



# Emergence as change: A report into the work of The Chrysalis Programme

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**CHRYSALIS**  
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SOCIAL ENTERPRISE



# **Emergence as change: A report into the work of The Chrysalis Programme**

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## **Executive summary**

**The Chrysalis Programme is becoming an established training scheme providing an innovative alternative to mainstream prison training**

**It was developed as a response to high re-offending rates**

**It is based on training processes and techniques employed to develop senior executives**

**It is resource intensive and requires a high-degree of commitment from trainees**

**It aims to change thinking and attitude in order to allow offenders to change their behaviours by being better equipped to re-integrate into family, local communities and mainstream society**

**There is evidence to suggest good rates of success in terms of reducing re-offending**

**Incorporation into more offender training programmes across a wider range of prisons may have a positive effect on re-offending rates**

**There is a potential risk that a lack of funding could impact on the sustainability of the programme**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This report details some empirical research undertaken by current and former members of the Social and Public Policy Research Group from Plymouth University.

1.2 We begin by providing a brief introduction on prisoners and re-offending, before moving on to give an outline of the Chrysalis Programme including aims and objectives, throughputs and costs. From there, we outline the methods used in collecting the empirical data and then move to summarise that data before offering some conclusions.

1.3 The rate of imprisonment for offenders has never been higher in the UK. However, whilst imprisonment is an effective way of ensuring that offenders are removed from society, there are questions as to its longer-term effects on the offender. Such questions range from the impact imprisonment has on long-term relationships with family members; the loss of accommodation whilst in prison, the effect on employment chances post-release and the ability of prison to change the patterns of behaviour that led to imprisonment whilst in environment filled with their peers. By any measure, for most of the above points a prison sentence would appear to impact negatively. For example, regarding the last point the Audit Commission (2010) noted that around 60% of prisoners sentenced to less than 12 months re-offend within a year of leaving prison. With young offenders this re-offending rate is higher up to 90% (Social Exclusion Unit 2010). It is accepted that on average 75% of offenders re-offend within two years of their release from prison

1.4 There are a number of well-rehearsed reasons for this, which include; high levels of over-crowding, lack of time and facilities to provide meaningful education programmes, short sentence prisoners not being able to access programmes and longer sentence prisoners being subject to transfer.

1.5 The result is that for some offenders, prison would seem to exacerbate their problems and increase the likelihood of re-offending. It is in this context that the Chrysalis Programme emerged.

## **2. Chrysalis: background, development and aims**

2.1 Chrysalis has been in operation for four years. It was the brainchild of David Apparicio and followed from his experiences as a Justice of the Peace (Magistrate) and Head of Learning and Development within The Royal Mail Group with nearly thirty years experience in 'Training'. Mr Apparicio became concerned as to the level of re-offending of individuals after their release from prison, evidenced by the number of offenders who were returning to court again and again.

2.2 Using his work experience as a management training consultant, combined with his experience as a Justice of the Peace (Magistrate), Mr Apparicio developed the Chrysalis Programme which is based on a number of proven training techniques and guides more normally employed to develop senior executives.

2.3 Funding for The Chrysalis Programme has been supplied by Mr Apparicio. The programme has been responsible for developing a team of Facilitators as well as business networks and development experts all working toward the deployment and delivery of the programme.

2.4 The programme has been running for four years and has run/is running in five prisons. It began operation in HMP/YOI Reading and subsequently it has spread to a number of prisons in the south of England, including HMP Huntercombe (Oxfordshire), HMP ISIS (Belmarsh London); HMP Portland, and HMP High Down (Sutton).

2.5 The aims of The Chrysalis Programme are to:

Engage and inspire individuals to make sustainable changes to their lives;

Influence thinking, attitudes and behaviours of participants;

Help individuals take personal responsibility to own and drive positive change in their lives  
Assume personal accountability and make positive contributions to their role in community/society;

Motivate and encourage people to be less cynical, have greater levels of self-esteem and self-worth and become more caring and achieve fulfilment in their work and lives

Build a Personal Improvement Culture where individuals are encouraged to think and contribute to their life-long learning and development to enable them to grow;

Make improvements to personal effectiveness and interpersonal skills and behaviours.

2.6 The key objectives of the Chrysalis Programme are:

To reduce the level of re-offending rates and/or reduce the 'escalation' of offending severity levels

To engage and inspire people to make sustainable changes to their lives;

To create a paradigm shift in the approach to offender development and re-integration through application of thinking, attitudinal and behavioural change, learning and development programmes;

To engage individuals in making the behavioural changes that they want to achieve in their lives;

To create switched-on, motivated, re-engaged and re-integrated individuals that are driven to make a contribution to their local communities and society as a whole.

### 3.0 Programme, throughputs and costs

3.1 The primary purpose of the programme is to provide people with 'Essential Life Skills' often referred to as soft skills and inter-personal skills. These Essential Life Skills increase their knowledge and understanding, enhance and support behavioural change, improve self-confidence and motivate them to change their lives. If successful, the programme will have prepared people for re-entry into the workforce with changed thinking, attitudes and behaviours.

3.2 The programme itself is resource intensive requiring a commitment from both the trainer and the participant. The initial training programme consists of 12 modules totalling around 130 hours of interaction and learning. This entails 18 to 24 days interactive training delivered over a 12 week period. Details of content will be discussed in section three

3.3 Due to the level of prisoners on remand, prisoner relocations and early release, an alternative to the complete programme; the Chrysalis Lite Programme was developed. This consists of 6 modules and entails 8 days of interaction and learning delivered over six weeks. This meant that even where individuals are only in prison for short sentences, on average six to twelve weeks, the Chrysalis Lite programme can be used effectively with them.

3.4 The Chrysalis Programme was scaled-up over that period and the number of participants not re-offending increased from 6 in its first year, (through 8 & 12) to 24 in year 3. This is a total of 50 participants not reoffending over this period with Chrysalis claiming a saving of £8,295,487 to the public purse

3.5 The total cost of delivery for those programmes over the three year period was £180,000<sup>1</sup>

3.6 Over the course of the last 18 months of delivery of the Chrysalis programme, in HMP/YOI Reading, Isis and Portland 90 prisoners had attended across these prisons or YOI. Of those 90 participants, 55 participants had not re-offended on completion of the programme.

Detailed figures supplied by Chrysalis are:

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<sup>1</sup> N.B. these figures and those in 3.4 above and 3.6 below are taken from the Chrysalis programme data. The cost figures are based on the following data: The cost to the criminal justice system of dealing with the consequences of recorded crime committed by ex-prisoners comes to at least £11 billion per year. **[Source: Social Exclusion Unit]**

- The cost for one prolific teenage offender is officially estimated at £80,000 a year.
- 58% of Adults re-offended @ an average cost of £152,460 over two years
- 72% of Juveniles re-offended @ an average cost of £164,593 over two years
- 72% of Under 15s re-offended @ an average cost of £264,693 over two years. **[Source: Social Exclusion Unit]**

### ***HMP/YOI Reading - Chrysalis Lite***

Four Programmes Delivered – maximum delegate numbers 12:  $4 \times 12 = 48$  with 38 completing. Chrysalis found that on average of those that complete The Chrysalis Lite Programme, 75% do not reoffend. Based on the above figures, of the 38 completions, 28 of these participants typically will not reoffend.

### ***HMP/YOI Portland - Chrysalis Lite***

One Programme Delivered – maximum delegate numbers 12: with 11 completing. Of the 11 completed Chrysalis found that 7 of those participants typically will not reoffend.

### ***HMP/YOI Isis - Chrysalis Lite***

Two Programmes Delivered – maximum delegate numbers 15:  $2 \times 15 = 30$  with 26 completing. Looking at the above figures, 26 completed and 20 of those participants typically will not reoffend.

3.7 The Chrysalis project has made its own estimations of the savings to the Criminal Justice System that this success rate provides (see above 3.4 and footnote 1). It must be noted that these figures are based on known costs but projected savings. Nevertheless, it is established that any reduction in re-offending has both economic and social benefits and it is evident that Chrysalis has positively impacted in the lives of prisoners who have been through the programme and subsequently gained employment upon release.

3.8 There is scope and active encouragement for those prisoners who do not re-offend to be trained as Chrysalis trainers/facilitators. At present, three ex-participants is undertaking facilitation work for them with a view to increase this number in the immediate future.

## **4 Research methods**

4.1 It would be wrong to label this as an impact evaluation as it is notoriously difficult to evaluate the impact of any policy or measure, however, some of the data does hint at possible impact through the perspective of the researchers and the attitudes and opinions of respondents.

4.2 The principal focus was directed at the delivery of services in different UK Young Offenders Institutions (YOI), although the empirical data was predominantly drawn from HMP Portland. In order to conduct this research a multi-method approach was required.

4.3 The research was predominantly inductive and this inevitably influenced the nature of the results. Importantly it enabled sufficient flexibility, so that new (relevant) respondents were included as and when identified and where alternative or supplementary methods of data collection or analysis became necessary.

4.4 The project required a multi-method approach, which included:

- Observations
- Interviews – both formal and informal
- Focus groups
- Documentary analysis.

4.5 The interviews, both formal and informal, sought to obtain data on the attitudes and opinions of relevant actors on the content, delivery and the perception of the overall value of the Chrysalis programme as a rehabilitative initiative aimed at young male offenders. The observational data added further insight on the delivery of the programme, and was supplemented by an interactional dimension as one of the researchers was actively involved as a virtual participant. While this clearly had an impact on the sessions observed, from the perspectives of tutors and ‘students’, it was felt that this was not sufficient to alter the nature of the delivery unduly and was in keeping with the philosophy of the Chrysalis programme.

4.6 Observations were used to investigate the programme from the perspective of the ‘students’ as recipients and to cross reference data obtained via other means. Members of the research team were also taken on a tour of HMP Portland and given the opportunity to see other programmes provided through the institution for the young men. Additionally informal discussions were undertaken with various inmates during this process, including an informal focus group with a group enrolled on a rail-laying course sponsored by Network Rail. This enabled the researchers to gain a wider understanding of the location and context in which the Chrysalis programme is being delivered.

4.7 Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a range of different participants in order to develop a more complete picture of the delivery of the programme and the level of support from within the institution. In the event three interviews were carried out with a range of relevant participants. The designation of the respondents will be used when quoting.

4.8 Informal interviews were carried out, as discussed above, with the founder of the programme, course tutors, staff at HMP Portland, and other young offenders on parallel courses. These were, as before, flexible but with some target themes and information was recorded manually.

4.9 Focus groups were conducted with the 'students' attending the programme at HMP Portland. The student focus group was partly attended by the founder of the programme along with one of the course tutors, but they were asked to leave in order to prevent them influencing the responses. There were four students in attendance as three of the potential sample group were unavailable for various reasons.

The session was mediated by three of the research team members in order to maximise data collection as well as to enrich the data through post-interview discussion. The student focus group was unstructured as it was felt that this would facilitate the student perspective most effectively without imposing preconceived ideas and assumptions. It lasted for an hour and notes were taken during the session. After the focus group was completed and the tour of the facility, the research team members wrote up the notes and shared their recollections, impression and perceptions.

4.10 Interview transcripts and focus group notes, and impressions as collected through the informal methods discussed were organised into independent word files and then subjected to constant comparison

4.11 In order to support the empirical work undertaken during the research it was also necessary to engage in secondary data collection and analysis. This took the form of an unstructured documentary analysis. Documentary analysis was carried out using internal documents provided by the Chrysalis programme alongside material gathered about HMP Portland and HMP Reading. This was situated within a wider review of the relevant literature, including academic research, official reports and statistics and the associated grey literature.

## **5 Findings**

5.1 From the data gathered, the Chrysalis Lite Programme appears to be a learning and development programme that is focused on the world of work, providing skills for the future. The material and style of the programme has been drawn from experience in the corporate world.

While delivering similar material to various business environments Mr Apparicio wondered if a similar approach could be applied to the offender population for people in need of transitional skills and training.

In his interview he expressed his concerns that the current system does not work because the needs of an offender are currently decided by others, not the learners themselves. The education system focuses on behaviour, prioritising 'Cognitive Behavioural Therapies'.

The problem with these according to Mr Apparicio is that the offender's behaviour is managed by someone, thus only producing a temporary change which will revert once the controller is absent. Chrysalis on the other hand, provides essential life skills and in short, "creates capability".

## *5.2 Prison Selection and Resistance*

As already noted above, at the time of research the Chrysalis Lite Programme was operational in five Young Offenders Institutions, mainly in the South of England.

The relationship between the programme and staff at HMP Reading and HMP Portland, evidenced through observation and discussions with staff members, appeared to be supportive and enthusiastic. Mr Apparicio and Ms Knightley (a course tutor) noted that this was not necessarily the case with all of the institutions involved, some of which took considerable time to 'warm' to the programme.

It was noted that resistance by staff and governors alike was relatively common with the consensus being that "Chrysalis wouldn't work because the boys would not understand or 'get it'" and a sense that "only they [existing prison education staff] know their people' and as such they are in the best position to say if something like Chrysalis would work".

In most instances, such resistance was noted to reduce with time and observation of the programme in operation.

One of the key factors influencing this change was the way in which the programme managed to retain its users, something that is considered lacking in other educational programmes.

## *5.3 Overview of the programme*

5.3.1 Based on the empirical data, the Chrysalis Lite Programme is divided into a number of core modules, each designed to be covered in one or two days, tailored to what the programme creator refer to as 'essential life skills'.

5.3.2 The programme itself consists of six modules covering skills associated with:

1. understanding oneself;
2. personal leadership;
3. interpersonal and communication skills;
4. health and wellness;
5. thinking differently and
6. effective self-presentation.

Accompanying each module is a small workbook containing information, exercises, and reflection tasks driven toward improving and developing key skills to help participants capture their thoughts and learning.

## *5.4 Selection and Retention*

5.4.1 Each prison is provided with a 6-week planner leading up to the start of the course during which time they are asked to compile a list of participants that they feel would benefit from the programme. This selection process is left to the discretion of the staff at the prison and no clear format was apparent. Discussions with these individuals then ensued, sometimes in the form of a formal interview, through which a shortlist is compiled.

4 weeks before the course start day the facilitators attend the prison and conduct interviews or an 'engagement day'<sup>2</sup>. Often this process challenges the potential participants to say why they should be selected for the programme in the same way you might be during a job interview.

5.4.2 On average 12-15 people are selected for the programme which settles down to 12 after the engagement session and then typically to 8-9 by the final session, allowing for prison re-locations, early release and drop outs. Typically, once those that remain engaged up to the third module/ remain committed and will go on to complete the programme.

5.4.3 At the time of observation (week 5) the course was being undertaken by 10 'lads' (as they were referred to by the course facilitators), of which only four attended on this particular day. There were a number of underlying factors contributing to the poor attendance including: Ministerial visit by Prisons Minister Crispin Blunt which created change of regime for the morning such that no prisons were allowed to attend education for the morning, during his visit. This coupled with poor communication between the education department and the wing officers leading to lads' not being released from their wing; medical issues, and poor behaviour by an inmate resulting in one wing being on lock down<sup>3</sup> so would not release a couple of the participants. Overall, the course facilitators suggested that while this level of attendance was relatively rare, delayed start times was more common and usually a result of communication issues between education and wing officers regarding prisoner release.

5.4.4 When discussing selection, the lads currently on the course suggested that they were chosen because their wing officer had been asked to nominate 'high performers' or the best prisoners from which a selection was made. Conversely, the programme organisers noted that there could be a lack of explanation as to why each client was selected for the programme, this sometimes led the lads to feel as they had been selected because they have failed in some way. However it is worth noting that this did not reduce their interest in the course, their willingness to engage and the praise they disclosed to us, as will be seen shortly.

## 5.5 *Programme Delivery*

5.5.1 As a whole the programme and each core session is delivered by two facilitators, one takes the lead presenting the material and guiding the session, while the other interacts more generally with the group and assists in group tasks.

5.5.2 The format and delivery of the material is very structured. The facilitators emphasised the need for each session to be delivered in an identical manner regardless of group and institution. For this reason the characteristics and training of facilitators is considered essential.

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<sup>2</sup> a minimum of ½ the day during which a taste of the programme is given

<sup>3</sup> Being confined to their cell and privileges temporarily removed

Each facilitator is carefully selected by Mr Apparicio, the founder and core facilitator of the programme, utilising a range of selection processes. Once deemed suitable for the programme, facilitators are required to undertake a three part, six day, 'train the trainer' programme delivered by Mr Apparicio. This course represents the final stage of selection and is not a guarantee of success; those completing the course and deemed suitable are then integrated into the programme delivery.

5.5.3 The course material could easily be delivered to a broad range of individuals of varying age and background. The material is engaging and fun therefore if delivered with enthusiasm and energy, most people would engage with it on some level. For young offenders, it offers an invaluable insight into communication and life skills that for whatever reason appear to be missing in their lives. The fact that it appears to be having some impact on re-offending and employability is testament of this. That said, as indicated in 3.4.2 the character and personality of the instructor is considered an essential aspect of the programme's success, although the training offered appears to ensure that this is a consistent quality across programme delivery, regardless of institution or environment.

5.5.4 The teams operating in HMP Reading and HMP Portland appear to have fully trained teams who have a good rapport and reputation with the 'lads'. This is attributed to the attitude changes that the programme requires of the staff involved. Staffs were actively encouraged to sit in on the sessions and observe the interaction between the facilitators and the Lads. In addition, before the programme becomes operational in any prison staff, who will come into contact with the programme and the lads on it, are required to complete the course themselves and adopt a respect-based approach with all involved. Mr Apparicio believes this to be an essential element of the programme and can have a significant impact on the character changes observed in the lads involved. Essentially, what is being learnt inside the classroom needs to go with them to the wider prison environment and their interaction with peers and prison staff alike. From our own observations there certainly appeared to be a high level of two-way respect between the lads and the various staff we had contact with. This was demonstrated in both physical body language and verbal communication.

## 5.6 *Programme Content*

5.6.1 Overall, the session included very little material that followed the traditional 'teaching' style whereby the teacher talks and the student listens. The whole session was based around physical and mental tasks that required group work and co-ordination. When discussing the content of these sessions with the founder and a course tutor the underpinning framework for these sessions was described as being based on a 'do-think' rather than 'think-do' style of learning. Using an analogy of playing computer games, Mr Apparicio explained that 'gamers' will play the same scenario numerous times until successful, repeating the process at each stage of the game. When they then apply this system to education, work, and so on they fail to understand why failing repetitively before arriving at the correct answer or solution is unacceptable. For this reason he feels that to better engage learners a more 'do-think' mentality is needed with a combined 'think-do' element to reinforce the consequences of learning.

This reinforcement however, must not be negative as this will not result in a positive reaction therefore the course adopts a positive rather than negative stance. Providing an example of this, there were instances of resistance and verbal negativity from one of the attendees on the day of observation. Rather than responding in a disciplinary way, which many of these lads would expect, the negativity was ignored and continued reinforcement and persuasion was used instead. Eventually this approach worked and the individual in question started to engage with the group and tasks.

5.6.2 This programme is orientated around changing thinking which is a long-term process that according to the programme creator, requires greater integration into the programmes being delivered in prisons and elsewhere. It definitely offers a refreshing and innovative way of working with young offenders that could bring them significant benefits in the outside world. For example, part of the course teaches the lads how to interpret comments and verbal exchanges so that they can see for themselves that if they present themselves in an aggressive manner, they are likely to be responded to in a similar way. This was actually raised by one of the lads in the focus group, noting that he was using this new awareness in his interactions with peers and found it particularly helpful.

5.6.3 The material involved with this session was divided into three core sections, the first related to creativity and innovation, the second to problem-solving, and the third to lateral thinking. Each section incorporated group work, visual prompts or images to work with, written sentences and language use. The tasks often encouraged the lads to think outside of the box and more broadly than they would usually do. For example, this particular session incorporated a brain-storming element utilising Dr. Edward De Bono's 'Six Thinking Hats' approach to decision-making, first published in 1985 and subsequently revised and updated in 1999 and 2004. The purpose of the task, other than to teach them valuable skills and improve employability, was to encourage them to recognise that their own lives are guided by the choices they make, even when they think they have no choice.

5.6.4 The skills being taught here are definitely 'business' orientated and designed to improve employability, whether the lads realise this is another matter but it appears to spark their interest and encourages them to keep coming.

## 5.7 Interaction

5.7.1 The level of interaction between the lads' and course facilitators was formal but friendly. Upon entrance to the room, each of the lads shook hands with the facilitators greeting them by first name. Most of the lads approach the researcher automatically to shake hands and for introductions to be made but one or two were 'encouraged' to do so by the facilitator.

5.7.2 The lads appeared to relax into the session very quickly, laughing and joking with the facilitators about how they were "messing with our heads" and "making me brain hurt". The banter in the classroom pushed the boundaries of what you would expect to see in a

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<sup>4</sup> De Bono, E., (2000) *Six Thinking Hats*. London: Penguin Books

class between student and teacher but that is not to say that it did not work. The interaction was natural and fluid allowing the lads to use their own language styles, which at times made the conversation difficult to follow but assisted in their engagement with the work.

## 5.8 Outcomes

5.8.1 Material provided by the programme co-ordinators suggests that across the five prisons offering Chrysalis lite some 400 prisoners have completed or had contact with the programme.

5.8.2 An estimated 25% of those completing the programme have gone on to get paid employment after leaving prison. Considering the distribution of this programme at the time of the research, this is a relatively good outcome and one that in all likelihood would increase if the programme was rolled out to other prisons.

5.8.3 The programme has been accredited by Edexcel and offers a Level 2 BTEC award qualification. Due to the additional work required to achieve this level of qualification, at the time of the research, no-one had completed the BTEC although one of two were working towards it.

## 5.9 Offender Feedback

5.9.1 A focus group with offenders undertaking the programme produced overwhelmingly positive feedback:

- They appeared to like the content, the way it challenged their existing ideas and made them think differently about things, people and interactions. This appeared to be especially true when it came to the nature of the programme and the fact that they saw it as preparing them for real life unlike other education programmes available to them.
- They enjoyed the way it was delivered, that it was done with respect and was interactive.
- The pace was tailored for individuals and checks were regularly carried out to see whether everyone was sure of the message/lesson

5.9.2 These students were also keen to suggest potential developments for the programme, such as:

- Providing it to families, in probation and even in schools. There was some feeling that if they had been made aware of the things they were learning that they might not have been in their current position
- Delivering it more flexibly, to account for different individual needs by either increasing the intensity or reducing the speed of delivery.
- A more precise link to work or training on the outside afterwards. Other courses were considered worthwhile because of the job opportunities opened up to them 'on the outside'.

## 6. Conclusions

6.1 The Chrysalis Programme has been proven to be very successful on a number of counts. In terms of cost effectiveness, the project has been funded philanthropically, without calling upon public monies. Resources have been called upon from the prisons involved, such as prison officer support, organising courses and providing rooms, but the programme still offers excellent value for money.

6.2 The primary aim of the Chrysalis Programme was to prevent re-offending and to change the thinking, attitudes and aspirations of prisoners. This research did not permit an evaluation of re-offending rates, only of offenders' perceptions of future behaviour. However, the indications were that the intervention of the Chrysalis programme has a positive effect and would make re-offending less likely, alongside improving employability.

6.3 The Chrysalis Programme is currently funded philanthropically, which raises a question over its future support. This programme offers an innovative approach to addressing areas of reintegration, with promising results. Therefore, applying for external funds to support the continuation and extension of the Chrysalis Programme is seen as an essential next step in securing its future.

6.4 Although it was not one of the principal aims, keeping prisoners engaged in meaningful activities during their incarceration, is an important outcome. Certainly the feedback suggests that prisoners find the programme meaningful, important and stimulating.

6.5 Indeed feedback from prisoners highlighted the fact that the programme was respectful and allowed them to maintain their individuality and dignity. Feelings of self esteem and dignity are particularly important when offenders are released and start to integrate back into society. Feelings of self esteem are essential in successfully applying for jobs and in re-building personal relationships. Twenty five percent of offenders taking the programme went on to gain employment. If this programme was expanded there is the potential to increase this number and make real headway in this area of reintegration.

6.6 The Chrysalis Programme has attained external accreditation, which is important for three key reasons.

- Firstly, it is important for offenders to know that the course they are attending is part of a nationally recognised qualifications framework, and thus has credibility.
- Secondly, the programme needs to have national recognition in order to be sustainable and to be embedded.
- Thirdly, gaining external accreditation gives the programme credibility within the prison system, which increases the likelihood than the programme will be sustained and expanded. Fourthly, employers value nationally recognised qualifications, and this will increase the likelihood that offenders will gain employment, adding to the success of the programme.

