



# CORRECTIONS CAREERS

## CCJ4C: CAREER COUNSELLING GUIDELINES FOR STAFF WORKING IN CRIMINAL CORRECTIONAL JUSTICE SYSTEMS

### WP3. Stakeholders Analysis in CCJ Careers, the supportive competencies, and educative needs.

**Objectives:** Provide in-depth knowledge on target group of correctional staff, their learning and training situations and effective methodologies, understanding of the skills set needed to manage own careers. This WP aims the development of a catalogue of skills in CCJ.

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### 3.2. Definition and exemplification of what is a learning context prison staff and how it supports the professionals' development.

\* Note that the criminal justice system and legal jurisdiction of England and Wales are reserved – non-devolved – matters, and so are under the control of the UK parliament and government at Westminster. The criminal justice systems of Scotland and Northern Ireland are devolved to the Scottish parliament and Northern Ireland assembly, respectively. All information contained in this report pertains to the criminal justice system of England and Wales only.

#### **Education:**

Candidates for the role of Prison Officer in England & Wales must be a minimum of 18 years old. They must have the right to live and work in the UK, with a minimum of 30 months remaining on their UK residence permit at the time of applying. If an individual is applying to work in a Category A prison (the highest security level), candidates must have lived in the UK for a minimum of three years. Previous criminal convictions does not automatically preclude an individual from the Prison Service and each case is assessed on an individual basis.

No formal qualifications are required to apply for a Prison Officer role in England & Wales, however successful applicants will be expected to work towards secondary level qualifications in Mathematics and English if they have not previously achieved these. Personal qualities are deemed to be more important and four broad areas are defined by the Prison and Probation Service. They are:





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- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Good Communication and Influencing Skills
- Effective Decision Making
- Care and Understanding

When applying, candidates are invited to complete various tests in an Online Assessment Centre. In the first stage, prospective Prison Officers will be asked how they would respond in certain situations they may face working within a prison, including judging the effectiveness of certain actions, and solving basic numeracy tasks.

The second stage of the Online Assessment includes four test areas:

1. Role Plays – candidates are asked to take on the role of a prison officer interacting with an offender
2. Interview – candidates will be interviewed about their skills and strengths, and asked to discuss what motivates and energises them.
3. Numerical test – candidates will be asked to complete numerical tests including basic ratios and fractions, extracting data from tables, and reading times in 24 hour format.
4. Reading & Writing – candidates will be asked to make effective decisions using information extracted from written sources, write in sentences to show an understanding of grammar, and provide a summary of a written source of information.

Following the online assessments, medical and fitness tests will be arranged. Endurance and agility will be tested, along with upper body strength. Basic health screening, including eyesight and hearing tests, will be carried out.

## **Training:**

From summer 2021, all Prison Officers in the North of England and Midlands regions will complete a Custody and Detention Professional Apprenticeship, lasting 12 to 18 months. In the South of England, the training will lead to a Professional Vocational Diploma in Custodial Care. Both qualifications will cover subjects including:

1. Understanding organisational, legal and moral responsibilities for individuals in custody
2. Understanding offending behaviour and methods for reducing re-offending
3. Recording and reporting in a custodial environment
4. Use of force in custodial environments
5. Searching individuals and custodial environments





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6. Escorting in custodial environments
7. Model pro-social behaviour in working relationships with individuals

The training begins with an 8-week induction course in a training centre. The remainder of the training takes place within the prison environment.

## **Prison officer status:**

Within the prison environment there are two main roles which come into contact with offenders. They are:

- Prison Officer. This is grouped by prison security level, with those working in Category A Prison Officers being the highest security level, through to Category D, or “Open” Prisons.
- Prison Operational Support. This is a varied role and includes, welcoming prisoner visitors, monitoring prisoner calls and letters, carrying out security checks and searches, and monitoring the prison perimeter.
- The Prison Service operates a hierarchical system:
  - Prison Governor
  - Custodial Managers
  - Supervising Officers
  - Prison Officers
  - Prison Support Staff

### **3.3 Mapping the professionals responsible for the prison staff's career guidance, what kind of training they receive specific to work with career management competencies, and what is their on-the-job preparation.**

Although the majority of prisons are operated by HM Prison Service, there are 14 “contracted out” prisons in England & Wales, operated by private companies. They must meet the same stringent requirements as HM Prison Services facilities and are inspected by HM Inspectorate of Prisons in the same way.

Prison Officer training is centralised. Careers advice and guidance prior to joining the Prison Service is found in multiple government websites, including a dedicated website for Prison and Probation Service careers (<https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk/prison-officer/>) and





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the National Careers Service (<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/prison-officer>).

Information regarding career guidance and training opportunities once working within the Prison Service is not made publicly available, however previous research for the earlier stages of the CCJ4C project has provided us with some information on this subject. All prisons have a Human Resources Manager who is responsible for supporting Line Managers in identifying training and development needs for staff. All Prison Officers receive regular informal “check-ins” with their Line Manager, and at least one formal review each year. Refresher training is made available on all of the seven categories identified for the induction training. Almost all Prison Officer Training takes place internally with few external training providers involved. Initial training takes place at the dedicated Prison Service College in the north of England, or a local satellite training centre.

During a prison officer’s initial training, information and advice is given on career guidance and possible future career pathways, but it is not a key training focus. There are ongoing training opportunities for prison officers with refresher training. There are opportunities for prison officers who are experts in particular fields to deliver training within other prisons. During staff appraisals with their line manager, the prison officer is able to identify and discuss if or when they may need to take a refresher course over the next year. The staff development performance review system is able to identify the potential training needs of prison officers and enables officers to confidently discuss their progress and needs with their line manager or the prison HR manager. Career guidance and development is still very much driven by the prison officer, although it is increasingly viewed with importance within the wider criminal justice sector.

The prison service is keen to invest in their staff in order to reduce the attrition rate. There is an increasing awareness within government policy making that it benefits the service for their staff to be well trained and know what pathways are available to them.

### **3.4 identification of a list of common competences so professionals can perform in the “learning prison” context with a career progression mindset.**





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The HMPS Competencies Framework identifies twelve key behavioural competencies for prison officers, grouped into three distinct areas. Those areas are:

- Working professionally
- Working with others
- Working to achieve results

These competencies are used to support the staff performance and development review. The twelve identified key competencies are:

- Working professionally
  - Achieving and safe and secure environment
  - Showing resilience
  - Acting with integrity
  - Respecting others
- Working with others
  - Persuading and influencing
  - Building relationships and team working
  - Communicating effectively
  - Caring
- Working to achieve results
  - Problem solving and decision making
  - Organising and maximising performance
  - Embracing change
  - Developing self and others

For each competency, additional indicators are given for each level of prison staffing, from Prison Officer, First Line Management, Middle Management and Senior Management.





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### STAKEHOLDER CHECKPOINT 3

<b>Date:</b>	<b>02-30 August 2021</b>
<b>Place:</b>	<b>Conducted virtually</b>
<b>Project partner:</b>	<b>York Associates International, UK</b>
<b>Number of participants:</b>	<b>09</b>

Due to multiple constraints, including limitations on meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the summer holiday period and low staffing issues within our participants' workplaces, it was not possible to gather all stakeholders together for one meeting on this occasion. This checkpoint was therefore carried out using a mix of focus group discussion, one on one meetings, telephone interviews and email interviews. Some of the data shared in this report was gathered during previous stakeholder focus groups and is included due to its relevance to the specific subjects discussed in this report.

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

York Associates encountered reluctance among participants to permit their identifying details to be published in any report. The focus group leader and administrator have retained detailed identifying information about the participants, including their full names and job roles, but at the request of the participants, the descriptions provided in this report will not include any identifying information.

**Checkpoint Lead:** Tom Flaherty (TF)

**Checkpoint Administrator:** Linda Simi (LS)

**JP** – Prison officer in a maximum-security facility, with 12 months service

**RG** – Prison officer in a maximum-security facility, with 3.5 years' service

**DJ** – Head of Learning & Skills for HM Prison Service

**KW** – Youth Offending Officer in Restorative Justice team, with 6.5 years' service

**PW** – Member of the UK Independent Prisons Monitoring Board

**RW** – Director of an organisation working on creative learning programmes inside prisons

**CR** – Lecturer of Criminology



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**EB** – University Deputy Dean of School of Education and Social Sciences, formerly Principal Lecturer of Criminology

**LS** – The checkpoint administrator, currently studying an undergraduate degree in Social Science, provided background materials from research for discussion at this checkpoint

## Introduction

Between 02 and 06 August, each stakeholder received a communication by email from LS, thanking them for their involvement in the project so far. This email explained that next steps of the programme would be to analyse the drivers for change within criminal corrections career management. This would be done by completing a PESTLE analysis and developing possible future scenarios using the Axes of Uncertainty framework. This communication also including some research carried out by LS using publicly available sources (see appendix). Through the stated combination of telephone discussion, online meetings and electronic communication, the stakeholder group were able to make the following observations. Between 06 and 30 August, responses were received through various sources both via online and telephone discussion and email feedback, to enable to group to develop the PESTLE analysis and Axes of Uncertainty graphic.

## What are the POLITICAL factors?

PW stated they were pleased to note increasing government recognition of the need to improve working conditions within the prison service, and especially regarding violence within prisons. Assaults on prison staff remain a significant concern and PW has seen firsthand the effects of these attacks.

DW explained that the prison service does want to retain staff, avoiding the expense of training a new intake. They felt that the newly created graduate programmes with on-the-job learning are a great way to highlight correctional justice as a career path. However, DW also raised the possibility that the increasing focus on bringing graduates into more senior roles could mean fewer non-graduate prison officers are likely to make their way through the ranks in future. DW could see both advantages and disadvantages to this approach, as although it may lead to a higher level of education in staff at management level within the prison service, it may also mean that managerial staff have less direct understanding of the frontline prison officer experience.

## What are the ECONOMIC factors?



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PW stated that reduced allocation of funds for the prison service is, in their opinion, the most significant risk factor to improving working conditions and career development for correctional justice staff. In their experience working within a high security facility, PW noted that The Prison Governor spent much of his time looking into where cuts could be made when he, by his own admission, should have been looking at and improving the management of the prison.

KW explained that their experience has been that senior staff are supportive in terms of further training but there is no formal career structure, the role is considered 'entry level' in terms of salary and status. They felt that the infrastructure within the correctional justice sector doesn't allow for career development. KW is highly qualified (a graduate in criminology) but doesn't feel that this is taken into consideration or especially valued.

## **What are the SOCIAL factors?**

PW stated that they personally believe that academic qualifications should be a necessary requirement for employment in the prison service. Many prisoners are highly intelligent (equally many prisoners cannot read or write) and need to be managed by officers who have been educated to an appropriate or adequate level. PW did not however feel that it was necessary that Prison Officer should necessarily have to be university educated. PW was surprised to note the high percentage of female officers employed in English prisons and wondered if this reflected a salary at the prison officer level that may not be deemed sufficient by men, or that men may feel they could obtain a higher salary outside the prison sector.

PW felt that it is important that more officers come from a BAME (black and minority ethnic) background and that recruitment and career progression drives should focus more attention on diversity.

SG explained that being from a traditionally working-class social background they hope to be able to relate to prisoners and they expressed some concern that bringing in more graduates to prison service will mean those from different social backgrounds may be less able to fully understand the effects of a prisoners background on their offending, for example.

## **What are the TECHNOLOGICAL factors?**

PW was pleased to note that there is a greater emphasis on technological skills for both officers and staff but clearly access to the internet could become a dangerous tool in the prison. PW was keen to understand if there is any evidence yet that any time released by







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the use of technology has been productively used by the officers for either their own benefit or that of the prisoners.

DW was very keen to note the importance of technology within the prison service. They pointed to research that suggests access to technology for prisoners can reduce reoffending, and better use of technology for prison officers can free up more of their time for development activities. DW highlighted that In 2018 reoffending was estimated to cost UK society approximately £15 billion. Investment in prisons to allow more technology that can be used to give both prisoners and prison officer access to more education, training, and development opportunities.

## **What are the LEGAL factors?**

RG highlighted that Salary continues to be an issue within the criminal justice sector and there is a perception that better paid jobs are available outside the prison service with less risk attached. RG also mentioned that they don't feel that there is any contractual obligation for senior prison staff to offer development, training, and promotional opportunities to more junior staff.

JP agreed that an increase in pay, and better management of working hours to improve work-life balance, would encourage prison officers to stay in the system. JP also agreed with RG regarding performance reviews very short with no formal targets or development goals set, and a sense that senior staff are not contractually obligated to support junior staff with their professional development.

## **What are the ENVIRONMENTAL factors?**

RW stated that within the correctional justice environment, the prison officer role is seen as a career with opportunities to move up the ladder. But outside the system, the prison officer career is seen more negatively because of preconceptions about what a prison officer needs to do to be able to deal with prisoners. RW also felt that many newer prison officers do see their role as a stepping-stone towards a more senior position. Those who've been a prison officer for a long time may be more likely to see being a prison officer as a career in itself. Prison staff mental health still an issue, many prison officers may feel they cannot come forward and seek support as it will be noted on their record and could negatively affect their chances of promotion. Change in emphasis so mental health support for prison staff is





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mandatory or at least considered the norm, may help retain good prison officers and encourage more to seek promotion.

CR was keen to highlight that there is a cultural difference, even between wings in the same prison, giving the example that the segregation unit in a prison is very different to the health unit. There isn't just one prison culture, but various cultures, even within the same prison, and this impacts on the skills required from the prison officers themselves in managing that culture. Many prison officers are committed to their own professional development, and training within the prison environment is improving as there is becoming a greater acknowledgement of its necessity. CR also notes that pre-2010, prison officers were often employed from ex-military backgrounds. This has changed in recent years with a broader spectrum of people joining the prison service, and an increased focus on diversity.

EB noted that gender may be an issue as female prison officers may find deescalating violence with male prisoners a greater challenge, perhaps this limits promotional opportunities for female prison staff? LS suggested that perhaps any careers development guidance for prison officers must include specific considerations of gender. LS also suggested that this may apply with regards to race and ethnicity too – a campaign to encourage more female and BAME promotional opportunities may be beneficial.

## POLITICAL

Health and safety of correctional staff has been identified as an area of concern by the UK government. Concerns relating to violence within prisons, assaults on staff and possible exposure to psychoactive substances are all stated government priorities. The Joint Unions in Prison Alliance (JUPA) developed the "Safe Inside Prisons" charter in 2020, which has been accepted into practice by the British Government. Since October 2018, rigid bar handcuffs and incapacitant spray have been issued to Prison Officers working with adult male prisoners.

## ECONOMIC

The UK governments total funding available for prisons in 2009/2010 was 4.73bn. In 2019/2020 this was 4.36bn, a significant real terms reduction. Projected spending for 2020/21 is significantly increased to 5.63bn but a decade of real terms cuts means additional spend will take time to filter through to on the ground improvements. Starting salary for Prison officers in England and Wales is between £24,118 and £31,728 depending on geographical location (highest in London and southeast England).

## SOCIAL

Female staff made up 49% of HMPPS workforce in 2019/2020 across all professions. 59.7% of senior leaders within HMPPS are male. 10.4% of staff identify themselves as BAME (Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic). 26.8% of HMPPS staff are aged between 50 and 59 years old. BAME staff had a lower promotion rate at 4.9% than White staff at 5.1% in 2019/20. 9.1% of Band 3-5 Prison officers declared that they have a disability in 2019/20. 6.2% of staff declared themselves as LGB (Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual). No formal academic qualifications are currently required to apply for the Prison Officer role.



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## TECHNOLOGICAL

UK Government report released in 2020 detailing the findings of a 10-year project looking at the impact of technology within prisons, for both for prisoners and correctional staff. The P-NOMIS System (Prison National Offender Management Information System) is available to all correctional staff. Information available on each prisoner includes Prisoner History Sheets, Prisoner Risk Assessments and Prisoner Incident Reports. 2020 trial of handheld mobile devices for accessing the P-NOMIS system was reported to be a reasonable success, with some reluctance among established officers to embrace the new technology.

## LEGAL

Prison Officer roles are contracted for an average of 37 hours per week and maximum of 41 hours per week. Weekend, public holiday and unsociable hours working is expected as part of the role. Most prison officers work 12-hour shifts. Applicants must be over 18 years old, be reasonably fit and have the right to work in the UK. To work in a maximum-security prison, potential officers must have been resident in the UK for at least 3 years. All prison officers undertake a process of security vetting, including a Disclosure and Barring Service and Counter Terrorist Check for applicants to youth facilities or high security prisons. Prison Officers are subject to random drug and alcohol tests on duty. UK Prison Officers do not carry firearms.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Prison staffing numbers have increased overall between June 2017 and June 2020 from 18,755 Band 3-5 Prison Officers in 2017 to 22,169 in 2020. This is a net increase of slightly more than 19% over three years. Although prison population numbers have fallen in 2020/21, this is primarily down to delays in hearings & sentencing due to Covid-19 restrictions. The UK government projects that the prison population will increase to 98,700 by 2026. In June 2017, 26.3% of HMPPS staff had less than three years' experience. By June 2020, this had increased to 32% of staff. The leaving rate of Band 3-5 Prison Officers in June 2017 was 9.3%. In June 2020, this figure was 11.1%.



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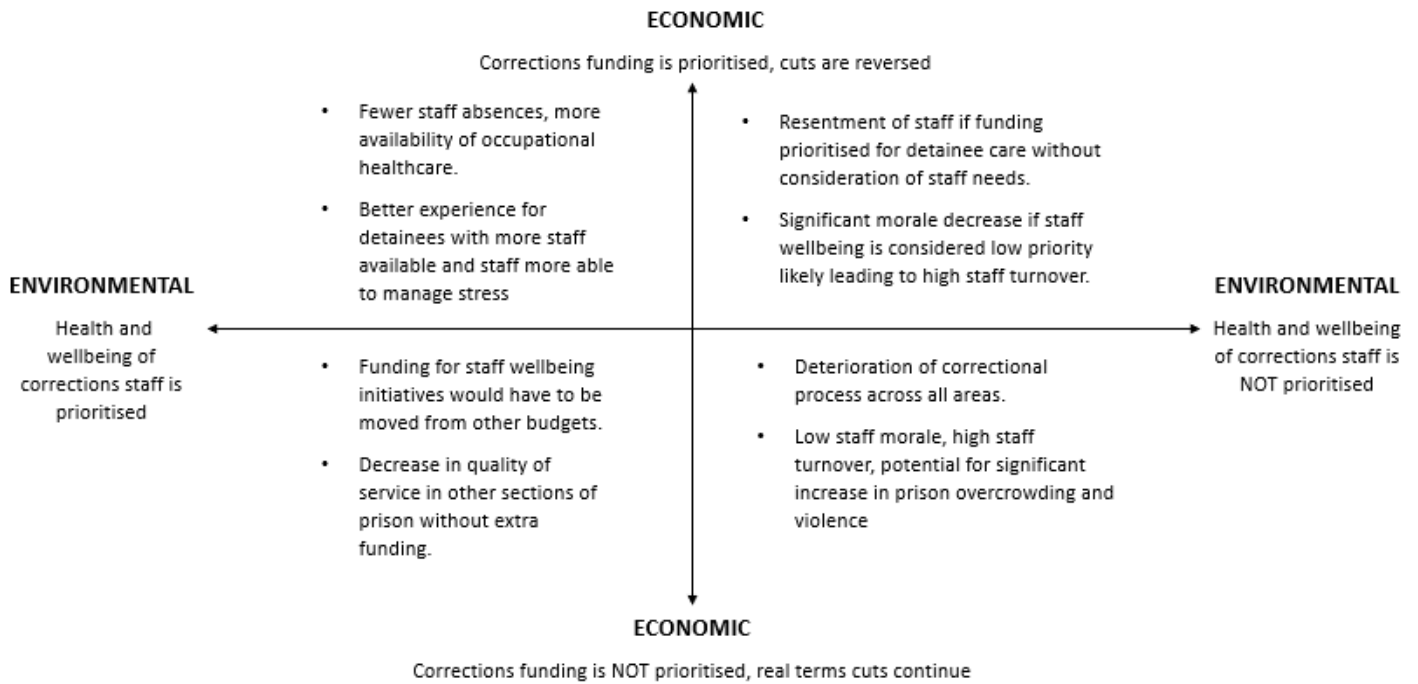
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## AXES OF UNCERTAINTY

During the course of their discussions, the group were able to develop the following axes of uncertainty:





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## Appendix

Additional sources of research for the PESTLE Analysis and Axes of Uncertainty:

<https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk/> (accessed 06 July 2021)

<https://prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk/prison-officer/> (accessed 06 July 2021)

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/about/hmps/contracted-out> (accessed 06 July 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/prisons-in-england-and-wales> (accessed 06 July 2021)

<https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/criminal-justice-devolution> (accessed 06 July 2021)

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/prison-officer> (accessed 06 July 2021)

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/> (accessed 06 July 2021)

<https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/jobs/hmps-competence-framework.pdf> (accessed 14 July 2021)

