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Prisons failing to educate young offenders, warns CSJ

Young Offenders' Institutions (YOIs) in England are not providing the most basic education requirements, new data from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) shows.

It found that just one in nine state-run YOIs are delivering their minimum requirement of 15 hours of education to each teenager per week.

Responding to a Government consultation on the possible introduction of Secure Colleges, the CSJ is highly critical of the current system which fails to provide even the basic schooling.

Its freedom of information data shows the situation at YOIs is getting worse – the number of hours of education has dropped 15 per cent over two years to an average of just 11 hours per week for 2011-12.

Edward Boyd, Deputy Policy Director of the CSJ, said: “The youth justice system is being treated as a dumping ground for youngsters that no one knows how to help. Education is one of the best ways to reduce reoffending – but YOIs are failing to do this.”

The consultation response criticises the lack of focus on “learning” and urges the Government to radically overhaul the current system and introduce Secure Colleges, which would put education at the heart of detention.

Mr Boyd added: “Our youth justice system is in crisis with more than two thirds (70 per cent) going on to reoffend within 12 months of release.

“We know only too well the link between educational failure and crime. Half of those entering YOIs aged 15-17 have literacy levels you would usually find in primary schools. But instead of trying to rehabilitate these young people, by equipping them with the skills for work, the current system has simply written them off. Is it any wonder most go on to reoffend?”

“What will also shock many policy makers, is that this failure is not because of insufficient money. A place in custody for a young offender costs on average £100,000. More than sending a young person to Eton.”

As well as urging the Government to press ahead with Secure Colleges, the CSJ has also called for:

- A guarantee that each young offender has a mentor
- The creation of a Commissioner for Resettlement – to close the gap between custody and the community

For media inquiries, please contact Ross Reid of the Centre for Social Justice on 07780 707322 or Alistair Thompson of Media Intelligence Partners Ltd on 07970 162225.

Additional information:

YOIs are contracted to deliver 15 hours of education per week, see [here](#)

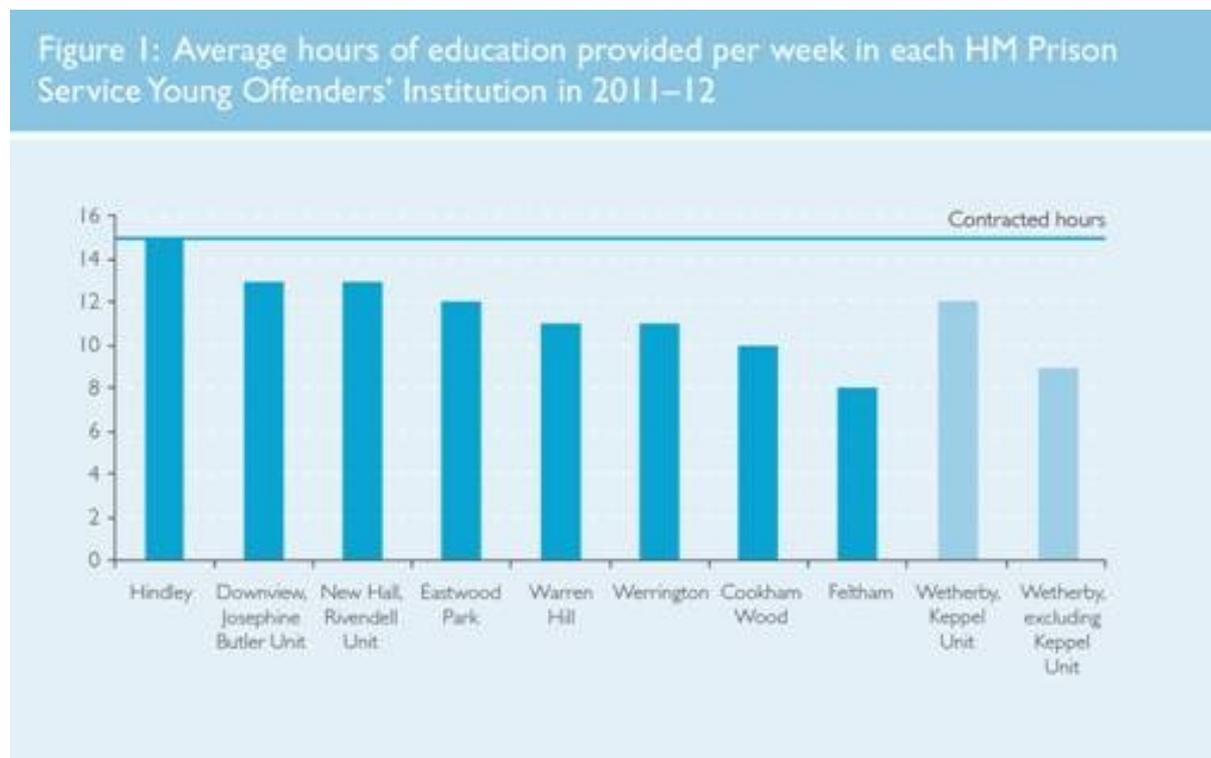
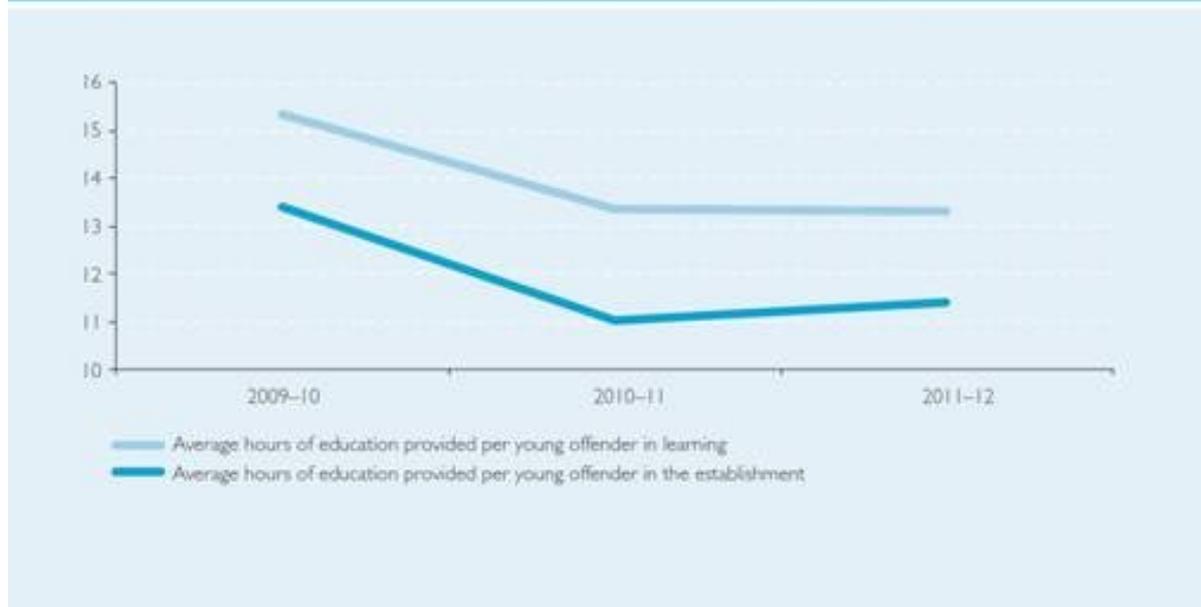


Figure 2: Average hours of education provided per week in HM Prison Service Young Offenders' Institutions between 2009–10 and 2011–12



Figures obtained via an FOI to the Ministry of Justice

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Centre for Social Justice is an independent think tank established in 2004 to put social justice at the heart of British politics.

In 2007 the CSJ published its landmark report, *Breakthrough Britain*. This publication, which set out 190 evidence-based policy recommendations to tackle poverty in Britain, transformed the social policy and political landscape and was awarded Publication of the Year by *Prospect Magazine* in 2008.

Since *Breakthrough Britain* the CSJ has published over 40 reports which have shaped government policy and influenced opposition parties. These have included the seminal papers *Dying To Belong* and *Dynamic Benefits*, which has led the Coalition Government's welfare reforms.

Further to this, the CSJ manages an Alliance of over 350 of the most effective grass roots, poverty-fighting organisations.

The CSJ is able to draw upon the expertise and experience of Alliance charities for research work and media inquiries. Journalists wishing to conduct grass-roots research into social problems can be put in touch with front-line charity directors and staff.