



A REVIEW OF THE SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND PERSONAL SKILLS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

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Summary of the Project

This document is produced as a result of *Skills4Life – Sowing the Seeds of Social Inclusion for young Offenders*, a 2-year project funded by the Erasmus + KA2 – Strategic partnerships for youth, Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices. The project is implemented by a partnership of five organizations: Institut Saumurois de la Communication (France, coordinator); European Prison Education Association (Norway); University of Gloucestershire (UK); Athens Lifelong Learning Institute (Greece); CESIE (Italy).

Skills4Life focuses on the self-growth and personal development of young people in conflict with the law. By applying the principles of desistance theory, it develops and implements of an intervention that values people for who they are and for what they could become, rather than judging, rejecting or containing them for what they have done.

The project serves a dual purpose:

- To frame a new context in which young offenders may negotiate new, prosocial non-criminal identities and pathways for their lives,
- To provide them the tools to put their lives back on track after release.

It proposes the development of a holistic learning programme which looks at the needs of the individual so that they can personally develop, successfully face any challenges -both while serving their term and after their release- and enjoy a meaningful, fulfilling life.

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Introduction

In 2020, in Europe there were more than 4000 young people under the age of 18 housed in facilities away from home because of a juvenile or criminal offense (Aebi & Tiago, 2021). Although some progress has been made in recent years, since both the number of young

people entering the system and the number of young people in custody have reduced, yet this progress sits alongside an unacceptably high level of re-offending: more than 50% will not be successful in re-entering their communities after release and will return to prison.

Recent research has highlighted the importance of personal agency and identity change as motors for desistance from crime (Johnston et al., 2019). This Erasmus+ KA2 project entitled Life Skills 4 Life After Prison: Sowing the Seeds of Social Inclusion for Young Offenders (Skills4Life) aims to develop a holistic learning programme that helps young people in custody develop a new non-criminal identity. This programme will aim to promote the personal development and self-growth of young people in custody in order to empower them and help them get ready for release.

This project has five European partners. Partners are based in England, Italy, Greece and France; with a fifth partner (the European Association for Prison Education) having members all across Europe. The partners include one university and four NGOs (non-government organisations). All partner organisations are involved in researching or working as practitioners with young people who have come into contact with youth justice systems in their respective countries.

To achieve its aims, the project is organized into three Intellectual Outputs (IO):

- IO1: Review of the Missing Social, Emotional and Personal Skills of Young Offenders
- IO2: The Skills4Life Curriculum
- IO3: The Skills4Life Implementation Guide

IO1 is composed of two parts: (1) literature review and (2) needs analysis. This report presents the literature review for this project. The aim of the literature review is to provide thorough bibliographical research on the state-of-the-art of the existing personal development programmes. To this end, Part I of the report provides an overview of the situation and policies of the partner countries. Part II provides a theoretical and conceptual evidence base, which indicates the importance of personal agency, identity and personal development in desistance. In Part III, an overview of existing personal development programmes in prison will be provided, focusing on the programmes delivered in the partner countries. In this section, content and methodological issues will be analysed, as well as their effectiveness.

Section 1 – Literature Review

Part I – Overview of youth justice in Europe

Differences among countries

Youth justice policies and juvenile systems vary across Europe. For example, the age of criminal responsibility ranges from 10 (Switzerland and United Kingdom) to 16 (Belgium and Portugal; Aebi & Tiago, 2021). These differences have consequences in how young people in conflict with the law are treated in each country and in the amount of young people in custodial settings (Souverein et al., 2019).

In the partner countries in this project, the age of criminal responsibility goes from 10 in the United Kingdom to 14 in Italy. The definition of young people in conflict with the law also varies in the different countries, with some countries only keeping data of those up to 18 years of age and others having aggregated data of young people in conflict with the law until 24 years of age. These differences make the comparison difficult. For example, in 2020 the United Kingdom had a monthly average of 643 young people between 10 and 18 years old in custody, while France had 17,624 young people in custody between 16 and 24 years old.

Despite this disparity of approaches, youth delinquency is decreasing in many countries in Europe, which suggests the learning and application of more effective prevention and intervention strategies (Souverein et al., 2019). However, effective prevention and intervention strategies are not always fore fronted due to the financial, demographic and socio-political challenges countries face (Souverein et al., 2019). Due to this, there are still high rates of reoffending among young people in some European countries. For example, in France, partners report that the recidivism rate for minors within five years of detention is 70%, and in Italy, partners report that in 2016, 64% of the young people in custody were reoffenders (Save the Children, 2016). These high re-offending rates indicate that custodial settings must do more to prepare young people for their lives when back in the community. The Skills4Life project aims to offer custodial settings across Europe with an easy-to-implement education programme to better prepare young people for their lives after release. In turn, it is expected that the young people participating in the programme will have reduced reoffending rates.

Souverein et al.'s (2019) commentary about European forensic youth care highlights the importance of sharing experiences and practices across countries. The objective is to arrive at an integrated system that will focus on the common goal of promoting young people's development and preventing reoffending. Following that, in the Skills4Life project, partners from different countries across Europe have come together to share practices and develop a common programme. Souverein et al. (2019) finish with a mission statement with which the partners in this project align: all societies should offer "the opportunities and perspective for all youth to flourish and develop to their full potential" (p. 5).

Custody as last resort

Liberty is a human right and therefore, deprivation of liberty should only be used as a measure of last resort. Other dispositions should be made when appropriate (Nowak, 2019). Following this, all the partner countries involved in this project have policies in place to assure that custody for children and young people is used as a last resort. Young people in conflict with the law, and especially those who end up in custody, have complex psychological needs and have often experienced several adverse childhood experiences (Hodgkinson et al., 2020). This means that the young people in custody are usually those in very vulnerable situations where another disposition was not possible (Souverein et al., 2019).

The main focus of youth justice in the partner countries is rehabilitation. In the United Kingdom, the principle 'child first' guides action in the youth justice system, advocating the best interests of the children. Custody is considered the last option available, providing non-custodial dispositions when possible (Youth Justice Board, 2019). In Greece, the law related to youth justice recognizes that punishment has "more disadvantages than advantages" and has the principle of the interest of the minor as its core. Therefore, in Greece, priority is given to application of rehabilitative and therapeutic measures and not in the placement in prisons. In Italy, the legislative decree 2 October 2018 n 121 for juvenile offenders underlines the importance, when possible, to resort to alternative measures, and use detention only as an extreme measure. The core goals established by that decree are empowerment, education, and full psychological and physical development of the youth; prevention of recidivism; and restorative justice and mediation with the victims. In France, there has been a recent reform of the youth justice system. This reform has the objective of reducing the number of young people in custody, which should only be used for serious offences.

Despite these policies, sentencing a young person to custody is sometimes unavoidable. In those cases, most of the partners countries place significant importance to education in custody. For example, in Greece, attendance at primary and secondary schools is compulsory in all prisons for young people and Second Chance Schools are being established in young adult custodial facilities (Crime and Media Lab-Κέντρο Μελέτης του Εγκλήματος, 2020). These schools, however, focus on educational and vocational training, without attention to other important skills that young people need to be successful in their lives when back in the community. A similar focus is found in other European countries. For example, in Italy each young person in conflict with the law has an Education Intervention Program tailored to their needs (Dipartimento per la Giustizia Minorile e di Comunità, 2020). This program is limited in the aspects that it can include, which are educational paths, vocational training and internships, responsible citizenship training, community work, cultural, sport and leisure activities and paths of restorative justice. A similar plan is made in the UK for each young person in custody, which also focuses on compulsory and formal education and skills related to employment (Youth Justice Board, 2020).

It is true that formal qualifications and employment skills are important to have a successful life after release and reducing reoffending (Social Exclusion Unit, 2002). However, research has shown that providing education when other basic needs such as safety or belonging are not met is not successful in engaging young people (ahmed Shafi, 2018; Peterson-Young et al., 2021). Young people in conflict with the law have complex needs and only when all these complex needs are tackled in a holistic way there is hope for resettlement.

Part I Summary

In this section, it has been discussed how the youth justice systems in the partner countries focus on rehabilitation, with emphasis in formal qualifications and employment. This approach, however, has limited effectiveness, as the reoffending rates of young people that leave custody are high. This suggests that a more holistic approach that includes the personal development of young people is needed. The Skills4Life project aims to learn from the practices of different countries in Europe to develop a holistic programme that addresses these issues and helps reduce reoffending rates.

Part II – Predictors of desistance

Predictors of offending

Research has identified several characteristics that puts a young person at higher risk of reoffending. For example, research has repeatedly shown that having antisocial peers is a strong risk factor for juvenile delinquency (Forney & Ward, 2010). Social skills deficits and low self-confidence are also commonly found in young offenders, especially in those at greater risk of reoffending (Basanta et al., 2018; Van der Stouwe, 2016). The deficits on social and interpersonal skills often include deficits on conflict management and conflict resolutions skills (United Nations, 2018).

Young people in conflict with the law have also been found to be at higher psychosocial risk than adolescents in the general populations. They are also at higher risk of developing depression and anxiety, they have higher negative affectivity, and have had more frequent experiences of negative consequences from substance use (Borras et al., 2016; Glowacz, 2021). As such, substance use, and mental health disorders are also considered risk factors for delinquency.

Other risk factors also commonly found among young people in conflict with the law are low levels of formal education, poor cognitive and emotional functioning, and lack of planning and financial management skills (United Nations, 2018). For example, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1998) highlighted that young people in conflict with the law often need to develop their ability to understand and manage their emotions, their problem solving and decision-making skills, and their awareness of career options to make a realistic life plan. However, it is important to consider that incarceration itself leads to heightened emotion which makes learning difficult (ahmed Shafi, 2020).

From the risk factors discussed, it is clear that young people who come into conflict with the law have a number of developmental areas which need targeted support. These needs make it challenging to lead a successful life in the community (United Nations, 2018). Therefore, most programmes directed to reduce offending and reoffending have focused on improving these skills (Borras et al., 2016). We have already discussed the focus of custodial settings on improving the levels of formal education. In addition to this, mental health support might be available in some settings to help the young people in conflict with the law to reduce their use of substances and cope with symptoms of mental health disorders. Social skills training is sometimes done to improve social and interpersonal skills, such as conflict resolution or resistance to peer pressure (van der Stowe et al., 2016). Research has shown that these programmes are effective when they include active and practical components where young people can practice the skills (United Nations, 2018).

In fact, Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation (2016) found that those young people who had been successful in resettlement considered that interventions that provided problem solving solutions to use in daily life situations were especially helpful for their resettlement.

However, these support and programmes often focus in one specific skill, instead of seeing the young person in a holistic way. Furthermore, recent research on desistance from crime has found that improving these skills is not enough in preventing reoffending, as other factors such as agency an

identity have an important role (Wigzell, 2021). Therefore, some attention to personal development skills is warranted.

The importance of engagement

Self-efficacy is not only a predictor of desistance, but also of engagement with education (Van Tol, 2017). Any education programme that attempts to improve any of the skills described in this section will only be successful if it is able to engage the young people that participate in it (Baker, 2017). This is especially important as the personal motivation of the young person has also been found crucial for desistance (Kontopoulou et al., 2018).

Young people in conflict with the law are often disengaged with education (ahmed Shafi et al., 2020). Disengagement is often driven by emotional barriers, and young people in custody present complex emotions related to being incarcerated. These emotions need to be considered in any programme to eliminate those barriers and promote engagement.

Baker (2017) argues that building a good relationship with the young person in conflict with the law is crucial to encourage engagement. This good relationship is built with a willingness to understand the young person's experiences, showing genuine interest, and creating an atmosphere of trust. However, not only the relationship with the staff is important for engagement, but also the relationship with the wider network, as supportive relationships act as a promoter of engagement (O'Carroll, 2016).

Part II Summary

The studies reviewed in this section show that reducing risk factors is not enough to avoid reoffending. Developing a positive law-abiding identity, increasing the self-efficacy to desist, promoting a sense of agency, and promoting personal development are of great importance for desistance from crime. However, doing this on its own might not have the desired effect, as risk factors and desistance are intertwined (Polascheck, 2015). For that reason, the Skills4Life program, besides using existing expertise on reducing risk factors, will have a focus on developing these internal factors.

Part III – Current provision

As discussed in Part II, an education programme that aims to help young people in conflict with the law resettle in society and desist from crime needs to promote the development and practice of certain key skills. Social and interpersonal skills are important as they allow an individual to develop meaningful personal relationships. These social skills include conflict management, conflict resolution and resistance to peer pressure. Other important skills that such an education programme should aim to develop are self-control and the management of emotions; problem solving and decision-making skills; and planning and financial management skills. The practice of those skills should focus on situations they will encounter often in daily life (Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation, 2016). Planning skills, as discussed, can be promoted by developing a specific plan for life after release (Forste et al., 2011). To be effective, this education programme should also promote reflexivity and the development of self-confidence, self-efficacy, a sense of agency, and a positive identity. Finally, it is important to promote engagement with the programme for it to be effective. These ideas are supported by the United Nations (2018), which highlights that programmes based on desistance theory need to promote motivation, human capital, such as self-efficacy and agency, and social capital, which includes factors such as supportive relationships and employment. In this section, other programmes are going to be considered to identify ways in which these skills and abilities can be promoted.

Partners' expertise

This project builds on the partners' expertise in the design and delivery of programmes with-aims which align with Skills4Life. A list of those programmes follows with the findings that are relevant to the Skills4Life project.

Now What?: Preparing and Empowering Youth Leaving Care (<https://now-what-project.eu/>)

The objective of this project was to prepare young people leaving the care system to lead an independent life. The findings of the needs analysis highlighted how young people leaving care need support developing life skills such as financial management and planning (Output 6: The Set of European Standards, 2020). This needs analysis was the basis of the After Care Life Skills Curriculum, which aimed to develop skills in the following areas: entitlements and obligations, money management, maintaining a home, looking after one's wellbeing, employment, education, having a good lifestyle, navigating local services and communication and interpersonal relationships. Each thematic area was delivered in a series of workshops. Participants also created an After Care Plan, which allowed them to plan their independent life after leaving care. The curriculum received good feedback from the participants, who considered it useful. The most popular activities were those which were practical and experiential. In fact, some of the participants expressed that they would have liked more practical activities. At the end of the curriculum, the participants felt more confident in their ability to make decisions about their lives (Output 6: The Set of European Standards, 2020).

Several of the skills promoted by the After Care Life Skills Curriculum are common to the ones needed by young people in conflict with the law according to the literature reviewed. Therefore, the Skills4Life curriculum can be partly built based on the After Care Life Skills Curriculum. The sessions around money management, employment, communication, and interpersonal relationships are especially relevant. However, it is important that they are adapted to include more practical activities which are relevant to the daily lives of young people in conflict with the law in the different countries. The After Care Plan could also be adapted to promote planning of the life after release.

One important learning that we can take from this project is the importance of giving enough training and time to prepare the implementation and delivery of the programme and the need of clear guidelines for its delivery. In fact, the structure and clarity of the manual was highly appreciated by the trainers, who found it easy to follow (Output 6: The Set of European Standards, 2020).

Active Games for Change (<https://www.activegames4change.org/>)

This project aimed to develop social and emotional competencies in young people in conflict with the law using active games and sport. A series of games and associated materials have been developed to help educators deliver the intervention. Five core socio-emotional competencies were identified: Self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness (Shafi et al., 2020). Each game and sport proposed was then mapped against these competencies.

The five socio-emotional competencies developed with these games are relevant for Skills4Life. Therefore, some of the activities from Active Games for Change could potentially be helpful in the Skills4Life curriculum. However, the resources and space available need to be taken carefully into account. Most of the activities in Active Games for Change require gym or outdoor space and equipment to which the facilitator of Skills4Life might not have access.

Re-Engaging Young Offenders with Education and Learning (<https://skills4youth.eu/>)

As previously discussed, young people in conflict with the law are often not engaged with formal education. This project aimed to use authentic inquiry as a means of re-engaging young people with education and learning in custodial settings. Authentic inquiry starts with something that is of significance to the learner (authentic)(private) and then move that towards some outwardly assessed goal (public). This project demonstrated (through quantitative and qualitative data) that authentic inquiry is an effective means to re-engage young people with education and learning in custodial settings (Shafi et al., 2022).

As discussed previously, engagement is not only important in formal education, but in any education programme. Therefore, the Skills4Life curriculum could draw from the experiences in Re-engaging

Young Offenders with Education and Learning to promote engagement. Using authentic enquiry as a pedagogy in the Skills4Life curriculum could encourage that engagement.

100 Chances 100 Emplois (<https://www.100chances-100emplois.org/>)

This French project aimed to help young adults from disadvantaged areas to find sustainable employment. Personalised professional integration programmes were developed to promote equal opportunities. As finding sustainable employment is important for young people in conflict with the law both as a source of income and as a source of prosocial support, similar personalised integration programmes could be developed as part of the Skills4Life Curriculum to promote realistic career planning.

Other programmes and interventions

Research has shown that a common feature of programmes that are effective to reduce reoffending is their focus on developing cognitive skills (Baker, 2017). For example, Farrington et al. (2002) compared the effectiveness of two programmes conducted in young offender institutions in England. Both programmes consisted of intensive physical training. However, they differed on the inclusion of cognitive-behavioural skills. The evaluation showed that only the programme that included cognitive-behavioural skills training, such as problem-solving skills, emotional management and social skills, reduced reoffending.

Following that, different programmes have been developed to increase problem solving and other related cognitive skills. For example, the group problem-solving training delivered and evaluated by Biggam and Power (2002) achieved an improvement on social problem-solving skills among the young people in conflict with the law that participated in it. This improvement lasted three months after the training. In this programme, participants were trained on the five stages of problem solving during five sessions using instruction, discussions, reflective learning, and group exercises.

Both the Social Problem-Solving Skills Training (Bourke & Van Hasselt, 2001) and the Offense-Focused Problem-Solving Program (McGuire & Hatcher, 2001) were developed for adult incarcerated offenders. They are both group-based programmes that include training in problem solving, self-management and social skills and use instruction, modelling, role-playing and feedback for the delivery. The Social Problem-Solving Skills Training also includes empathy training while the Offense-focused Problem-Solving Program includes training on prosocial values, beliefs, and attitudes. These programmes encompass several of the key skills discussed previously and use active ways to develop those skills. Therefore, parts of these programmes could be adapted to be used as part of the Skills4Life curriculum. However, it is important to consider that the evaluation of these programmes is very limited and, therefore, it is not clear whether they are effective in developing those skills. In addition, using programmes developed for adult offenders with young people in conflict with the law need to be considered carefully as it is not always successful. For example, Mitchell and Palmer (2004) evaluated the effectiveness of the Reasoning and Rehabilitation Programme with young people in conflict with the law. This programme is a cognitive skills programme that includes self-control, problem solving, social skills, empathy and relapse prevention which had been successful in

reducing reoffending with adult offenders. However, Mitchell and Palmer (2004) did not find any decrease in reoffending in the young people that participated in the programme compared to a control group. Redondo et al. (2012), on the other hand, found that the young people that participated in the programme had improvements in social skills, self-esteem, and emotional management at the end of the programme. These results suggest that the programme has short-term effects in skills, but it does not seem to promote long-term desistance, which might be related to the fact that it only promoted development of skills and did not promote a change in identity or a sense of agency.

Other common type of programmes delivered in prisons are life skills programmes. Cecil et al. (2000) reviewed the evaluation of five life skills training programmes delivered in adult prisons. The life skills training programmes reviewed included training on some of the following topics: communication, stress and anger management, career planning, goal setting, time management, vocational and employment-seeking skills, building interpersonal relationships, money management, self-development, family values, drug and alcohol awareness, community involvement and practical living skills. Cecil et al. (2000) reached the conclusion that Life Skills training is worse at preventing reoffending than cognitive skills training, although it promotes more desistance than receiving no intervention. It is important to note, however, that most of the evaluations reviewed lacked appropriate analysis of the effects. A more recent evaluation of a self-development life-skills programme called the Power of People found no effect of the programme on different measures of recidivism (Clark & Duwe, 2015). The authors emphasise how a bigger focus on cognitive skills would help the effectiveness of the programme. These results suggest that it is important to develop cognitive skills besides other life skills to promote desistance.

Although most of the studies reviewed focus on reducing recidivism and promoting desistance, qualitative research shows that the value of education programmes done in custody is not only about those outcomes. For example, Crabtree et al. (2016) asked the adult offenders that participated in their informal education programme what they valued about the programme. This programme covered the topics of technology, socialization, finances, employment, health and education with practical group exercises and discussions. They emphasised how the programme allowed them to gain a sense of self-worth, as they felt seen as individuals and not criminals. This was promoted by the fact that they were treated with respect in a non-judgemental environment, and they had the opportunity to interact with what they called "normal" people. Supporting the results from "Now What?" project, these participants also found especially helpful the practical activities such as role-plays, where they could rehearse and practice skills.

Developing a positive identity

It is noteworthy that none of the reviewed programmes focused on developing a positive identity. However, it has been argued that participating in prison education can promote a positive identity by itself (Szifris et al., 2018). In their theory of prison education, Szifris et al. (2018) argue that "prison education can provide the structural opportunity required to develop a new identity". However, they further argue that this only happens when two circumstances collude: (1) an identity focused on growth and development is promoted by the facilitator of the programme and the culture created within the programme and (2) the offenders are engaged with the education programme. Although Szifris et al. (2018) focused on the evidence from adult offenders to develop their theory, these ideas

are supported by the findings of Munford and Sanders (2015). Munford and Sanders (2015) explored in a qualitative study the aspects that promoted the development of a positive identity in young people who had been in contact with multiple institutional services, including youth justice. They highlighted that due to their often-difficult circumstances, they lacked opportunities to test out different identities. They had often dropped out early from education, which limited their opportunities. Those who had been able to reengage with education found that it allowed them to experience others sense of self. However, this only happened if they felt secure and had strong safe relationships with the relevant adults working in those settings.

Beyond Youth Custody (2015) has some suggestions on how to build positive identities among young people in conflict with the law. They highlight the importance of reflexivity, which also follows Gerbino's (2019) findings. Beyond Youth Custody (2015) argues that young people should be encouraged to explore the different aspects of their identities, what they mean for them and how they impact their life. An activity that could be used to facilitate this exploration is the 'Diamond Nine'. This task is used by Szifris (2018) with adult offenders. However, it is important to note that both Beyond Youth Custody (2015) and Szifris (2018) emphasise the importance of building an environment where understanding, trust and confidence are in the centre to allow for an honest exploration. Szifris (2018) explored how to build that kind of environment. In her ethnographic research facilitating a philosophical course in two adult prisons, she found that taking an open, non-judgemental, and respectful stance to encourage open conversations, using Socratic questioning, treating the offenders with fairness, and valuing their contributions worked to build trust. These methods also encouraged self-reflection and development of social skills, which in turn, made participants feel more confident. This supports Crabtree et al. (2016) findings. Although both Szifris (2018) and Crabtree et al.'s (2016) research focuses on adult offenders, there is some evidence that indicates that similar strategies can be used with young people in conflict with the law. For example, Trotter et al. (2017) found that young people in conflict with the law engaged better in conversations when the facilitator challenged them in a non-judgemental exploratory way, asking questions and highlighting their strengths. Trotter et al. (2017) also suggest that pro-criminal comments and attitudes should not be ignored and, instead, they should be reframed in a pro-social way.

Hodgkinson et al. (2020) suggests that cultural and ethnic needs should also be considered when delivering any programme. In their review, some programmes were more effective with young people from a specific ethnic background. Cultural competency can promote engagement with the programme and, therefore, its effectiveness. Acknowledging the cultural and ethnic background of the young person also promotes the development of a positive identity as this background is often an important part of a young person's identity (Beyond Youth Custody, 2015). Considering this is especially important for Skills4Life, as it is a programme developed to be delivered in different national and cultural contexts.

Part III Summary

The Skills4Life curriculum can learn from the design, delivery and evaluation of previous programmes delivered in prison and other related services. First, the development of cognitive and social skills such as problem solving, self-regulation and conflict resolution is essential to reduce reoffending. It is important that these skills are taught in a practical way, such as role-playing, with a focus on situations that are relevant for young people in conflict with the law.

Developing life skills such as financial management and career planning is also important. The projects previously developed by the partners can be a good starting point when developing this part of the curriculum. Planning for life after release in a broader sense can be promoted by developing a specific plan with each young person at the end of the curriculum.

Besides the content discussed, it is important that the Skills4Life curriculum promotes reflexivity and the development of self-confidence, self-efficacy, a sense of agency, and a positive identity. This should be done across all the session using specific pedagogies. Facilitators should aim to create a non-judgmental environment, where everyone's contributions are valued and treated with respect and everyone's strengths are highlighted. This type of environment promotes self-confidence and self-efficacy. To promote reflexivity, open and exploratory questions should be used across all the sessions. Finally, to promote a shift in identity towards a more positive identity, the curriculum should encourage the exploration of different identities. This could be done directly using the 'Diamond nine' task. However, the programme and the facilitator should encourage a dynamic identity focused on growth and personal development, acknowledging the role of ethnic and cultural background.

Finally, for the curriculum to be successful, it is important that the young people engage with it. Some of the strategies highlighted, like doing practical activities or creating a non-judgmental environment, can help on that task. In addition, an authentic enquiry pedagogy could be used.

Section 2 – Needs Analysis

The success of the Skills4Life project required primary data about missing social, emotional and personal skills of young offenders. The objective of the Needs Analysis was to identify gaps in the preparation of life skills for young people in custody. This was designed to assist the project partners to consider how they can effectively respond to the needs of young offenders to successfully plan their new lives after release and to accomplish their goals and their potential.

The Needs Analysis consisted of primary research with young people in conflict with the law. The purpose of this was to explore from the perspective of young people themselves what they felt would be helpful for them to learn and know about as they prepared for life back in their community. Research has shown that young people who engage with education and learning opportunities whilst in custodial settings are more likely to successfully transition back into the community and engage in meaningful activity, such as education, training, or employment (Lanskey, 2015).

The results of this Needs Analysis in conjunction with the Literature Review will constitute the basis upon which the consequent work packages will be based since it will identify the project's target group concerning specific knowledge and skills required for their preparedness to integrate once their term ends. The needs analysis will exert a strong influence on the creation of a comprehensive approach in the young offenders' preparation procedure, the nature of the curricula and the pedagogic methodologies which will be employed.

The following research questions were explored through the Needs Analysis data collection:

- What do young people in custodial settings believe to be the gaps in the provision of life skills and psychological, emotional, and social needs development when preparing for re-entry into the community?
- What do young people, who have recently left a custodial setting believe would have better helped them plan and prepare them for successful re-integration into the community?

Methodology

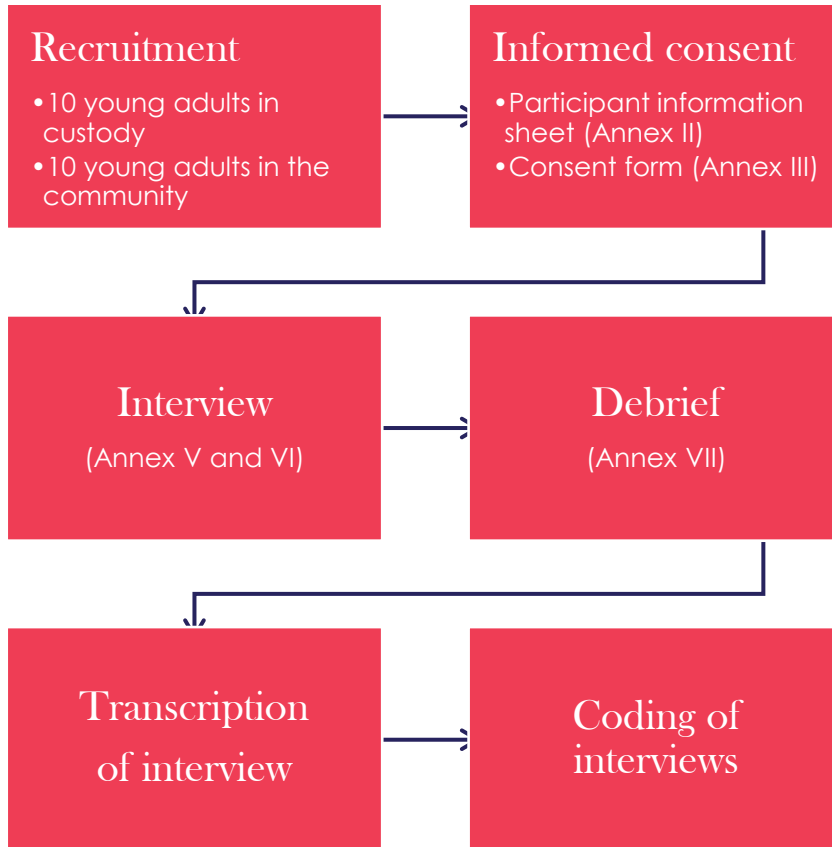
The University of Gloucestershire (UoG) were the leads on this Intellectual Output (IO1). In order to support rigorous data collection, they developed a Methodology Pack for the partnership. This Methodology Pack contained all the documents including how to:

1. Recruit the participants
2. Consider ethical implication
3. Conduct the interviews
4. Manage the data
5. Transcription of interviews
6. Code/analyse the interviews

All supporting documents were provided, such as the participant information sheets, interview questions, debriefs, email templates, consent forms and storing the data securely and according to

ethical principles. Ethical approval was granted by the University Ethics Committee. The flow chart below illustrates the process that partners were asked to follow to conduct the interviews.

Figure 1 Flow chart for conducting interviews



Interviews questions were translated and conducted by the project partners in their own languages and then the Coding Framework, developed by UoG using both deductive and inductive coding, was used by partners to analyse the data in their own languages. An example of the Coding Framework is below.

The deductive codes were generated from the review of the literature in terms of needs for young people planning for release back into the community and loosely mapped to the proposed modules. The inductive coding was designed to capture novel information from the interview data.

Table 1 Coding Framework table

Data (insert your interview data here)	Deductive coding (place a code from the above framework that best describes the data)	Inductive Coding (think of a word/phrase that best describes the data)	Useful quotes (quotes that could be used in the final report to illustrate codes)

The purpose of ensuring that this first level of coding was conducted by native language speakers was to ensure that the richness of the interviews was not lost in translation. Full training and ongoing support were provided by UoG to ensure that coding was consistent across the partnership. The final codes were then used to conduct a meta-analysis of the codes to generate the key themes from the data across the partnership.

These themes were then mapped on to the proposed modules for the Skills4Life Curriculum in the original application. Many of themes mapped on to the proposed modules, thereby lending empirical support for these modules. However, they also enabled the partnership to add content based on this empirical data within the relevant modules, thereby ensuring that the modules are closely aligned to the empirical data collected and reflect the needs as reflected by young people themselves.

This is a particularly unique aspect of the Skills4Life Curriculum because it includes the voice of young people in conflict with the law which we already know are not often consulted for their needs (ahmed Shafi, 2018).

Participants

It was important that young people had the opportunity to have a voice in what they believed would be helpful. Therefore, this analysis draws upon interview data collected from two participant groups in each of the participating countries. These were:

1. Young people in custodial settings and preparing for release
2. Young people who had recently exited custodial settings

Ten participants from each of these groups per country would be interviewed, meaning a total of 80 participants across the partnership. Participants were between 16 and 24 years old.

Access to participants was through the existing networks of the partner organisations. However, this was made problematic due to the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions within the partner countries. Navigating these restrictions as well as the ethical implications and inherent challenges of accessing secure settings resulted in the partnership requiring an extension to the overall project.

The following table illustrates the actual number of participants across the partner countries in each of the participant groups:

Table 2 Number of participants interviewed in each country and in each group

	UoG	ICS	ALLI	CESIE
Group 1	10	10	10	3
Group 2	3	10	7	13
Totals	13	20	17	16

Themes from the primary data collection

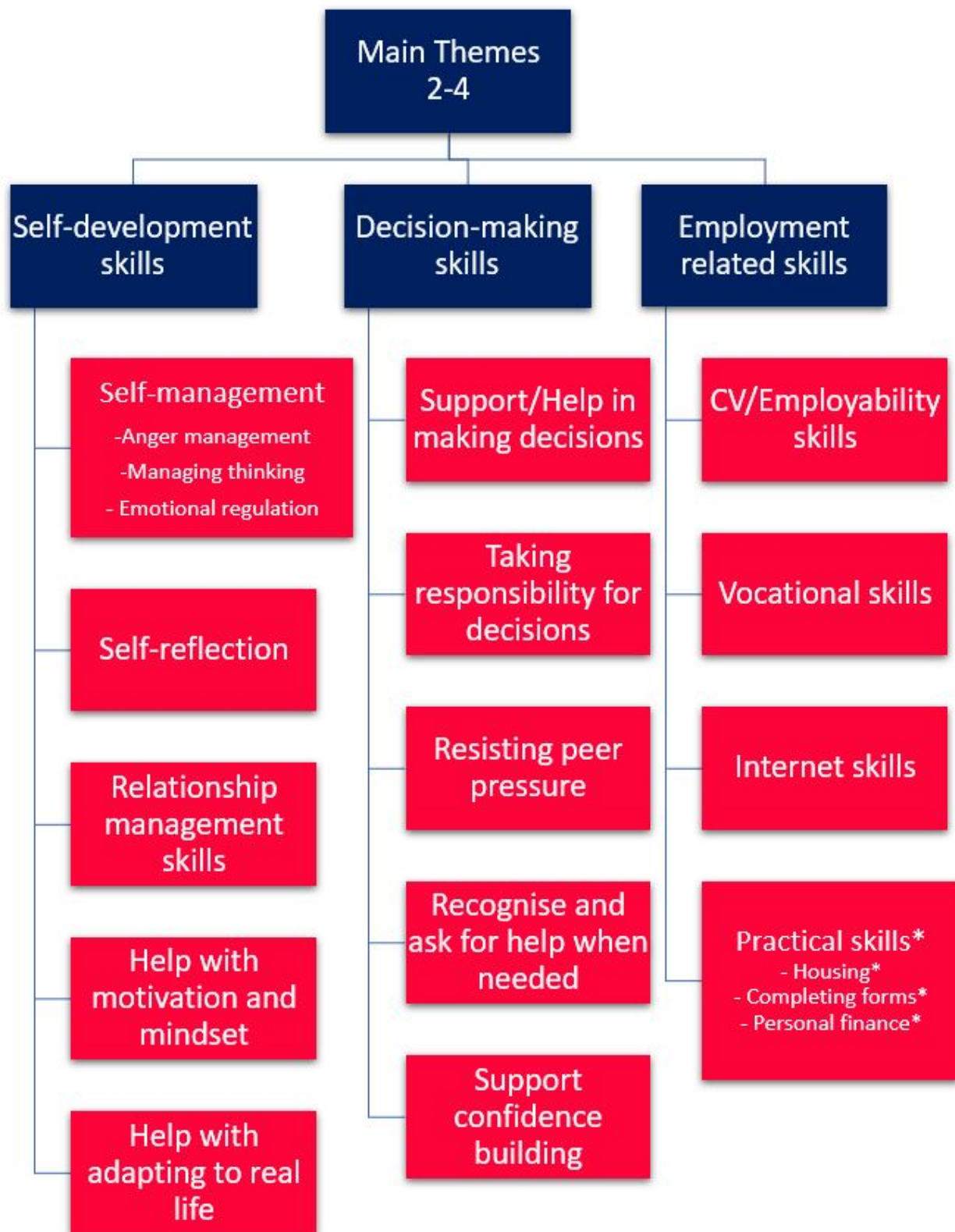
Following a meta-analysis of the coding from across the partner data set and across the two groups of participants, some key themes emerged from the data:

1. Poor previous (mainstream) educational experiences
2. Self-Development skills are required
3. Decision-making skills support is needed
4. Employability (or future skills) needs a focus

Theme 1 confirmed findings from previous research concerning the previous educational experiences of young people in conflict with the law. These, like those from previous research showed that educational experiences were largely poor and unfulfilling (e.g., Cripps and Somerfield, 2012).

Themes 2, 3 and 4 referred specifically to the sorts of skills that the young people deemed to be useful for them. The diagram on the following page illustrates some of the details that sat behind each theme.

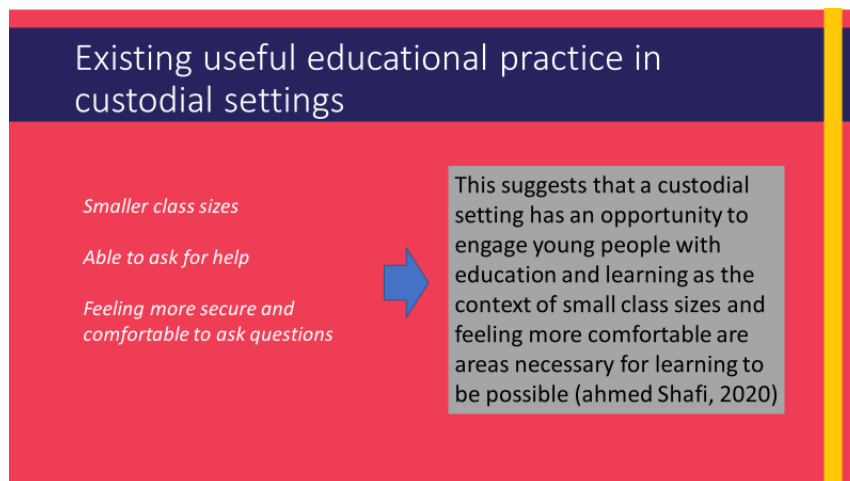
Figure 2 Themes from the interview data



Those themes with an asterisk denote data which came mainly from Group 2 participants i.e., those who had been released back into the community. The practical nature of these suggests that these areas were those of particular difficulty and not necessarily anticipated before release.

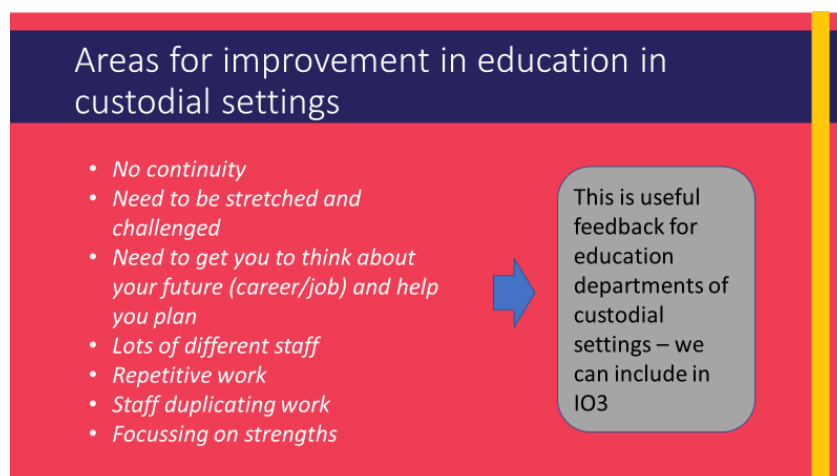
Other themes that emerged from the data related to existing useful educational practice in custodial settings that could be continued in a new Skills4Life Curriculum and areas for improvement in a custodial setting.

Figure 3 Existing useful practice



This theme demonstrates that a custodial setting offers a key opportunity to engage young people with education and learning.

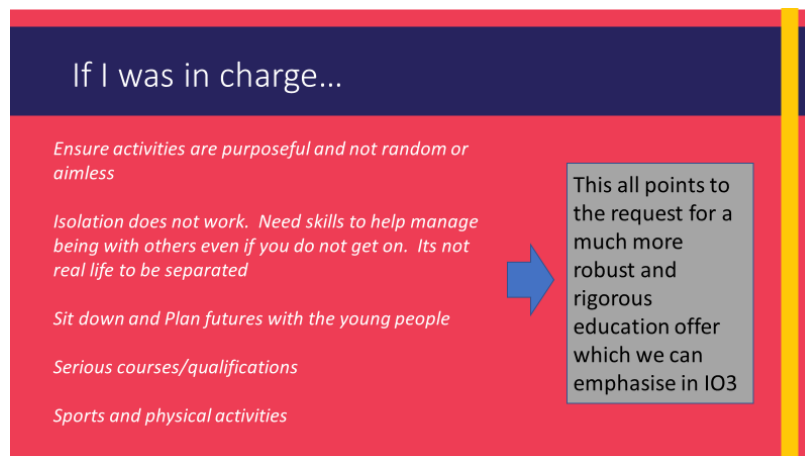
Figure 4 Areas for improvement



Participants pointed to structural issues that could be improved but also pedagogical and practical issues that could be addressed in order to improve education in custodial settings.

An important question within the interviews was designed to explore innovative ideas from participants was to imagine if they were in charge of education at their custodial setting and what would they do to make it better. Responses are summarized in the figure below.

Figure 5 If I was in charge...



The responses to this question showed some particular areas that education departments could make changes in so that it is received better by the young people. This included future planning and a more serious approach to education.

Predictors of desistance

Wigzell (2021) gives an overview of the factors related to desistance in young people who come into conflict with the law. She highlights maturation, identity, agency, and relationships as the most important predictors of desistance. She defines maturation as an increase of self-control and understanding of the consequences of offending related to the concept of adult responsibility. Although maturation might occur naturally as young people get into adulthood, this does not always happen (Wigzell, 2021). Bottoms and Shapland (2016) found that active maturation, defined as a maturation brought by the efforts of the young people and their context, was more often related to desistance than natural maturation. This implies that a programme that wants to promote desistance needs to teach self-regulation and encourage the development of adult responsibility to promote active maturation.

The second factor highlighted by Wigzell (2021) is identity. The importance of identity in desistance from crime has been supported by the results from the project Pathways to Desistance. This was a sizeable project in the United States that followed 1354 serious juvenile offenders for 7 years. Forney and Ward (2019) found that those participants with a positive identity were more able to resist peer

antisocial influence and, therefore, were less likely to reoffend. Supporting those findings, Na and Jang (2019) found that a shift in positive self-identity predicted a decrease in offending.

Reflexivity, or the capacity to have an internal conversation to oneself about our actions, goals, and the context (Gerbino, 2015), seems essential for that change in identity. Gerbino (2019) found that promoting individual reflexivity in young people in conflict with the law in Italy was essential to promote a proactive, responsible, and prosocial identity. This new identity helped to redirect them towards personal development and adult responsibility. Thus, we can conclude that promoting reflexivity can promote a change towards a positive identity that, in turn, can promote maturation.

Johnston et al. (2019) also used data from the Pathways to Desistance project with a focus on agency, where agency is understood as the capability of influencing our own actions and the environment. They studied the relationship of three agency enablers -perceived opportunity, self-control, and resistance to peer influence- to criminal involvement. They found that higher scores in the agency enablers predicted an increase in desistance self-efficacy (i.e., their confidence on their ability to behave following the laws and desist from crime), which in turn predicted a decrease in offending. This relationship between agency, self-efficacy and reductions on recidivism was also found by Forste et al. (2011), who found that self-efficacy, sense of agency and having specific plans for the life after release were strong predictors of intentions to stay out of trouble in offenders between 18 and 21 years old in England.

Self-efficacy is also related to the development of a positive self-identity. Oberalder (2021) followed 325 probationers in Germany for five years and found a strong relationship between a law-abiding identity, self-efficacy for law-abiding behaviour and lower risk to reoffend. In turn, law-abiding identity predicted a decrease in recidivism. Although the mechanisms are not clear, these studies show how developing reflexivity, a positive identity, a sense of agency, self-efficacy, and maturation in young people in conflict with the law are all interconnected in promoting desistance.

Meaningful personal relationships and a sense of belonging have also been consistently found as an important predictor of desistance. For example, Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation (2016) found that those young people in England who had been successful in resettlement placed a lot of importance on their family, romantic relationships, and prosocial friendships. Similar results were found in Greece, where Kontopoulou et al. (2018) conducted a qualitative study that highlighted the importance of social support, and the role of family and friends to promote desistance. Gerbino (2015) also found that stable employment after release did not only act as a source of income, but also provided a sense of belonging to the young people that promoted desistance. Although an education programme cannot directly promote relationships with family and prosocial peers, it can teach social and relationship skills that in turn can help establish and maintain strong relationships.

The Skills4Life Curriculum

The themes from the interview data map well on to the planned modules for the Skills4Life Curriculum but add some additional areas such as internet skills or career or future longer-term planning:

1. Personal Empowerment: Resilience, Self-Esteem, Self-Regulation and Personal Growth
2. Personal Relationships and Social Bonds
3. Life Skills
4. Planning for Life After Release

Key areas to consider when designing the usability of the curriculum

The empirical data lends support to the content of the Curriculum as well as added additional areas of focus. However, the data also revealed challenges in how the curriculum was to be designed. Particularly, how it addresses and navigates the structural components and/or constraints of custodial settings which include the:

- Transient nature of learners*
- Skills of educators
- Leadership
- Resources – time allocations and structural constraints of settings

A successful curriculum designed for custodial settings with the profile of the learners as identified in the literature review and the skillsets of the educators will need to focus on these areas. The module content itself is only one aspect of the Curriculum. The key will be to design it so that there are multiple entry points for learners, that the educators are upskilled, and that the leadership is dedicated to the implementation of the curriculum ensuring appropriate resource allocation.

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Appendix 1 – Interview Methodology Pack

Intellectual Output 1 - Review of the Missing Social, Emotional and Personal Skills of Young Offenders will be composed of two parts:

- Literature review
- Young Offenders Training Needs Analysis

This methodological pack has the objective of giving a clear outline of the methodology used to develop the Training Needs Analysis and guide the Skills4Life partners in data collection and analysis.

The success of the Skills4Life project requires concrete information and data about missing social, emotional and personal skills of young offenders. The objective of the Training Needs Analysis is to identify gaps in the preparation of life skills for young people in custody. This will assist the project partners to consider how they can effectively respond to the needs of young offenders to successfully plan their new lives after release and to accomplish their goals and their potential.

The results of the Training Needs Analysis in conjunction with the literature review will constitute the basis upon which the consequent work packages will be based since it will identify the project's target group concerning specific knowledge and skills required for their preparedness to integrate once their term ends. The needs analysis will exert a strong influence on the creation of a comprehensive approach in the young offenders' preparation procedure, the nature of the curricula and the pedagogic methodologies which will be employed.

The methodology devised for the completion of the needs analysis has the following core aims:

- to estimate the current and future needs of young prisoners in the partner countries.
- to identify the specific groups within the population who require additional resources.
- to identify the gap between met and unmet needs.
- to identify any discrepancies between need and provision.

The activity is considered to be important for the engagement of young prisoners and ex-prisoners, themselves since it will provide them with the opportunity to voice their needs, their wishes and their intended first steps once they are released back into the community. For work with offenders to make

a “real impact”, the people involved – the children and the young adults – should be engaged and consulted with throughout. Research in the field dictates that the more the participation principles are adhered to, the better the chances of success (Nacro 2008). Ultimately, the training needs analysis will give young people a voice and provide them with the opportunity to influence what content is included and how service is implemented to render more possible the chance of future rehabilitation.

Offender participation – which in our case the “offender” is either a child or a young adult – is expected not only to increase the levels of engagement and compliance with a particular form of intervention or programme, but getting them involved in the process, participants’ self-esteem increases, making “motivation to change” more likely.

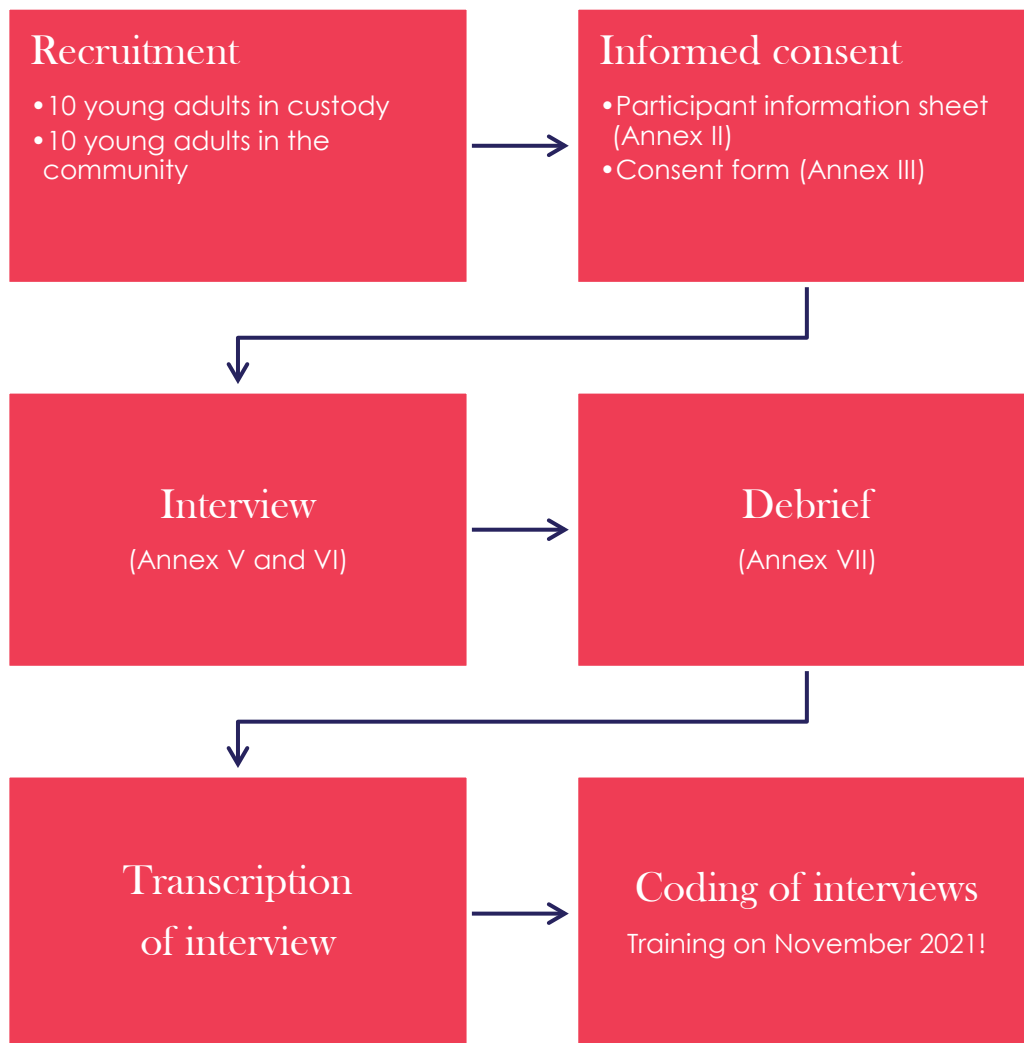
Ultimately, Intellectual Output 1 is expected to result in empirical work that is required to provide the required foundation for the development of:

- the meaningfulness of programme,
- the required link between personal development programmes and human empowerment,
- the link between personal development programmes and desistance and reintegration into society.

Structure and flowchart

This methodological pack has been organized in chronological order. We start with the recruitment of participants. We continue with the ethical considerations that need to be taken into account before conducting the interviews. Then, we outline the interview schedule, how to debrief the participants and how to keep data secure. Finally, we describe the process to analyse data.

Figure 1 Flowchart



Recruitment of participants

A total of eighty (80) interviews will be conducted with (ex) prisoners in order to investigate their needs, strengths and deficiencies in knowledge and skills related to their effective

and permanent integration into society. These first-hand testimonies will reflect the reality prisoners face across Europe and will dictate all crucial aspects of the project's intervention.

Participants

Participants will be between 16 and 24 years old.

Four partners (i.e., ISC, Athens, CESIE and UoG) are expected to interview 20 participants each composed of:

- 10 young adults in custody
- 10 young adults with a history of imprisonment and that are now trying to resettle into de community.

This means that we will do 80 interviews in total: 40 of young adults in custody and 40 of young adults with a history of imprisonment.

Recruitment

To access these participants, we advise contacting young offender institutions and organisations that support young people with resettlement after being released from custody.

For this purpose, UoG has developed:

1. an email template (Annex I)
2. an information document that can be sent to relevant organisations (Annex II).

If used by other partners, these two documents will need to be adapted with relevant names and contacts.

To maximise replies, we recommend contacting people and organizations with whom the partners have worked previously or had established previous contact.

Ethical considerations

Once participants have been contacted and a date and time have been set to conduct the interviews, several ethical considerations need to be taken into account before starting the interview.

The University of Gloucestershire (UK) Research Ethics Committee has awarded ethical approval to the study as long as the following ethical procedures are followed. In addition, each partner might need to follow other procedures depending on their country/institution policies.

Researcher safety

Researchers will make every effort to collect data in pairs to reduce lone working risks and physical danger. In the cases that data must be collected by one researcher on their own, this will be done in the secure settings or institutions acting as gatekeepers and, therefore, there will be other staff present that has been trained to deal with young offenders. Secure settings have alarm systems in place to alert if there is any danger.

Informed consent

Participants must be informed of the objectives of the study before they agree to take part. In addition, they need to be informed of other aspects of the study such as confidentiality or their right to withdraw.

In that regard, a participant information sheet is provided in Annex III. Partners will need to translate it, complete it with their details and provide it to the participants either in paper or electronic format before the interview takes place. Partners are also encouraged to summarise its content before the beginning of the interview and offer to answer any questions that the participant may have.

The information sheet provided in Annex III has some elements in **yellow**. These elements will be relevant for some interviews and not for others. For example, some elements will be relevant for participants in custody, but not for those that have been released. Partners are encouraged to take out the elements that are not relevant in each case.

It is also important that the researchers make clear to potential participants that the research is conducted by an independent party separated from the criminal justice system and that they will not face any negative consequences if they decide not to participate. This is important as they might feel forced to participate due to the circumstances that they are facing.

Finally, once the participants have read the information sheet and they agree to participate, they will need to sign the consent form provided in Annex IV. Consent forms will also need to be translated by each partner and completed with their contact details.

Conducting the interviews

Once the participants have agreed to participate and have signed the consent form, it is time to conduct the interviews. Ideally, interviews will be **voice recorded** to facilitate transcription and analysis. If that is the case, participants have the right to stop the recording at any time with having to explain why. We need to make sure they are aware of that.

In the cases that recording is not possible due to participants not giving their consent or the institution not allowing it, detailed notes will be needed. For that purpose, two people should attend the interview. One will focus on conducting the interview and the other will focus on listening and taking notes of the responses.

Interviews are expected to last around 30 minutes. However, we need to make sure we allow extra time in case the participants feel especially talkative. This is important in the cases where the information given is especially relevant to the aims of the study.

Interview questions

UoG has developed two sets of interview questions

1. for young people in custodial settings (Annex V)
2. for young people in community settings following incarceration (Annex VI)

Each interview schedule consists of **ten main questions** that are then followed by prompts. The prompts are meant to guide participants to give more in-depth responses. They will be needed for some participants but not for others.

Tip:

Each question is also given in conjunction with its purpose. Interviewers need to be aware of what kind of information we are looking for and be able to redirect the conversation. Interviewers might have to ask the same questions in different ways on some occasions and other questions might not need to be asked. Interview schedules are a guide, but interviewers need to be flexible and adapt to the participant.

After the interview

Once the interview is finished, it is important that we debrief the participants and that we take steps towards making sure that the data they have given us is secure.

Debrief

A debrief form is provided in Annex VII. Partners will need to translate this form and complete it with their contact details and relevant resources. We must be aware of the support resources provided

by the institution or organization that signposted us to the young people. Then, we can add those resources to the debrief form. It is also good practice to provide a helpline or independent support service where the participant can call and receive support anonymously.

Data management

No personal data will be collected besides the consent forms. Voice recordings might also contain personal data. Therefore, they will be deleted immediately after transcription. Any personal data given by the participants during the interview, such as their names or the names of the institutions, will be substituted in the transcription with a general term (e.g., the institution). This will prevent any possible identification from research data.

Research data and consent forms will be kept separated to avoid linking personal information with research data by people external to the project. For example, this can be done in separated locked drawers for data in physical format, or in separated encrypted hard drives for data in digital format.

Research data such as transcriptions will be pseudo-anonymised (i.e., each participant will be assigned a pseudonym). Therefore, no personal data will appear in the research data. Consent forms must be also marked with the pseudonym to link personal data and research data in the case that the participant asks for their data to be removed from the study. Once data analysis is finalised, consent forms and any other personal data will be deleted.

Data analysis

Interviews will be analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis allows the researchers to extract common themes from the different interviews. Then, those themes are used to answer the research questions.

Thematic analysis consists of the following steps:

1. Transcription,
2. Reading and familiarization,
3. Coding,
4. Searching for themes,
5. Reviewing themes,
6. Defining and naming themes, and
7. Finalizing the analysis

Steps 1 to 3 will be done by each partner, and they are detailed in the following sections. Steps 4 to 7 will be conducted by UoG.

Transcription of interviews

To analyse the data, the first step is to transcribe the interviews. These can be done manually by each partner, hiring an external company or with specialized software. It is important that any external service that we use follows data protection legislation and confirms the deletion of any data within 28 days.

As outlined in the Data Management section, any data that can be used to identify the participants must be removed or substituted by pseudonyms or general terms. For example, the name of the institution can be substituted with 'the institution'.

Although manual transcription of interviews is time-consuming, it allows for reading and familiarization with the data at the same time. This is the second step of thematic analysis. If transcription is done by an external service, the transcriptions must be read several times before coding starts. Doing this will familiarise the researcher with the content.

Coding of interviews

Once the interviews are transcribed, and the researchers have become familiar with their content, the next step is coding them.

For this, the UoG has developed a coding framework (see Annex VIII). This is a list of codes that the partners can use to code their interviews. This is called deductive coding. However, coding needs to be flexible, and if any partner finds relevant information that does not correspond to any of the provided codes, they are welcome to add their own codes. This is called inductive coding.

Further information and training on how to code the interviews will be provided in the transnational meeting in November 2021. It would be ideal if each partner could bring one of their interviews already transcribed. This can be used then to practice coding.

Grouping of codes into themes

UoG will do this part of the analysis. To facilitate this process, each partner will need to send their list of codes with quotes related to them. This means that a part of each transcription will need to be translated into English. Further details on this will be provided in the training in November 2021.

Workplan

As we work to tight deadlines, in this section we outline when each step is expected to take place and by when it is expected to be finished. The complete work plan for Intellectual Output 1 can be found [here](#).

Recruitment: September 2021

Interviews: October – December 2021

Transcription of interviews: November 2021 – January 2022

Coding the interviews: December 2021 – February 2022

Annex I – Email template

Dear [insert name],

I believe you have spoken with my colleague Adeela Shafi, Associate Professor in Education from the University of Gloucestershire (UK), on other projects and she has given me your contact details.

Adeela and myself are the UK partners of an EU funded project entitled Skills4Life aimed at developing a holistic learning programme to support young people as they transition back in to the community following a period of incarceration. The voice of young people is key to developing this programme.

Below is a very quick summary of the Project:

The University of Gloucestershire's role - led by Dr Adeela Ahmed Shafi - is key to the Skills4Life project in understanding the lived experiences of young people who come into conflict with the law in all partner countries including Norway, France, Italy, Greece and the UK. 'This project helps us to further understand the challenges of young people in prison with regards to transition into the community. It then enables us to develop a programme which specifically hopes to address these challenges.' The project builds on existing projects led by Adeela Active Games for Change (AG4C) and Re-engaging Young Offender with Education and Learning (RENYO) as well as a recent Special Issue in the International Journal of Educational Development which Adeela led on as editor and contributor entitled Children's Education in Secure Custodial Settings: Towards a Global Understanding of Policy and Practice.

The first phase of the project consists of interviewing young people to seek their views on what they think they need as they prepare to transition back into the community. We are already working with two YOIs and an SCH but also need to speak to young people who have recently left a custodial setting on their experiences of how prepared they felt. To that end, **we would like to ask for your help in contacting young people you may be working with who would be willing to share their views and have a voice in shaping the support for re-entering the community.** These views will feed into the Skills4Life Curriculum which will be developed as a key part of the project.

I attach a more detailed description of the project for your information. I am happy to answer any questions or arrange a meeting either face-to-face or online if that is more convenient to discuss details.

Kind regards,

[...]

Annex II – Information for organisations

Aim

This is a transnational European project with partners from France, Italy, Greece and the UK. It aims to consider what young people who have experienced education in a custodial setting feel they would best benefit from when they are released from custody. We are focused on those skills which could contribute to establishing personal responsibilities and developing oneself. This project therefore aims **to equip young people with the appropriate skills for life that will support them to meet the challenges they will face both while serving their term and after their release. This will be done by:**

- Exploring emotional responses when facing problems
- Demonstrating how healthy relationships can be fostered
- Providing the skills of how to plan and organise so they can meet the demands of education and employment

The project is bound by the University of Gloucestershire's ethical guidelines of confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw. Your setting will not be identified nor will any individuals or young people. All feedback and data are stored securely in accordance with data protection laws and ethical procedures.

Why do this work?

As a practitioner in this field, you will know that young people who come into conflict with the law have some of the most complex needs and represent some of the most troubled young people in the country.

For example:

- School dropout is high. Nine out of ten have dropped out of school before being incarcerated (Little, 2015)
- Higher prevalence of drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems and learning difficulties (Chitsabesan & Hughes, 2016)
- Emotional problems (Abram, 2003)
- Behavioural problems (Young et al, 2015)
- Language and communication difficulties (Snow, et al, 2016)
- Complex family and socioeconomic backgrounds

What is our involvement?

In order to be authentic and ensure that the materials we develop absolutely fit the needs of the young people, it is essential that we hear their voices and that these should form the basis of all that we do. Thus, all the partner countries will be interviewing young people who:

1. Are in custodial settings preparing for release
2. Have served a sentence but are back in the community.

In interviewing at least 10 people in each category across the 4 partner countries we will have a total dataset of 80 young people whose views will feed into our programme.

It is for this process that we ask for your help in identifying young people who would be willing to share their views. All data will be anonymous and confidential and has passed ethical approval from our University.

The above will feed into the design of a training programme for practitioners to be used in custodial settings which focuses on the skills the young people have identified as necessary. **We would be delighted if you would be happy to be trained on this programme and deliver a pilot of it in your setting.**

Benefits to participation

Young adults

- Young people and children in conflict with the law are often described as 'doubly vulnerable' because they have less of a voice and are often marginalised. The opportunity to have their voices heard and for their views to be taken seriously is a crucial aim of this project
- The children and young people are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of materials to support other people in this position, giving the participants a sense of purpose and value
- Participants can use their participation in their CVs to help with employment opportunities. It shows skills of communication, collaboration and co-operation.
- **Educators**
 - The opportunity to engage in training designed specifically for their context
 - The opportunity to engage with European partners on best practice as a form of professional development.
- **Organisation**
 - The opportunity to lead the way in terms of utilising the latest research on the development of resources which support the resettlement of children and young people in their care
 - Access to a wider network of relevant organisations through our partnership for effective sharing and collaboration of good practice.

Further information

The UK lead for this Project is [Dr Adeela ahmed Shafi MBE](#), Professor of Education in Youth Justice at the University of Gloucestershire. Adeela is a leading academic in this field of work and is supported by [Dr Laura Castillo-Eito](#), Lecturer in Psychology.

Annex III – Participant information sheet

What is this all about?

This study is part of the Skills4Life project, which is funded by the European Union. There are five European partners, which means that young people in the UK, Greece, Italy and France are all participating in this project.

This study aims to understand the personal skills needed by young people that are released from custody. Then, the information collected will be used to develop the Skills4Life program, which will help young people in custody develop those skills.

What do I have to do?

You are asked to take part in an interview with a member of our research team. They will ask questions about your experience with education in your time in a secure setting. We are especially interested in hearing your opinions of what is missing that could help with your life after release. This is an opportunity for you to have your voice heard. These interviews will last 25-30 minutes. *If you give your consent, they will be recorded with a voice recorder. You can ask for the recorder to be switched off at any time if you don't want a particular piece of information to be recorded. If you don't want to be recorded, the interviewer will take notes of your responses.*

Who is involved in [insert name of the country]?

- [name], [role]
- [name], [role]

What happens to the data or information I give you?

All data will be kept securely in line with Data Protection legislation. *Voice recordings will be transcribed by a trusted external company that will delete any files in 28 days.* Quotes could be used in the reports as examples but any information that could identify you will be deleted. The data or information you give us will be used to help develop the Skills4Life curriculum.

Will the data be confidential?

Yes. Only the research team will have access to the data. Your name will not be used and instead you will have a pseudonym (not your real name) so no one will know that the data is yours. *The name of the setting you are in will also be anonymised.* However, it is important for you to know that if you disclose any malpractice regarding safeguarding we are obliged to report it.

To read more about our privacy policy please follow this link: [insert link]

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

Participating is voluntary and you won't face any negative consequences if you don't want to participate. If you decide to participate, you can stop the interview at any time or pull out your data up to four weeks after the interview. This can be done [through the educator you work with or](#) contacting the researcher at [insert email]. After this time, data analysis will start and it will be difficult to extract individual data.

If you are happy to participate, please complete and sign the consent form.

This research has been approved by the University of Gloucestershire Research Ethics Panel. If you wish to discuss the research with an independent party, please contact the chair of the University Research Ethics Panel, Dr Emily Ryall (eryall@glos.ac.uk).

Annex IV – Consent form

The project will be conducted under the guidelines of the University of Gloucestershire and the [British Educational Research Association](#).

If you are happy to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

Please tick the following	Yes	No
I understand that I have been asked to participate in an interview to express my experiences about education in custody.		
I have been able to ask questions about the project and my involvement in it.		
I understand that I don't have to be involved and can withdraw from participation in the study at any time whilst the data is being collected and up to four weeks following the interview.		
I understand that any information I give will be kept confidential and that my name will not be used anywhere.		
I understand that quotes may be used as examples but will be anonymised.		

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

We can be contacted here:

[Insert address]

[insert email]

Annex V – Interview Questions for young people in custodial settings

1. **Can you describe your educational experience when you were in mainstream school?**

(the purpose of this question is to open the interview and get a sense of their previous experiences of education and learning).

2. **What kinds of skills do you think you need to get on in life outside?**

(The purpose of this question is to gauge what the participant thinks about life outside and what they need).

Prompts– they may talk about skills such as reading or writing or other trade skills. This is fine but we also want them to consider the softer skills related to personal development such as self-reflection, self-management, a sense of agency/control. For this, you may need to prompt them on these further.

3. **How much do you think your mainstream school would have prepared you for these skills?**

(this question is designed to help understand whether they feel mainstream school helped them more in this regard)

4. **On a scale of 1-5, how able do you feel in making decisions about your life with 1= not very able to 5= very able?**

(the purpose of this question is to assess how much agency the participant feels they have, even though they are confined).

5. **Can you explain why you gave this score?**

(the purposes of this question is to get them to explore their scoring and help them to answer the next questions)

6. **What would help you increase your ability to feel more able in making decisions about your life?**

Prompts: help with how to make good decisions

Help with how to take responsibility for when things might go wrong

Help with how to resist peer pressure

Help with being yourself

Help with developing confidence

(This question is designed to understand what soft skills young people feel they need to develop a sense of agency. It must be noted that this question could be very challenging for the young people to understand, simply because it is likely to be unusual they may never have thought about it. You may need to ask it in various ways to elicit the responses).

7. How could the education and learning that you get in this (custodial) setting help you with some of those skills you mention in the last few questions?

(this question focuses on the current practice at the setting and connects it to what they identified as what they need).

8. What things would you like them to do more, and why?

(The purpose of this question is to get participants to draw out the useful and less useful elements of what they already experience. Settings could find this useful).

9. What would like them to do less of, and why?

10. If you were the Head of Education at this setting, what would you do to help you develop the skills, such as confidence or responsibility that we talked about earlier?

(this question is designed to get them to think about things if they were in charge. It also helps them come out of their own position and into the position of someone who makes decisions).

Annex VI – Interview Questions for young people in the community

1. What kinds of skills do you think you need to get on in life now you are back in the community?
(The purpose of this question is to open the interview and gauge what the participant thinks about life outside and what they need).

Prompts– they may talk about skills such as reading or writing or other trade skills. This is fine but we also want them to consider the softer skills related to personal development such as self-reflection, self-management, a sense of agency/control. For this you may need to prompt them on these further.

2. Would you say there was a difference between your experiences of mainstream school and the education you received in your custodial education?
(the purpose of this question is to explore whether participants felt education in custody was different to their mainstream experiences).
3. Which was better in helping you develop the skills you described earlier and why?
(the purpose of this question is to explore if they felt the custodial setting helped them. The reason it is anchored to mainstream school experiences is just to help them to think about it as often a comparison against another tangible experience may be easier than just asking about the custodial setting alone).
4. On a scale of 1-5, how able do you feel in making decisions about your life with 1= not very able to 5= very able?
(the purpose of this question is to assess how much agency the participant feels they have, despite the fact that they are confined).
5. Can you explain why you gave this score?
(the purposes of this question is to get them to explore their scoring and help them to answer the next questions)
6. What would help you increase your ability to feel more able in making decisions about your life?
Prompts: help with how to make good decisions
Help with how to take responsibility for when things might go wrong
Help with how to resist peer pressure
Help with being yourself
Help with developing confidence

(This question is designed to understand what soft skills young people feel they need to develop a sense of agency. It must be noted that this question could be very challenging for the young people to understand, simply because it is likely to be unusual they may never have thought about it. You may need to ask it in various ways to elicit the responses).
7. How do you think the education that you had in your (custodial) setting helped you with some of those skills you mention in the last few questions?
(this question focuses on the current practice at the setting and connects it to what they identified as what they need).

Prompt: you may need to probe further if they say it did not help them.
8. What things would you have liked them to do more of, and why?

(The purpose of this question is to get participants to draw out the useful and less useful elements of what they experienced in their custodial setting now that they are back in the community – if they did not already comment in this in the previous question).

9. What would like them to do less of, and why?
10. If you were the Head of Education at your previous (custodial) setting, what would you have done to help develop the skills, such as confidence or responsibility that we talked about earlier?
(this question is designed to get them to think about things if they were in charge. It also draws on the benefit of hindsight now they are back in the community and can think about what they could have needed).

Annex VII – Debrief form

Thank you for your participation! Your responses will help us design an education program to help young people in custody be better prepared for release.

Remember that you can withdraw your responses from the research up to four weeks from now. For that, you need to contact the researchers [through one of your educators](#) or at *[insert email]*.

If you have questions about this project, then please contact the primary researcher, *[insert name]*: *[insert email]*

If you feel distressed after participating in this research and need support, you can contact your GP or call *[insert local support organisation]*. You can find other mental health support here: *[insert link to relevant local services]*

This research has been approved by the University of Gloucestershire Research Ethics Panel.

It is recommended that you keep a copy of this debrief form.

Annex VIII – Coding framework

This Guide includes the steps to coding the interview data from IO1. It also includes the Coding Framework designed by UoG and a Coding Table if you are coding manually.

Coding the data manually using Word

Step 1

Insert your data into the first column of the table on the next page.

Please ensure the data are transcribed and in a Word format.

Step 2

Read through your data, question by question and then pick the code from the framework below that best describes that data. Place that code label against that piece of data in the next column. The codes broadly correspond and are in the order you might find them in your interview data. However, any code could be used for the answers of any question. This is deductive coding.

Keep each file separate with a file name which is anonymous but contains key information. E. g. whether it is Set 1 or Set 2, your country and a pseudonym.

Step 3

As you read through the data you might find things that do not fit into the coding framework, but you feel it is relevant and needs a code. Think of a label and place that in the last column against the data it relates to. Ensure that any additional codes are relevant to the research questions before you add them. This is inductive coding.

Step 4

On the third column of the table, include quotes from the interview (2 or 3 from each interview) that you feel illustrate well the code. This can be done for both deductive and inductive codes. Please, translate these quotes into English. These quotes can then be used in the final report.

Step 5

Complete Steps 1-4 for all interviews and then email the whole batch to the UoG Team

Coding the data using NVivo software

Step 1

UoG will send you a Nvivo File with the Coding Framework already inserted.

Step 2

Label your files as suggested in yellow box and then upload to the Nvivo File from UoG. This means you have all your data and Coding Framework already for you to code the data.

Step 3

Read through your data, one interview at a time. Code each chunk of data by highlighting and dragging the text across to the code you think best represents it. The codes broadly correspond and are in the order you might find them in your interview data. However, any code could be used for the answers to any question. This is deductive coding.

Step 4

As you read through the data you might find things that do not fit into the coding framework, but you feel it is relevant and needs a code. You can add a label under any of the categories in the Coding Framework (using the NVivo instruction) Use a label that best represents that data and ensure it does not fit into any of the other codes. Ensure that any additional codes are relevant to the research questions before you add them. This is inductive coding.

Step 5

Complete Steps 1-5 for all interviews, Save with your country name attached. Then email the whole Nvivo file the UoG Team

Notes and further advice

The coding framework is meant to be a guide. It is not there to limit you, if you find relevant information that is not covered in the coding, please, follow Step 3.

Inductive coding (Step 3) is very important, as we might have missed important issues when developing the coding framework. Any information about skills or support needed by the offenders is relevant, as it will inform the development of the curriculum.

Both codes from Step 2 and Step 3 should be placed on the table as many times as they appear. One code appearing multiple times gives us information about the importance that the offender gives to that skill. This is relevant for the development of the curriculum.

Think of the list of codes you develop for each interview as a summary of that interview. The UoG team will not have access to the original interview and, therefore, they should get a good idea of what was covered in the interview by looking at the codes.

The Coding Framework

- 1 Previous educational experiences
 - Positive previous educational experiences
 - Negative previous educational experiences
- 2 Skills that they think they need for the future. These may be further refined for specific skills. You may add other codes depending on your data. Place these in the inductive coding column.
 - o Reading
 - o Writing
 - o CV or employability skills
 - o Internet skills
 - o Self-reflection
 - o Self-management
 - o Emotional help
 - o Relationship skills
- 3 Mainstream school support
- 4 Decision making and agency – scale of 1-5. Note the number.
- 5 Level of agency
 - o High level of agency
 - o Some level of agency
 - o Low level of agency
- 6 Things that would help with decision making: These could be further coded as below. But add more if you need.
 - o Help with how to take responsibility for when things might go wrong
 - o Help with how to resist peer pressure
 - o Help with being yourself
 - o Help with developing confidence
- 7 Specific and practical suggestions for ways to help with the above – inductive/open coding
- 8 Existing useful practice they experience/d at the custodial setting – inductive/open coding
- 9 Existing practice that participants feel is/was useless at their custodial setting– inductive/open coding
- 10 If I was in charge I would.... - inductive/open coding

The Coding Table

Data (insert your interview data here)	Deductive coding (place a code from the above framework that best describes the data)	Inductive Coding (think of a word/phrase that best describes the data)	Useful quotes (quotes that could be used in the final report to illustrate codes)

SKILLS4LIFE



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