EDUCATION, LIFELONG LEARNING AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

AGENDA

6th Meeting, 2009 (Session 3)

Wednesday 25 February 2009

The Committee will meet at 10.00 am in Committee Room 4.

1. **Offender learning:** The Committee will take evidence on the Scottish Government's offender learning project from—

   Rosemary Winter-Scott, Advisory Group Chair, Offender Learning Project, Scottish Government;

   Jim McCormick, Chair, In Custody Workstream, and Esther Roberton, Chair, In The Community Workstream, Offender Learning Project;


   Gary Waddell, Head of Offender and Community Outcomes, Scottish Prison Service.

2. **Offender learning:** The Committee will consider the evidence it heard on the Scottish Government's offender learning project.

3. **Decision on taking business in private:** The Committee will decide whether to consider its approach to the proposed Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Bill in private at future meetings.

Eugene Windsor
Clerk to the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
Tel: 0131 348 5204
Email: eugene.windsor@scottish.parliament.uk
The papers for this meeting are as follows—

**Agenda item 1**

Paper by the Clerk
Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee

6th Meeting, 2009 (Session 3), Wednesday 25 February 2009

Scottish Government’s offender learning project

Background

1. At its meeting on 17 September 2008, the Committee agreed to look at the issue of offender learning.

2. Subsequently, Scottish Government officials advised the Committee that the Scottish Government was planning to establish an offender learning project to consider a wide range of related issues.

3. It was therefore considered appropriate for the Committee to take evidence from the Scottish Government’s offender learning project team before considering possible future work on this issue.

Evidence session on 25 February 2009

4. At its meeting on 25 February 2009 the Committee will take evidence from Scottish Government officials, and others involved in the Government’s offender learning project.

5. The primary aim of this session is for the Committee to gain an overview of the Scottish Government’s work in this area in order to help the Committee consider how it might proceed.

6. A briefing paper from the Scottish Government is attached at Annexe A.

Next step

7. The Committee will be invited to consider the evidence heard on this issue following the conclusion of the evidence session.

Nick Hawthorne
Senior Assistant Clerk

Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee
Offender Learning Project – Submission for the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee

Appearing at the Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ORGANISATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosemary Winter-Scott</td>
<td>Scottish Government Head of Employability and Skills Division</td>
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<td>Chair - Offender Learning Advisory Group</td>
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<td>Melanie Weldon</td>
<td>Scottish Government Team Leader More Choices More Chances</td>
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<td>Lead Official – Youth offending Workstream</td>
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<td>Gary Waddell</td>
<td>Scottish Prison Service Head of Offender and Community Outcomes</td>
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<td>Jim McCormick</td>
<td>Independent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chair – In Custody Workstream. Dr Jim McCormick is an independent adviser and commentator on public policy matters. He was appointed Scotland Adviser to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in November 2007. He was previously Director of the Scottish Council Foundation, the independent think-tank specialising in policy research and practice, for five years until September 2007.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esther Roberton</td>
<td>Independent</td>
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<td>Chair – In the Community Workstream. Esther spent the first ten years of her career in the private sector in personnel and training before taking up various appointments in the public sector including Scottish Council for Development &amp; Industry (SCDI), Scottish Further Education Funding Council and NHS. She was a founder member of the Scottish Further Education Funding Council where she was Vice Chair from 1999 till 2001 and Chair from 2001 until the Council was wound up in October 2005. Esther is currently the non-executive director SCDI and a lay member of the Press Complaints Commission. She has recently been appointed as a non-executive director of APEX.</td>
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Scope

The Offender Learning Project will begin work which will look at offender learning as a whole in Scotland, with the aim of providing a more streamlined and improved learning service to those who are in and leaving the justice system.

Range

The Offender Learning Project has an advisory group which oversees the project and three workstreams which comprise of internal and external stakeholders and have an independent chair.

Issues being addressed by the Scottish Government in this area

The Offender Learning Project has been initiated to research and highlight overlaps and gaps in the offender journey through the justice system including custodial and non-custodial sentences, those leaving the justice system and youth offending. This will in turn assist with the creation of a final report which should identify key strengths, weaknesses, gaps and areas of duplication in current offender learning in Scotland, in order to make recommendations for sustainable improvements in outcomes.

The Offender Learning Project is working on three key client groups which are:

- Offenders in custody;
- Adult offenders/ ex-offenders in the community and;
- Youth offending.

Offenders in custody

The focus of this workstream is adult offenders aged 18+ (men and women) currently held in Scotland's prisons.

This workstream is looking at how best to ensure that the client group can develop the skills required to be able to enter the labour market and successfully hold down a job developing the skills required to be able to enter the labour market.

The objective is to recommend some practical steps for significant improvements in learning, skills and employability provision in custody.

In the community

The client focus of this workstream is adult offenders aged 18+ (men and women) who have left a custodial sentence or are on a community sentence order etc.
The rationale behind looking at this particular group has similarities to the Offenders in Custody group – how best to ensure that the client group can develop the skills required to be able to enter the labour market and successfully hold down a job.

The objective is to recommend some practical steps for significant improvements in learning, skills and employability provision in custody.

**Youth offending**

The particular focus of this workstream is on young offenders aged 16-18, and aligns with Curriculum for Excellence and 16+ Learning Choices. This means that the scope includes young offenders in custody and within the community, and involves working closely with the other two workstreams.

The youth offending workstream takes as its starting point the premise that young people involved in offending should have the same educational opportunities as all other young people.

The objective of this workstream is to make recommendations which will raise the take up of learning and skills opportunities by young offenders, with a view to increasing the proportion of these young people moving into sustained positive destinations beyond the age of 18.

**Conclusion of the project**

Each workstream will produce a report with recommendations on their specific area within agreed timescales. A final report, due to be completed by summer 2009, will then be prepared which will make recommendations to Ministers.

**Scottish Government**

**February 2009**