

Shannon Trust Snapshot Survey 2017

Mentor Update

Many thanks to all of you who took part in this year's survey and for making it a success.

Hearing from Learners and Mentors helps Shannon Trust make sure your experience remains at the heart of the Reading Plan. Together with feedback from our volunteers and Reading Plan teams, it helps Shannon Trust highlight successes and share good practice. It also helps us identify where we need to improve or change how we do things.

Who took part?

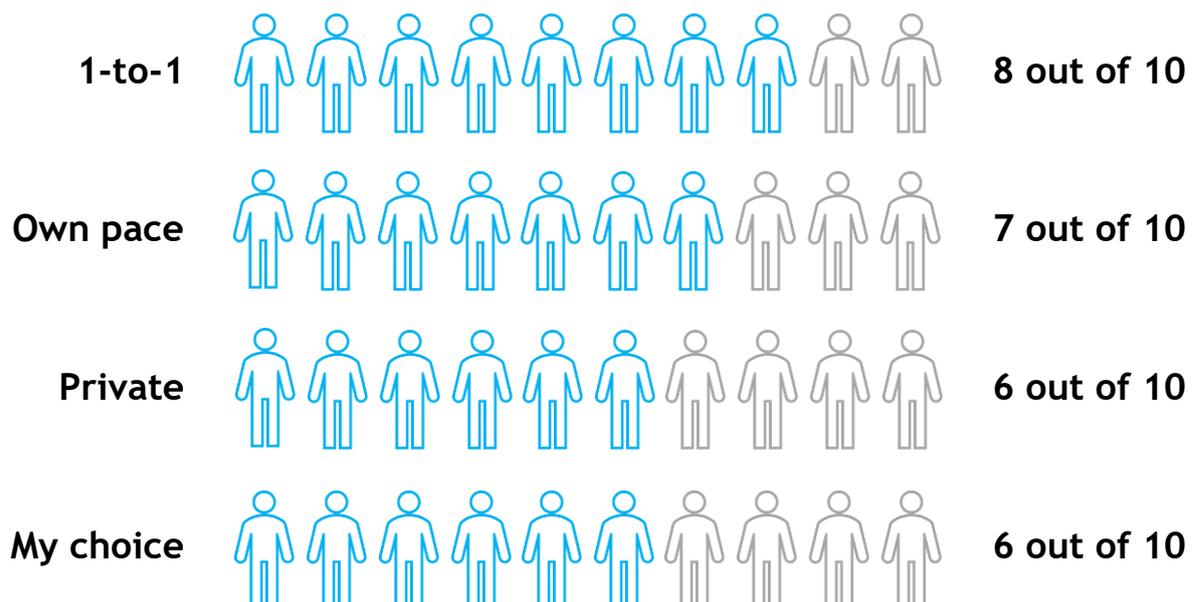
- 79 Reading Plans returned Learner snapshots. 88 returned Mentor snapshots.
- 597 Learners and 662 Mentors took part. This is 45% of the total reported Learners and 59% of the total reported Mentors at the time the snapshots took place. Overall, there was a 52% response rate.
- 112 'Tell Us Your Story' responses.

Key Messages

Learner Journey

Learner snapshots confirm that the Shannon Trust Reading Plan continues to appeal to people who are reluctant to go into formal education; taking part helps them to see their own potential and change their attitude towards education. As a result, many report going on to further learning. This confirms that the Reading Plan is a gateway to further learning.

The Reading Plan's 1-to-1 approach, the chance to learn at their own pace, its privacy and that starting the Reading Plan is their choice remain the key features of the Reading Plan which encourage Learners. Thank you for getting this message across so clearly. It really does make a huge difference - here's what Learners said about why the Reading Plan appealed to them:



Frustrated through years of torment and hiding a secret which I could only explain as embarrassment to say the least, I used excuses like 'I forgot my glasses'. I had problems reading and writing never thinking of asking for help. Being in prison did not help as I felt too embarrassed to ask for help until I heard of the Shannon Trust Reading Plan. I thought 'why not', I had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Shannon Trust Ex-Learner, now a Mentor.
Tell Us Your Story, 2017

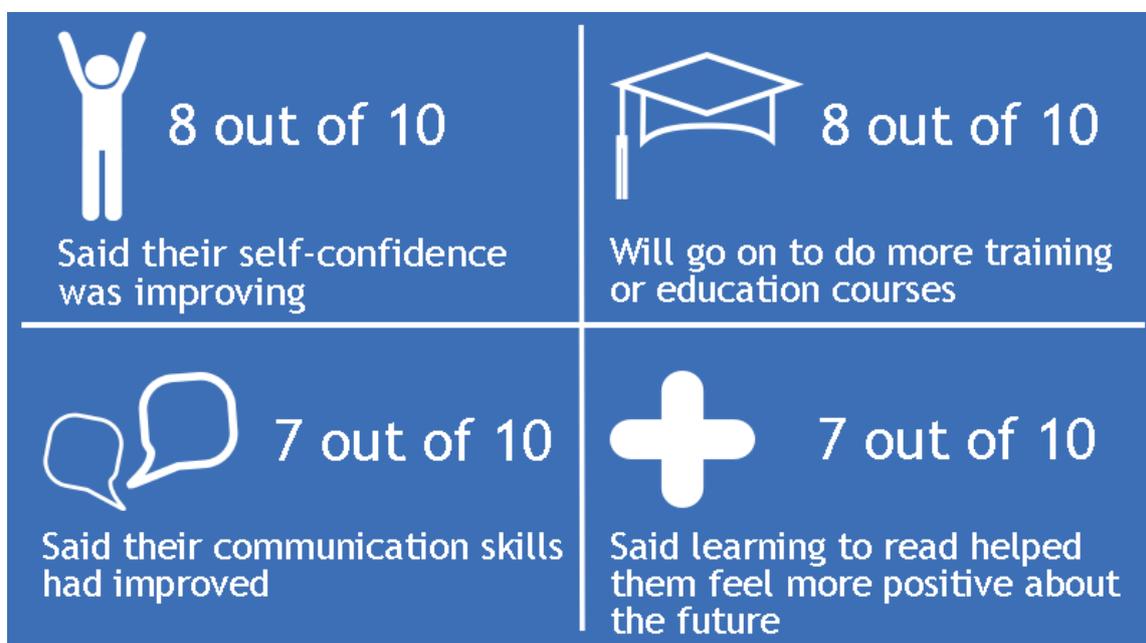
Along with improving reading, being able to read their letters and manage prison life more easily are key motivators for Learners:

Improve reading  7 out of 10

Read own letters  6 out of 10

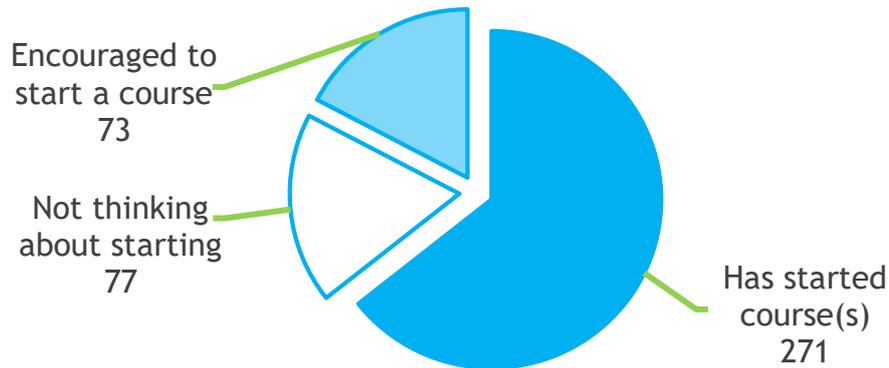
Help with prison life  6 out of 10

Learning to read has benefits beyond reading. Learners have told us it leads to increased self-confidence and improved communication skills. It also helps them navigate prison life more easily and can help them feel more positive about the future:

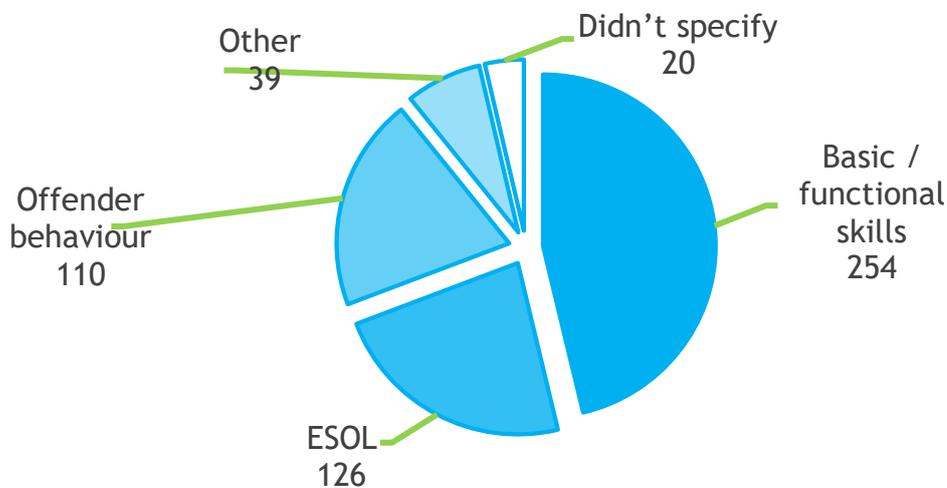




For 421 Learners, accessing further training or education opportunities was not a key reason for them to learn to read. However, this changed for many when they started to work with you. Of the 421, 6 out of 10 had started another course and a further 17% were encouraged to do so, which shows how the Reading Plan is often the first step towards for further learning:

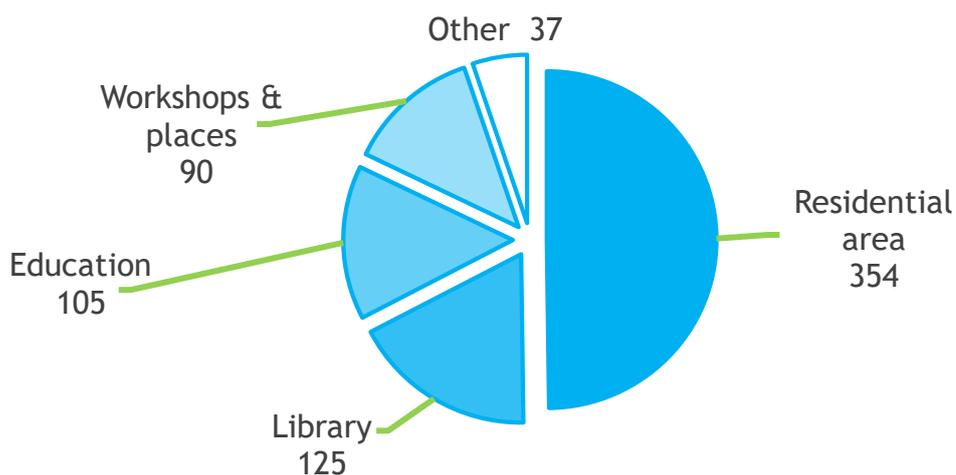


There's a wide range of courses that Learners take up with many taking up more than one course:



The Reading Plan - where, how & when

Most of Reading Plan sessions take place in residential areas; many Learners will receive their sessions in more than one place such as in a library and on their wing:



92% Learners are working at the pace that is right for them; 63% of Learners had between 3 to 5 sessions per week in the two weeks running up to the survey.

Pace is just right for me



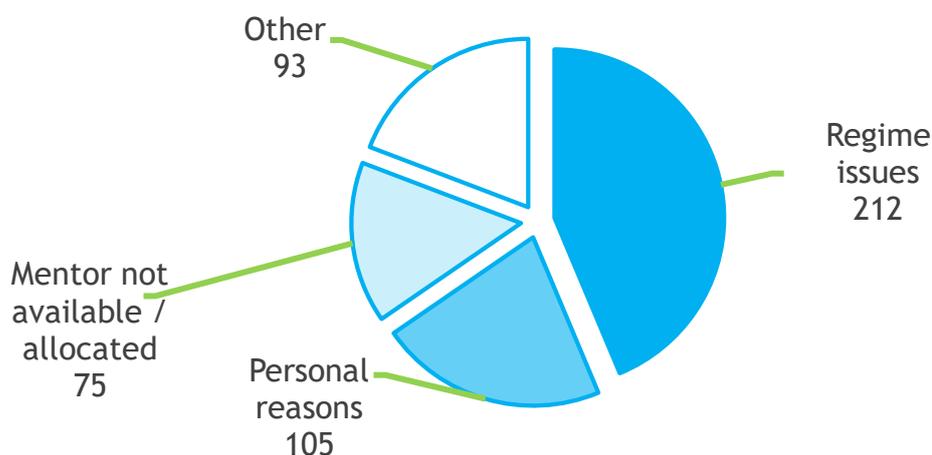
9 out of 10

Between 3 & 5 sessions a week



6 out of 10

Regime issues, such as lock downs, are the major reason for fewer sessions or no sessions taking place although personal reasons / health issues are also a contributor to missed sessions:



(Not all Learners answered this question)

One of the areas we've been focusing on recently is how we can improve access to the Reading Plan by making it available wherever a Learner is during the core day such as in Industries and Workshops. We've been running several pilots to find out what works and we'll be sharing more about this later in the year but in the meantime, thank you to all Mentors who've been involved in this work.

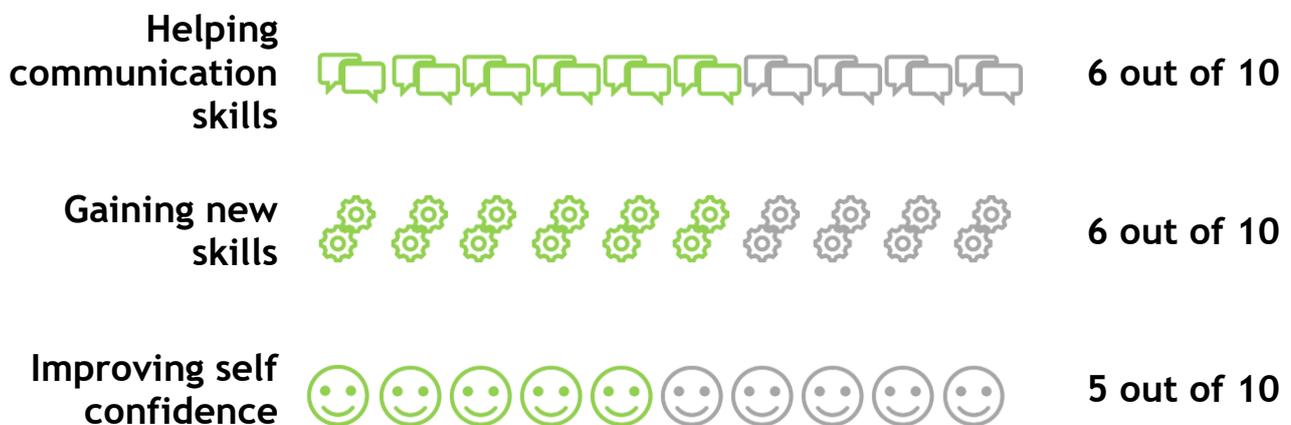
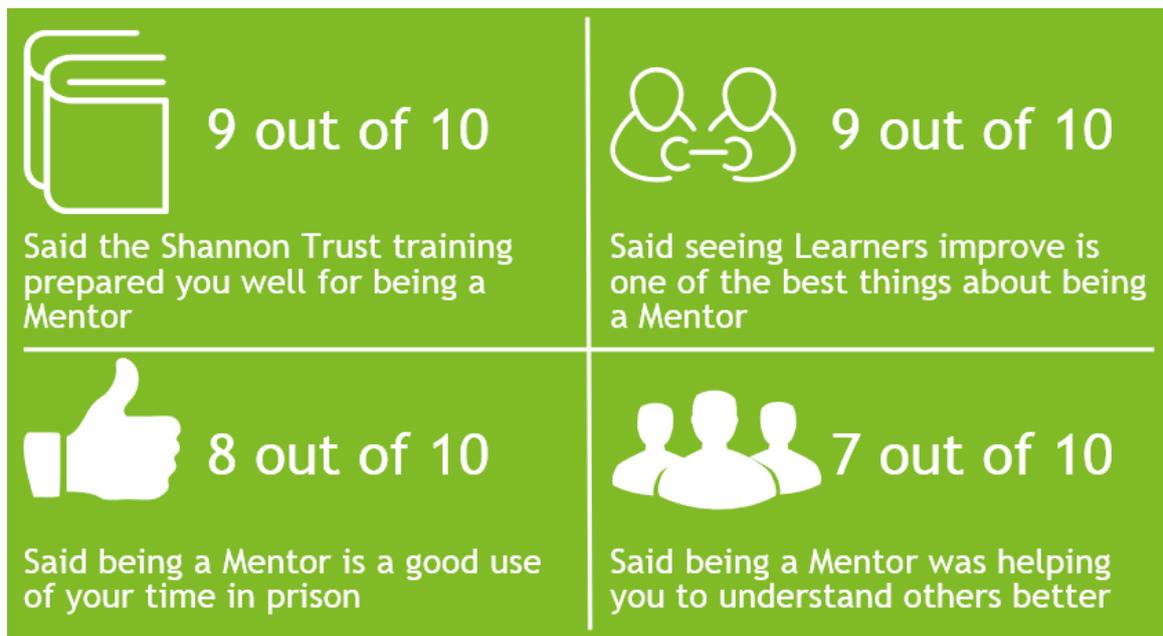
Never been to school, always been self-employed. Wanted to read but didn't have the courage to learn. After my conviction and coming to prison, I realised unless you could read, you couldn't progress through the system. The only way was to get educated and progress yourself.

Shannon Trust Learner
Tell Us Your Story, 2017

Beyond Reading

The snapshots continue to demonstrate how the benefits of the Reading Plan go beyond Learners developing a key skill; Mentors benefit too. Many Mentors report being able to

understand others better, an improvement in their own communication skills and developing new skills. It's great to hear nearly every Mentor would recommend becoming a Mentor to others and that most Mentors felt that their Mentor Training prepared them for their role - here's what you told us:



I'd never done anything like this sort of work before, I thought you had to have lots of qualifications to teach but after training and observing other Mentors, I began to teach others. I can't tell you how much I have enjoyed working with people, teaching them to read, the joy for both myself and the Learner when they finish a book is amazing. Shannon Trust gives you a chance to better yourself. Working with Shannon Trust has inspired me to do a Mentor NVQ qualification which I hope to use when I leave prison.

Shannon Trust Mentor
Tell Us Your Story, 2017



Some of you would like the chance to discuss ideas on how to encourage Learners. Others would like to know more about how to support those whose first language isn't English. These are common areas for discussion so please don't worry about raising them at your monthly Mentor meeting - our Shannon Trust volunteers will be able to help.



Most Mentors attend monthly Mentor meetings although at the time of the survey some of you were new to your role and hadn't had the chance of a meeting yet. As well as being a chance to talk about what's going well and to meet other Mentors, the meetings are for you to discuss new ideas to promote the Reading Plan, understand how it's working across your prison and to ask other Mentors for help or ideas. We're really pleased to know you find them useful; if you've not been to one, please go along. And if there's a topic or question you'd like to cover, please raise it.

I attend all the Mentor meetings that I'm invited to. The last meeting was seeing Learners accept their certificates, and unexpectedly I received an appreciation certificate. I feel good about myself being a Reading Plan Mentor, it has boosted my self-esteem and I am given the recognition that I am still a valued member of society with a purpose to fulfil.

Shannon Trust Mentor
Tell Us Your Story, 2017

Since the 2016 survey we've:

- Created and distributed a new Induction DVD for potential Learners. Many thanks to Mentors at HMP Rochester who took part.
- Piloted a new booklet of information, guidance and suggestions for Mentor Coordinators.
- Worked with several prisons to look at how the Reading Plan can take place in Industries and Workshops.
- Worked with specific prisons on a 'Whole Prison Approach'. The aim is to make sure that anyone who needs help with their reading has the opportunity to take part in the Reading Plan wherever they are in the prison during the core day, evening and weekends.
- Looked at how we can increase the diversity of Learners & Mentors. We've launched a campaign on National Prison Radio which includes sponsoring the 'Love Bug' programme. Over the summer months Angela Cairns, our CEO, will be co-presenting two episodes of Love Bug and listeners will hear more from Mentors and Learners - listen in on Tuesdays and Thursday between 08.00-09.00 and on Sundays between 12.00-13.00. Our current Reading Plan radio adverts will be replaced in November. Working with the National Prison Radio remains an important way to get information about the Reading Plan directly to potential Learners and to the prisoner community as a whole - we hope you enjoy the listen!

- We've also been looking specifically at three sets of Learners - Gypsy, Roma and Travellers, Learners whose first language isn't English and Women - and how we encourage more people from these groups to get involved with the Reading Plan either as Learners or Mentors.
- Produced a short and snappy briefing note to raise awareness about the Reading Plan with other prisoner groups. The briefing can be delivered by Shannon Trust volunteers, Reading Plan Lead or Mentor Coordinators. If you haven't seen it, please ask your Shannon Trust volunteer for a copy.
- Worked with the Prison Service (HMPPS) training team to ensure new prison officers are made aware of the Reading Plan.

Going forward we'll be:

- Sharing with you what we've learned from the Whole Prison Approach and Industries / Workshop pilots from November 2017.
- Publishing the Mentor Coordinator guidance in November 2017.
- Following up on the work with prisoner peer advisor groups and looking to extend an agreement with St Giles Trust to other organisations who support prisoner groups.
- Continuing to develop partnership with community reading organisation, Read Easy (where they operate), to help more Learners continue to learn to read on release.
- Developing new Turning Pages readers to extend the choice, style and topics covered. This will be a major piece of work for 2018. Thanks to the snapshots we have a very clear idea of what topics Learners would like covered and will be taking the opportunity to explore this more in the next snapshot survey.
- Continuing to work with the prison service at national and regional levels to promote the Reading Plan and embed it into prison service culture.

Together, you and Turning Pages continue to change the lives of people in prison and those around them; thank you for doing such an amazing thing.