



RSA TRANSITIONS...

Inside food: prisons and offender skills

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About the RSA

The RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) is an enlightenment organisation committed to finding innovative practical solutions to today's social challenges. Through its ideas, research and 27,000-strong Fellowship it seeks to understand and enhance human capability so we can close the gap between today's reality and people's hopes for a better world.

www.thersa.org

About Transitions

The project seeks to find new approaches to reducing reoffending by unlocking physical and social assets linked to prisons. The RSA published *Transitions*, its vision for a 21st century prison in 2011. This included the development of 'Transitions Parks' through bringing back to life unused assets – buildings and land – owned by the Ministry of Justice. The RSA is now working with a public prison in testing this proposal.

For more information about the project please visit: www.thersa.org/action-research-centre/community-and-public-services/transitions

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About the author

Adam Wright has three Psychology degrees with the most recent, a Masters in Applied Forensic Psychology, completed in 2013 from the University of York. Utilising knowledge from his background as a chef, Adam applies this combined expertise in producing this current research.

Transitions

Background

In 2011, a small group of RSA Fellows working within justice services and social enterprise developed *Transitions* (RSA 2011). Our starting point was to explore the innovations taking place within prisons but which were largely uncelebrated and evidenced. What would happen if, instead of piecemeal innovation via stealth, the best approaches were brought together and the evidence base on impact strengthened? How could the public be brought closer to the realities of the prison system and wider justice services?

In the context of reduced public spending, our focus was on unlocking potential social assets within prisons (service users, families and the workforce) and the wider community (the public, employers and services), and on physical assets owned by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) but laying fallow. Could providing a co-location space for agencies and others to work closely alongside prisons, but from the ‘outside in’, increase capacity and improve the chances of rehabilitation?

HMP Humber

Since 2012, with funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Tudor Trust and the Garfield Weston Foundation, the RSA has been working with HMP Humber to answer this question. Our aim has been to refine and ultimately to realise the *Transitions* model in relation to a 45-acre site adjacent to HMP Humber, a male resettlement prison in East Yorkshire that provides services for up to 1,062 people at any one time and releases over 1,000 people each year.

Transforming Rehabilitation

This work has been taking place against a backdrop of significant changes to justice services, in particular, the Government’s Transforming Rehabilitation agenda.

Existing individual probation trusts are in the process of being reorganised into a single national public sector probation service and 21 new government-run community rehabilitation companies (CRCs). These are in the process of being competitively tendered with new providers expected to be in place by the end of 2014.

The National Probation Service (NPS) will retain responsibility for the supervision and support of high-risk offenders, including those subject to Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), while new CRCs will be responsible for managing low to medium risk offenders. Transforming Rehabilitation also changes the licensing arrangements for offenders serving less than 12 months who will now receive some kind of supervision when they are released from prison.

It is anticipated CRCs (tier 1 providers) are expected to sub-contract resettlement services (focused on meeting the multiple needs of offenders) to tier 2 and 3 providers, including voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. Contracts to tier 1 providers will be awarded on a payment by results basis, which will reflect reductions in re-offending levels.

Rehabilitation capital and culture

In developing our proposals, we consulted with hundreds of stakeholders, many from the sub-region, including prisoners, families, staff, employers, local statutory and voluntary services, civic leaders and the wider community.

We have drawn, amongst other things, on RSA’s Connected Communities programme, which explores practical social network approaches to social and economic challenges, with a specific focus on how disadvantaged or marginalised groups might become more resilient and involved in designing solutions. This work is based on a growing body of evidence that shows our connections to other people, the context and nature

of these relationships, and the extent to which we have networks of support, matter greatly in shaping our behaviour, life chances and wellbeing.

Our contention is that a significant gap remains in understanding the role that offenders' networks – informal and formal – have on what we call their rehabilitation capital. This is, in short, the range of things – personal, social, community and cultural – that will make them less likely to commit crime. Many of these reflect the National Offender Management Service's (NOMS) existing seven resettlement pathways, which include accommodation, finance, health and employment. But we believe that explicitly focusing on networks and how to increase their breadth, quality and strength, could shape how the pathways are approached and help transform rehabilitation.

We argue that similar arguments can be made in relation to prisons themselves, when it comes to strengthening rehabilitation culture. Crime is a social problem and needs a social response. Yet, many working within the prison system lack the external networks and freedoms they need to succeed in what they are, increasingly, charged with doing: reducing reoffending. Rehabilitation is a process of (re) socialisation to active citizenship and this process needs to involve more of 'us'.

As leading criminologist Shadd Maruna has argued, our general belief in rehabilitation is not a given.¹ Historically our focus on rehabilitation has ebbed and flowed, driven by a range of factors including the costs of reoffending in times of austerity. Transitions developed within the context of reduced public spending, government emphasis on a rehabilitation revolution and the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda. Combined, these changes mean asking justice and through the gate services to do more with less. Within this context finding ways to strengthen the culture of rehabilitation within prisons and beyond becomes more pressing.

It was in this context and with these concepts in mind that RSA commissioned a number of papers to explore specific issues raised by the project. This paper is published alongside our full report and master plan, which can be found on www.rsa.org.uk/transitions.

1. Why food?

This paper was commissioned for several reasons. While undertaking our asset and network mapping and master planning, issues around food were frequently raised by prisoners, families, members of the prison workforce, local community and employers and a number of themes emerged.

The most obvious was the potential for the land on the HMP Humber site to be used to produce food, linked to opportunities for offenders to develop skills for work and independent living. Could fruit and vegetables grown on the land be used to supply the visitor's cafeteria or staff mess? This linked to a second theme around commissioning: could food production on site open up the question of local partnerships and local sourcing in what is a rural area facing gaps in the skills needed within the food industry?

As the Transitions model developed the obvious potential of the site (which has in past operated as a farm) expanded to discussions about the wider importance of food, hospitality and catering within the prison, for visitors and within the wider economy. This became more pronounced with the merger of HMP Wolds and HMP Everthorpe into HMP Humber, which has resulted in a 'spare' kitchen on the Wolds site with significant potential for providing training, qualifications and potential social enterprise opportunities.

So, food matters to the Transitions project and to our stakeholders in East Yorkshire. But is also provides a useful case study through which to explore the relationship between potential innovation, social enterprise and commissioning. This is particularly significant as food represents one of the biggest expenditures for prisons, alongside major budget heads such as staffing and energy costs. And of course, food matters to health and wellbeing. However, for many of those who we talked to this was not just only about nutrition and 'good food' (although this was a theme) but about its wider social purpose, underpinned

often by a strong sense of a link between what we eat and how we behave, what we grow and the patience and pride this may instill.

Healthy eating

Our body needs nutrients in order to perform its daily functions and stay healthy. These nutrients come from the food and drink we consume, but no single food can provide all the nutrients that the body needs. So, it is important to have a varied and well-balanced diet in order to maintain good health, both physical and psychological. However, according to the Department of Health:

“In England, most people are overweight or obese. This includes 61.3 percent of adults and 30 percent of children aged between two and 15. People who are overweight have a higher risk of getting type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers. Excess weight can also make it more difficult for people to find and keep work, and it can affect self-esteem and mental health...”

In 2011 an article in the *Journal of Public Health* (Scarborough at all, 2001) warned of a rising tide of diseases caused by poor diet and sedentary lifestyles that are costing the health service more than £6bn a year; around twice as much as the amount spent on ill health linked to smoking or alcohol.

A report published by the Food Standards Agency in March 2003 titled *Exploring food attitudes and behaviours in the UK: Findings from the Food and You Survey 2010* states that, of the 3,163 interviews with adults aged 16+ from across the UK, nine out of 10 respondents agreed with the statements 'What you eat makes a big difference to how healthy you are' (91 percent), and 'Even if you don't have a really healthy diet, it's worth making small changes' (94 percent). Generally respondents felt that food is not just a fuel to live and that eating food and cooking are pleasant experiences.

Government response

The Government provides advice on healthy eating. This centres on the eatwell plate (Figure 1), a pictorial representation of what a healthy balanced diet should consist of and ‘eight tips for eating well’, including advice on eating at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day and the recommended maximum daily allowances of salt for adults. Despite guidelines on recommended allowances for fat and calories, amongst the Food Standards Agency’s survey group there was limited knowledge of this.

The UK Government’s action plan to tackle these issues centres around helping people to make healthier choices and includes a number of approaches:

- Giving people advice on a healthy diet and physical activity through their Change4Life programme;

- Improving labelling on food and drink to help people make healthy choices, including promoting a labelling system;
- Encouraging businesses on the high street to include calorie information on their menus so that people can make healthy choices; and
- DoH guidance on how much physical activity they should be doing.

The Government introduced its ‘Meeting Local Needs’ initiative whereby local councils are responsible for working with other organisations to improve the health of people living in their area. This includes making sure that the right services are in place and includes a ring-fenced local authority public health budget for providing services that meet the health needs of their local community. Since 2012 local authorities have health and wellbeing boards as a forum where key leaders

Figure 1. The eatwell plate



Public Health England in association with the Welsh Government, the Scottish Government and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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from the health and care system work together with a focus on reducing health inequalities. From April 2013, responsibility for commissioning all healthcare services for prisoners (including drug and alcohol services but excluding emergency and out of hours services) rests with NHS England.

Health inequality

There is a wealth of research surrounding the issue of socio-economic status (SES) and diet, and, for the most part, researchers reached similar conclusions. Firstly, that higher SES groups were more likely to consume vegetables and fruit, particularly fresh, not only in higher quantities but also in greater variety (Turrell Patterson & Newman, 2002).

Secondly, that people living under socioeconomically disadvantaged conditions are more likely to have a less healthful diet (Hunt, Nichols & Pryer, 2000). This link between SES and diet is often reported to come down to two main issues; local food availability and attitudes towards food and diet.

Areas characterised by relatively poor access to healthy and affordable food have become known as 'food deserts' and may contribute to social disparities in diet and diet-related health outcomes, such as cardiovascular disease and obesity (Wrigley, 2002). The term reportedly originated in Scotland in the early 1990s and was used to describe poor access to an affordable and healthy diet (Cummins & Macintyre, 2002). Although the term can mean a literal absence of retail food in a defined area, studies of food deserts more commonly assess differential accessibility to healthy and affordable food between socioeconomically advantaged and disadvantaged areas. The demise of local greengrocers, the expansion of supermarkets, poor local transport links and the general affordability of healthy food have all contributed to the increase of food deserts on a national level (Beulac, Kristjansson & Cummins, 2009).

2. Health and the prison population

Significant health inequalities exist amongst offenders and ex-offenders

- In the week following their release female prisoners are 69 times more likely to die than females in the general population. Male prisoners are 29 times more likely to die than males in the general population.
- It is estimated that up to 30 percent of offenders have a learning difficulty/disability.
- Among children and young people in custody:
 - over 75 percent have serious difficulties with literacy and numeracy
 - over 30 percent have a diagnosed mental health problem
 - more than 30 percent have experienced homelessness
 - over 30 percent of young women and over 25 percent of young men report a long-standing physical complaint.
- 24 percent of prisoners with a drug problem are injecting drug users. Of these, 20 percent have hepatitis B, and 30 per cent have hepatitis C.
- Among female prisoners, 40 percent have a long-standing physical disability, and 90 percent have a mental health or substance misuse problem.
- Less than 1 percent of ex-offenders living in the community are referred for mental health treatment.
- In prisons, the smoking rate is as high as 80 percent, almost four times higher than the general population.
- 63 percent of male prisoners and 39 percent of female prisoners are hazardous drinkers.
- Before being in custody, 58 percent of prisoners are unemployed and 47 percent are in debt.

Sources: Department of Health, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Ministry of Justice, Home Office (2009) Healthy children, safer communities – a strategy to promote the health and well-being of children and young people in contact with the youth justice system. Ministry of Justice (2010, 2011, 2012) Compendium of reoffending statistics and analysis.

The prison population is more likely to come from areas of deprivation, experience poverty and a range of other inequalities, including health related inequalities (see above). Clearly the issue here is much broader than food but there is evidence to suggest that what we eat can impact on our behaviour.

Food and behaviour

When Dr Hugh Sinclair persuaded the British government in 1942 to supplement children's diets with orange juice and cod liver oil, he speculated that among other ills, poor diets could lead to anti-social behaviour. In the last three decades, evidence seems to be mounting that dietary status

and behaviour are indeed associated. Ecological data and correlational studies, for instance, suggested associations between dietary habits such as fish consumption on the one hand, and psychiatric disorders (Peet, 2004), developmental disorders (Hibbeln et al., 2007), and aggression and criminal behaviour (Hibbeln et al., 2006) on the other. Fish contains high levels of the essential fatty acids, which are assumed to be involved in all kinds of brain mechanisms (Horrobin, 1998).

Developmental studies suggest that poor nutritional status in early development can lead to behavioural consequences. Walsh et al., (2003) demonstrated that biotherapy could significantly improve patient behaviour. Walsh

defined biotherapy as the “correction of innate or acquired chemical imbalances using amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and other biochemicals naturally present in the body”. All 207 patients included in the study had histories of poor conventional treatment responses, such as medication interventions, behaviour therapy and counselling. Walsh et al. reported that aggressive behaviour (for example, assaults, destructive behaviour) was eliminated in more than half of the patients.

Building on evidence that offenders consume diets lacking in essential nutrients and this could adversely affect their behaviour, Gesch et al. (2002), a British research team with the approval of the Home Office, set out to test empirically if physiologically adequate intakes of vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids cause a reduction in antisocial behaviour. The experiment was a double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomised trial of nutritional supplements on 231 young adult prisoners, comparing disciplinary offences before and during supplementation.

They demonstrated that, compared with placebos, those receiving the active capsules committed an average of 26 percent fewer offences. Compared to baseline, the effect on those taking active supplements for a minimum of two weeks was an average 35 percent reduction of offences. Gesch et al. (2002) demonstrated that supplementing prisoners’ diets with physiological dosages of vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids caused a reduction in antisocial behaviour to a remarkable degree. Gesch et al. do point out that it is not advocated that nutrition is the only cause of antisocial behaviour but the difference in outcome between the active and placebo groups could not be explained by ethnic or social factors, as they were controlled for by the randomised design. If these findings are replicated, this nutritional approach to antisocial behaviour has the advantage that deficits in nutrition can be readily identified and remedied.

Information

Curd et al., (2013) examined the possible benefits of improved access to nutritional information from within prisons. Improved nutrition has implications for both prisoners and the penal system. This study evaluated a pilot intervention to improve nutrition in prisoners. Residents of a correctional substance abuse program (SAP)

completed a health risk appraisal (HRA) upon entering the SAP and at completion. Nineteen participants in a pilot nutrition workshop were matched with 37 non-participant controls. Analysis of changes in HRA responses relating to nutrition, general health, and social ties found that a significantly greater proportion of participants than controls reported improved nutrition practices. Participants were four times more likely to report improved general health than controls. A smaller proportion of participants than controls reported improved social ties. This study suggests that prisoner participants and the prison system may benefit from nutrition workshops.

For Transitions, the evidence here and the importance of food issues amongst our stakeholders raises broader issues about costs, the potential for growing food, innovation and social enterprise and how this sits within the commissioning framework.

Procurement of prison food

The prison service procures a range of goods and services for the prisons it runs throughout England and Wales. Goods needed for the daily running of prisons include for example, food and clothing, while services cover utilities and drug rehabilitation programmes. Food purchasing is covered by the Government Buying Standards, which favour higher environmental standards and seasonal produce where this does not increase overall costs. ‘Meet the buyer’ events aim to help potential first tier contractors, and SMEs now account for 52 percent (£29.4m) of the MoJ’s annual spend on food supply contracts.

Sir John Bourn, former head of the National Audit Office, reported recently that significant improvements have been made in the prison service’s catering arrangements resulting in financial savings and improved quality of service. Since 2003-04, savings of some £2.5m have been made each year from expenditure on food and some £1.7m a year on catering staff, mainly through civilianisation of catering staff posts. Other savings have arisen from more efficient procurement and reduced stockholdings of food.

Expenditure on food is determined by each prison governor who sets a daily food allowance per prisoner. The average is £1.87 for three meals a day but there are wide variations ranging from £1.20 at an open prison to £3.41 at a young

offenders' institution. Young offenders have some of the highest daily food allowances because juveniles eat more than adults. Although today's report found that the prison service had made improvements, it also finds scope for further savings. It highlights, for example, potential for financial savings if prisons with particularly high daily food allowances ('outliers') were to reduce them.

According to the report, prisons are not meeting all of their own catering standards. In 2004-05 prisons were fully compliant with some two thirds of standards, partially compliant with 32 percent and non-compliant with 2 percent. Prisons are least compliant with the standard which requires them to be clean and in good repair. On the whole, kitchens are clean and hygienic but many facilities have come to the end of their working capability and the state of the fabric in kitchens is poor.

Prisons provide breakfast, lunch and dinner together with all condiments and beverages. Menu requirements vary between establishments and are based on the prisoner population, local regimes and seasonal availability. Within this freedom to meet local needs governors are required to follow the requirements for prison service catering as set out in the prison service instruction (MoJ). On the whole, food offered to prisoners is in line with the Government's recommendations on healthy eating.

Prisoners are offered a variety of foods and different dietary requirements are catered for. There is a variety of choices such that cater for different religious or cultural needs. At least one meal option labelled as healthy is offered at lunch and in the evening. The NAO found that meals contain recommended quantities of most vitamins and minerals but with some notable exceptions, which could affect prisoners' health. Average levels of salt, for example, are up to 93 percent more than recommended levels and offerings of dietary fibre, which could be provided by fresh fruit and vegetables are low. Prisoners' meals rely heavily on convenience foods, such as pies, burgers, tinned food and frozen vegetables, with little use made of seasonal produce.

In 2009/10 the annual food and beverage costs for public sector prisons in England and Wales totalled £59,959,424 (MoJ). However, as the MoJ point out, the full cost of providing meals and beverages for prisoners in public sector prisons in England and Wales includes a number of elements. These include staff and prisoner labour, food, training (staff and prisoner), kitchen and serving facilities, utilities and other overheads, including management overheads, and that all of these costs are not collected centrally.

3. A change of direction

Understandably the Government's focus is on value for money and efficiency and even within the complexity of the prison system the unit cost of food products and preparation may be relatively easy to assess. However, the potential value of food and how it is sourced, grown, eaten and the training and enterprise opportunities this brings is a much harder task. In this section we explore some of the ways in which prisons in the UK and further afield have tried to unlock this added value.

The starting point for us was the potential public value that food growth and production could have on site, including the potential to cater for the prison and the project as it develops and the broader implications this could have for training and social enterprise.

Local sourcing

There are already many changes and new strategies emerging in other public service industries such as the National Health Service (NHS) and state-run schools and colleges. Changes were made on local and/or national scales and new Government policy was formed to reflect this;

“Since 2003, the catering team at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust has been working to provide a sustainable food service as part of the Trust's Good Corporate Citizenship initiative. This includes more sustainable food procurement, working with community social enterprises to set up community cafes, and reducing the hospital kitchen's carbon footprint. The Trust also plans to introduce a biomass system to cook patients' food, using locally grown biomass as fuel. This is expected to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and reduce the catering system's carbon footprint by up to 90 percent. Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust supports a number of other initiatives to promote sustainable activities

and has been recognised for a number of its initiatives as the 2007 and 2008 winners of the Health Service Journal Awards for Corporate Citizenship.”

Nottingham University NHS Hospital Trust

“All our meals are made daily on the premises using fresh ingredients, not ready meals. We have a fully equipped kitchen and highly skilled staff. Nutrition and quality are our key considerations, not driving down costs. Our catering team puts sustainability first, meaning we use seasonal, organic and local produce whenever possible. After hard work in this area, 30 percent of our food is now locally or organically sourced”

Brompton NHS Hospital

So, some hospitals are serving locally sourced, sustainable, nutritious food, and receiving accolades for it, as they are saving money, food waste and jobs. However, a recent story from the BBC News looked at a report produced by The Campaign for Better Hospital Food, showing the UK government had wasted more than £54m of taxpayers' money on failed attempts to improve patient meals since 1992.

There have been 21 failed initiatives, it says, many involving celebrity chefs such as Albert Roux, Heston Blumenthal or broadcaster Loyd Grossman. However, in the recent BBC Two series 'Operation Hospital Food', James Martin went in to the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham to try and improve both the quality of food for patients, and the food business model for the hospital. Previously he had done similar at Scarborough General Hospital, North Yorkshire. He was shocked to find 40 percent of food being thrown away, the catering department crippled by a huge overspend and facing the threat of closure, and no system to assess how many people they were cooking for, or what they would like to eat. He introduced a new seven-day menu helping the

head chef take control of stock management and ordering, and combining the restaurant menu and patient menu to save costs. James Martin recruited chefs Stephen Terry, Galton Blackiston, Paul Merrett, Lawrence Keogh, James Tanner and Chris Tanner to each work with a hospital in their own area. Since then, a 92-dish menu he and Stephen Terry created has been adopted by 115 NHS hospitals in Wales.

Local Sourcing of food and drink is one of the priorities of the Welsh Assembly Government, as set out in One Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government's One Wales document includes commitments to introduce an initiative to increase local sourcing of food and drink within Wales and to support the development of farmers' markets.

These commitments are relevant to the Government's pursuit of sustainable development across all rural and urban communities throughout Wales and its strategy for sustainable food production and rural development. In order to achieve this goal, they believe that there is a need to foster a climate in which enterprises, in particular small and medium sized businesses, can thrive. In this context, the emphasis is on encouraging farm diversification and the development of Welsh based food and drink companies through supplying mainly, but not exclusively, local markets. There are clear benefits from increasing the amount of local food and drink purchased in Wales and other countries, where existing production cannot supply the demand of our consumers. Buying locally leads to money being reinvested in our communities. It also reduces the miles food travels, reducing carbon emissions in line with Government commitments on climate change.

Transitions focuses on the need to treat and position the prison service as a core public service, applying more consistently the approaches that have informed health and education. A central argument is that in building a rehabilitation culture – not just within prisons and wider justice services – but amongst the broader public, prisons need to be far more embedded within their local communities and economies. As the NHS examples above show, there are opportunities available to place food at the heart of this. Within this mix is the question of what prisons farms could play.

Prison farms

According to the MoJ, there are currently only five farms across the prison estate; these opened in 1935, 1939, 1946 (two opened in that year), and 1962. The total number of potential prisoner employment places that the combined five prison farms (at North Sea Camp, Prescoed, Hewell, East Sutton Park and Kirkham) provide is 92. There is no profit made from prison farms.

This is partly due to the relatively high ratios of prisoner supervision required to maintain safety at the prison and to protect the public. The primary objective of prison farms is to provide vocational skills and qualifications to help improve the employment opportunities for prisoners upon release, and not the generation of profit. Records show that, for 2009/10 there was an allocation of £678,000 for all five farms.

The MoJ states however that this does not take account of the cost associated with staff supervision, prisoner wages and fixed costs. Between 2002 and 2005, the prison service significantly reduced its farming commitment from 23 farms, to the current five. Much of the produce grown on prison farms is consumed internally by prisoners. Some of these prison farm sites may have been redeveloped after closing, but clearly there is the potential for many prisons to revisit the idea of prison farms and all of the associated produce benefits, training and skills outcomes and employment opportunities through schemes such as Transitions.

The Green House

The Green House project is a horticultural therapy program for prisoners at Rikers Island Jail in New York City. Green House began in 1996 as a project of the Horticultural Society of New York with the aim to rehabilitate prisoners through horticultural therapy and thereby, reduce recidivism rates.

Green House works toward this goal by providing prisoners with 'job and life skills, some scientific knowledge, and on-going therapy working with plants and animals in the hope they can redirect their lives through meaningful work' and break the cycle of recidivism that grips so many offenders in a system with very few educational and vocational opportunities. Studies show that prisoners who have participated in similar horticultural therapy programs are only 25 percent as likely to reoffend as non-participating prisoners. Additionally, less than 10 percent of prisoners that work with Green Team post-release reoffend.

In her 2012 paper *Food, Farming, and Freedom: Promoting a Sustainable Model of Food Justice in America's Prisons*, Hillary Lyons explains how prison food, and the approach to food as part of rehabilitation, in North America has changed over the years. Initially, farms in America's prisons were meant to discipline and reform prisoners through hard labour, after abolition the farms became a means to harness newly liberated black labour power.

During the latter part of the 20th century, many of these prison farms were abolished, and food was replaced with corporate monopolies on food and foodservice, and subsequently, these very foodservice corporations have come to serve the prison populations that were once entirely self-reliant and sustainable. Lyons also explains that currently, the UN defines food security as a 'universal human right'. Food security means both physical and economic access to healthy food, as well as long-term access. She argues that privatised prison food service is neither: that it severely constrains prisoners' access to healthy food (and actively encourages consumerism of unhealthy food), and the mode by which this prison food is produced is entirely unsustainable.

The Marlborough Unit

The Marlborough Unit's horticultural program at Victoria's high-security Port Phillip Prison is supported by Corrections Victoria, Department of Human Services and G4S Custodial Services. The Unit runs a successful program using horticulture to build the professional and life skills of vulnerable prisoners and is home to 35 prisoners with a cognitive impairment, be it an intellectual disability or acquired brain injury. While serving their custodial sentences they develop skills to help them contribute to the community. At the centre of their rehabilitation is a garden, which prisoners have landscaped and planted with roses, edibles and perennials. There are also vegetable gardens, a chicken coop and five polytunnels full of plants being propagated. The garden provides physical activity, horticultural training, fresh food and the opportunity to build personal relationships with staff, trainers and volunteers. The prisoners tackle tasks that suit their abilities. Some undertake horticultural certificate training, focusing on skills that might help them get a job. Former inmates have entered the industry successfully on their release.

Lyons also examines the impact of prison farms in Canada. Canada's prison farms rehabilitate by providing prisoners with meaningful work through which they can grow, learn, and recreate themselves. Prisoners at any of the six facilities with farms (Frontenac, Pittsburgh, Westmorland, Riverbend, Rockwood, and Bowden) are given the opportunity to work on the farm at the end of their sentences. Prisoners work with plants and animals, learning specific vocational skills, such as operation and maintenance of heavy machinery, environmental stewardship, crop management, livestock care and breeding-as well as life skills such as problem solving, teamwork, and responsibility. Prisoners can get certified in various agriculture-related fields such heavy machinery operation, food handling, and dairy operation. Thus even if prisoners do not go on to a career in agriculture, some of the practical skills and certifications they earned through the farms program apply to future jobs.

Skills gaps, employment and training

Research conducted by Working Links found that prison staff and management are supportive of the Government's ambitions to increase the proportion of offenders working in prisons. In terms of education and training, in 2011, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) conducted a review of offender learning. The response to the review produced a strong consensus about reforming offender learning as a key priority. The following points were raised:

- Effective collaborative working is the key to making local arrangements operate well, with the effective engagement of employers;
- Greater local influence is needed on provision for offender learners, both in prison and in the community, in order to equip them better to compete for work in the labour market into which they will be released, with resources distributed according to the needs of learners in prison and with the needs of those serving community sentences taken into account by the further education and skills system.
- Take up and continuation of learning and employment opportunities should

be encouraged through mentoring for prisoners, with a focus on transition when leaving prison, as well as for those serving community sentences;

- The quality of offender learning should be paramount, along with the implementation of the virtual campus across all prisons, and flexibility of delivery in the community.

The Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) was created in 2005 with the purpose of integrating offender education with mainstream academic and vocational provision. The vision for OLASS is that offenders, in prisons and supervised in the community, according to need, should have access to learning and skills, which enable them to gain the skills and qualifications they need to hold down a job and have a positive role in society. In May 2011, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, along with the MoJ published the Review of Offender Learning, Making Prisons work: Skills for Rehabilitation. This recommended a number of changes aimed at reducing re-offending, through a greater focus on skills development and routes to employment for learners in custody. OLASS review recommendations included:

- Making prisons places of work and industry, with more prisoners experiencing structured and disciplined working weeks.
- More relevant and focused vocational training taking place in the immediate 12-month period before release.
- A greater focus on the role of prison governors and prison Heads of Learning and Skills in planning curricula.
- Being able to meet local needs more effectively and understanding the local labour market into which prisoners are released.
- A re-procurement exercise, culminating in new contracts starting delivery from 1 August 2012 (OLASS 4).

Funding is devolved to OLASS providers including the National Careers Service and, in the merged prison region, the Manchester College, which receives funding for a core curriculum made up from three elements:

- English, Maths and ESOL;
- Vocational qualifications, including information and communications technology (ICT);
- Employability skills (these may include a wide range of team-working, personal, social and other skills).

Since June 2012 the curriculum for the prisons in the regional cluster (HMPs Hull, HMP Humber and HMP Full Sutton) has been re-designed to improve the offender learning journey and ensure that OLASS 4 funding is efficient and effective. The learning and skills offer includes qualifications linked to catering, customer service and food preparation.

Innovative practice and social enterprise

In developing their learning and skills offer some prisons have developed initiatives some of which have become part of the supply chain or offer services to the public, albeit in constrained circumstances. In some cases projects have developed that enable learning and skills alongside wider public engagement, showing the positive results that can be achieved.

HMP Onley: A zero waste to landfill.

As well as improved recycling facilities and awareness of recycling and waste minimisation through campaigns, HMP Onley has developed a composting scheme for all food waste, mixed with wood pellets from workshops. This cannot be sold commercially because meat products within it mean it cannot reach high enough legal temperatures, but is used within the facility for food production. The prison creates biodiesel for use in the prison by purifying used cooking oils with methanol and caustic soda. An Energy from Waste (EfW) scheme has been developed that creates heating for a local residential area through incineration of the remaining waste. The prison has also been refurbishing prison issue shoes for re-use.

For example, in 2011 the horticultural team at HMP Everthorpe (now merged within HMP Humber) over 50 offenders at worked alongside the Horticultural Tutor, to create the Save a Life, Drop the Knife Garden, which went on to awards – including the Best in Show award – at the Royal Horticultural Society's Tatton Park show. The

project raised awareness of the issues around knife crime and the choices people make.

Waste

Waste management and recycling concepts have been established in prisons since 1998 and since September 2003, the service, like all government departments and agencies, has been required to have a sustainable development policy and strategy. In developing ideas around how food could be linked to wider opportunities around employment, skills and public benefit, there is potential to look at the wider issue of food waste.

These kinds of opportunities and innovations have been raised consistently through the development of Transitions. In the next stage of development the aim is to take some of the ideas suggested and develop these further, linked to wider opportunities that site provides. This includes the development of a cafe, a strong horticultural offer and scope for using the spare kitchen resulting from the prison merger to provide a space for developing skills for work and qualifications. All of this will be linked to the specific opportunities at HMP Humber, its local economy and the site on its doorstep.

3. Next steps?

The Humber sub-region is one of Europe's largest food processing centres, with Greater Grimsby known as 'Europe's food town', hosting the largest fish market in England and Wales. The catering sector is expected to grow with the new investments to the area, and food policy features in the Hull city plan, in recognition of increasing food poverty and health concerns. The city plans to develop local engagement with food growing and community bulk buying and to create a city farm for this purpose.

More locally, the site that Transitions is working on includes 45 acres of MoJ-owned land, some of which is used for horticulture, employing a small number of Category D prisoners. The plans for the site include a training and skills hub, a health and well being centre, field learning centre, light industrial workshops and a café. The first development on site will be a core administrative complex, which will be designed for co-location of service providers and Transitions partners.

In exploring the short to medium-term 'food strategy' for HMP Humber/Transitions partnership, we need to have this longer-term development aim in mind but begin with the immediate opportunities at hand. These include four key aspects:

1. Looking at a more granular level at where the skills gaps lie in the region drawing on the survey work we have done with prisoners in HMP Humber.

This work would need to address in detail the options for employment and skills (onsite and in custody) and how these fit within current commissioning and funding arrangements.

2. Exploring the potential for developing the spare kitchen on the HMP Humber as a social enterprise that can enhance opportunities for employment, training and qualifications.

This paper is informed by discussions with the catering manager and catering staff. Future work in this area will build on this and will scope, short to medium-term opportunities for providing food to some parts of the prison and Transitions site alongside training outcomes. This will include looking routes to work, potential partnerships in the area and independent living skills. It will explore longer-term opportunities linked to the development of the HMP Humber site/Transitions and the Market Garden, a private business outside the prison but not on the MoJ site.

The Market Garden has been closed for some time and Transitions has worked with its owners in developing a business plan and identified potential opportunities for bringing this back into use as 'the Gate', a shop front for Transitions and HMP Humber goods.

In understanding the opportunities available within the wider 'ecology' of the prison and Transitions as it develops, we will need to design innovations that can work within current procurement arrangements. Within HMP Humber, most food is purchased on the basis of long-term contracts, and these have some years to run. But there are opportunities and an appetite for new approaches within those areas not currently covered by existing contracts. For example, although prisoners' food is purchased within this contract, the staff mess does not have to purchase buy through the main contractor and can buy produce from wherever they want to.

3. Exploring the potential for expanding current work on site (horticulture) to food production and waste management.

This work will focus on generating work opportunities for Category D prisoners in the short-term with a longer term plan linked to the development of the Transitions project, in particular the café and health and wellbeing centre.

The core focus will be to look at enhancing the commercial opportunities that exist with an aim of developing a social enterprise.

4. Assessment for the potential of linking this work and the wider food offer to broader public health and independent living skills.

This will include developing our understanding of how to educate and inform prisoners and families about health and nutrition and assessing how to further engage prisoners with existing provision such as the gym and catering sites.

All of this work will be funding dependent and the RSA is developing proposals to this end. In the meantime there are a number of actions identified that will support this work. This includes the creation of an Employers' Advisory Group including those with expertise within the areas identified here and the creation of a working group, bringing together catering staff, learning and skills providers and Transitions.

Conclusion

This paper is published alongside a range of others, which address amongst other aspects transport, workforce development and green skills (a particular focus of the project). The presence of unused farmland at HMP Humber provides a particular set of circumstances that suggest the potential scope of what could be achieved is ambitious. The economies of the sub-region and skills shortages in areas like food production provide opportunities to engage with private and public sector employers on issues around food, catering and hospitality skills (as well as horticulture and waste issues).

However, Transitions aims to provide an effective model not just for HMP Humber but to highlight existing innovation already within the system and identify the processes and thinking that can support these.

At the heart of this is the need to strengthen rehabilitation culture in and around prisons and the wider community. We believe that the Transitions model provides a way of 'opening up' and expanding prisons' and prisoners' access to the innovations, networks and relationships needed to support rehabilitation. This requires a whole person/whole person approach that addresses the multiple needs that prisoners have and the multiple role that prisons and wider justice services can play. The issues around food we have outlined here provide a compelling case study for development.

Endnote

1. See Shadd Maruna, Creating a Rehabilitation Culture speech at RSA April 2014. www.thersa.org/events/audio-and-past-events/2014/What-is-a-Rehabilitation-Culture-and-How-Can-We-Make-One

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