NOMS 2009; Prison Reform Trust 2010) 45,000
Court and Legal costs  (Home Office Research Findings 1999)* 30,500
Supporting prisoners’ families  (as a direct result of the imprisonment of a family member) + travel for visiting  (Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report 2007)* 16,510
Education and Training  (2008/9 – Hansard) 1,631
Health Care in Prisons  (2007/8 – Sainsbury Report) 2,796
Probation Service input  (Centre for Crime & Justice Studies, 2010) 1,019

Total cost per prisoner per year £97,456

* Being 13 years ago, this cost is likely to have risen higher than the figure quoted here.

Actual and Potential Savings to the Government

1. Costs per prisoner that have already been saved by Jackie Hewitt-Main’s project

Table A
Savings to the government of this small group of 17 prisoners released in 2008, 16 of whom have not re-offended within the four years ending June 2012, despite three of them having previously been in prison over 40 times each. This represents a 5.9% reoffending rate within the four years, (compared to 70% nationally1), at a cost of £97,456 per prisoner per year (see above).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prisoners not reoffending who otherwise would have been likely to re-offend = 11 prisoners</th>
<th>Cost saved in 1 year</th>
<th>Cost saved over 4 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The costs saved by these 11 prisoners, at a cost of £97,456 per prisoner per year (see above).</td>
<td>£1,072,016 (£1.7 million)</td>
<td>£4,288,064 (£4.3 millions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 MoJ – 2012 Compendium of re-offending statistics and analysis, 12 July 2012
Extrapolation from the findings of the sample in Table 1, the estimated savings likely to have been achieved by all those 410 prisoners who were included in Jackie Hewitt-Main’s project in HMP Chelmsford during 2006-2008.

In this table, we have given two measures:
B(i) shows the savings which would have been made if the whole cohort of 410 had achieved the same 5.9% re-offending rate within 4 years as the first group of 17.
B(ii) gives a more conservative estimate of what is more likely to have been achieved by these 410 prisoners at double the smaller group’s re-offending rate, so 11.8%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prioners not reoffending who otherwise would have been likely to re-offend</th>
<th>Cost that may have been saved in 1 year</th>
<th>Cost that may have been saved over 4 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B(i)</strong> The costs potentially saved by 263 ex-prisoners (assuming a 5.9% re-offending rate as in the smaller sample in table A), at a cost of £97,456 per prisoner per year (see above).</td>
<td>£25,630,928 (£25.6 millions)</td>
<td>£102,523,712 (£102.5 millions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B(ii)</strong> Conservative estimate of the costs more likely to have been saved if we assume double the offending rate given for the small sample in table A: thus 238 ex-prisoners.</td>
<td>£23,194,528 (£23.2 millions)</td>
<td>£92,778,112 (£92.8 millions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table is based on the finding that 82% of all prisoners have writing skills below the level expected of an average 11-year-old and are therefore unable to fill in prison forms, benefits forms or application forms effectively, or to pass a theory driving test. These are potential cost savings if this project were to be rolled out across all prisons in England and Wales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prisoners not reoffending who otherwise would have been likely to re-offend</th>
<th>Cost saved in 1 year</th>
<th>Cost saved over 4 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The potential cost savings with a conservatively estimated re-offending rate of double that achieved by the small sample in Table A, thus 31,491 ex-prisoners, at a cost saving of £97,456 per prisoners per year (see above).</td>
<td>£3,068,986,896 (£ 3.1 billions)</td>
<td>£12,275,947,584 (£12.3 billions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The potential costs savings as above, with a very conservative re-offending rate of four times that achieved by the first sample of this project (see table A), thus 2,5106 ex-prisoners</td>
<td>£2,446,630,336 (£2.4 billions)</td>
<td>£9,786,521,344 (£9.8 billions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calculation Method – Tables A-C

Prison Reform Trust, (quoted in Hansard) – 2007 figures
For all the above calculations, we have taken the actual or potential cost savings to be based on the numbers of prisoners in the sample, times 70% (the national proven re-offending rate\(^3\) within 4 years), less the project’s re-offending rate within 4 years (5.9% for actual, or multiples thereof for projections) to establish the percentage and number of ex-prisoners who have not re-offended, or potentially will not re-offend as a result of being mentored and taught within this project, or its rolling out across all prisons.

### Dramatic Reduction in Assaults during the Project\(^4\)

Assault rates in the prison (HMP Chelmsford) were drastically cut during the two years of Jackie Hewitt-Main’s project, years ending 2007 and 2008, then rose sharply again in the following and subsequent years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chelmsford HMP</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assaults by prisoners on staff</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assaults by prisoners on other prisoners</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As there appear to be no national or local figures publicly available regarding the extra costs incurred to the prison service by these assaults, it is not possible to calculate the savings generated by the dramatic reduction of such assaults on both staff and other prisoners during and as a direct result of the success of this project.

Although no such quantitative assessment can be made of cost-savings, it is clear that this situation had a successful qualitative outcome regarding prisoners’ attitudes and behaviour, evinced both in the above table and in the comment of the Deputy Prison Governor, Vicky Blakeman, on page 8 of the 2012 project report.

\(^3\) MoJ – 2012 Compendium of re-offending statistics and analysis, 12 July 2112  
\(^4\) MoJ – Safety in Custody, Assaults Tables, March 2012