



THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF EDUCATORS

**The Educators' Trust Fund Awards 2018**

**Friday 27 April 2018**

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## Guest Speaker Emily Thomas

Emily Thomas is currently the Governor of HMP/YOI Isis, a medium security prison, accommodating around 600 men, the majority of whom are aged 18-30. Emily has a passionate commitment to ensuring that the rehabilitation of prisoners in her care is at the heart of the work undertaken at Isis and is a priority for all the staff. 'It is our job, she says, 'to support prisoners in their rehabilitation whilst in prison and help them to plan for release into the community. We aim to provide an environment where change is possible and all men have hope for a better future'.

Emily is a history graduate who, after a brief but 'Absolutely Fabulous' stint in PR, joined the Prison Service in 1999 on a fast track graduate scheme. She worked first as a prison officer at HMP Pentonville and a Principal Officer at HMP Holloway before relocating to the North West of England, having a baby and becoming a governor grade at HMP Buckley Hall.

Emily spent a substantial part of her career working with children in custody, becoming the Governor at HMP/YOI Cookham Wood in 2009. In 2013, Emily was invited to take up a secondment to the Ministry of Justice to lead on the 'through the gate' piece of the 'Transforming Rehabilitation' programme which saw the introduction of community rehabilitation companies tasked with reducing reoffending across the regions.

In 2015, after another baby, Emily took up post as the Governor of HMP Holloway and led the prison through to its closure in July 2016 before taking up her current post as the Governor at HMP/YOI Isis in south London.

Emily is rightly proud of what has been achieved so far at the prison. A passionate believer in the transformative power of education she is determined to provide a wide range of opportunities to young men who may have missed out on them at school, encouraging them to consider further education and broadening horizons. She is focused on delivering education in its broadest sense across all areas of the prison, ensuring that prisoners have the opportunity to gain qualifications and experience a wide variety of vocational work, thus providing better employment prospects on release. Emily recognizes that her staff are her most vital asset and provides bespoke training aimed at developing their skills and supporting them in their challenging role. She is involved with the *Unlocked Graduates* MSc programme in Leadership and Custodial Environments, a bespoke course aimed at supporting the development of inspirational leaders within the prison system.

Emily is also a Trustee for the Prisoners' Education Trust and the Shannon Trust, both charities which focus on improving the educational attainment of prisoners as a gateway to reducing reoffending. She is often called upon to serve on enquiries, act as an expert witness, contribute to research and give talks about how prison education can unlock the potential in prisoners to change their lives for the betterment of themselves, their families and for society more generally.

## **The Educators' Trust Fund Award Programme**

The overarching aim of the charitable activities funded by the Educators' Trust Fund is 'to promote, by appropriate means, the development of the profession of educator'. One of the most satisfying means by which we pursue this aim is to provide awards that recognise excellence and innovation. Reflecting the unique character of the Worshipful Company of Educators in including all levels of education and all settings in which learning takes place, our choice of the term 'educator' is also deliberately inclusive to cover all those professionals who contribute to creating a stimulating, diverse and supportive environment in which people learn and enrich their lives.

The Trust is able to make awards to these inspirational individuals only because of the generosity of Liverymen, Freemen and other individuals and organisations who share our values and aspirations for the profession of educator.

**Master's Award**, the topic and winner chosen by the Master

Two awards of commemorative medals for excellence in military education:

**No.22 (Training) Group RAF Award** for an outstanding trainer from the group

**Cadet Vocational Qualification Organisation Award** to an outstanding volunteer adult leader in Front Line Management from each of the three Armed Forces' cadet corps  
(Presentation by CVQO)

Four awards of bursaries in dedicated fields generously funded by individual Liverymen

**Geoffrey Bond Award in Art**

**Mary Lou Carrington Award**

**Keith Hutton Legacy Award for Theatre and Performing Arts**

**Peter Warren Award for Engineering** in partnership with City and Guilds

The Trust has also entered into partnership with City and Guilds for two match-funded bursaries in vocational training

**Educators-City and Guilds Bursary Scheme Awards**

(Presentation by C&G)

**Inspirational Educator Award**, the theme is chosen every year by the Trustees and awarded to eight impressive and inspirational educators in the field. This year the theme is prison education.

**Panel of Judges:** The Trust is grateful for the expertise, time and diligence of its panel of four award judges: Susan Cousins, Caroline Haines, Paul Fear and Harriet Harriss

## **1. Master's Award**

### **Winner: Mark Dawe, CEO Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP)**

AELP is a professional association representing over 850 members including FE colleges, independent training providers, universities, employers, and end-point assessment organisations. The focus is on work-based learning across the country with, unsurprisingly, apprenticeship reforms writ large on the agenda. This means working closely with the many organisations involved in these activities, contributing to advisory panels and steering groups ranging from the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to OFSTED, OFQUAL and employer groups. Mark Dawe, its Chief Executive, is driven by a passion for high quality training and learning for young people and adults, meeting the needs of employers, boosting productivity and contributing to social mobility.

Like so many in this field of post-16 education and training, including the Master, Mark has arrived at his present job via a fairly circuitous route, graduating from Cambridge with a MA in Economics, before becoming a Chartered Accountant with KPMG. He then became Head of Corporate Services at Canterbury College, where, among other activities, he took part in the restructuring of prison education in the 11 prisons in Kent. After 6 years he moved on to become Director of Education at 'eGovernment Solutions', developing technological solutions for public sector procurement, during which time he was seconded to the Association of Colleges. Mark then joined the Civil Service at the Dept for Education and Skills as a Deputy Director, whilst also serving as Governor of Lewisham College with the renowned Dame Ruth Silver. His role at the DfES involved the strategic direction both of the further education sector and adult literacy and numeracy.

After three years, Mark made what, in hindsight, seems like a logical shift: he became a Principal of a FE College - Oaklands in Hertfordshire. Five years later, in 2010, he moved again, this time to become Chief Executive of the Oxford Cambridge and RSA (OCR) examining body, one of the three leading English examination boards. He joined AELP in 2016, leaping straight into the churn and change of the reforms in professional and technical education and skills. He is a Board Member of WorldSkills UK, member of the Education and Skills Funding Agency Advisory Board, a school governor and an enthusiastic Leader with the Scout Association when time allows. AELP publishes a weekly e-newsletter where the organisation's purpose is described as 'working with government and employers to develop policies and provide high quality, learner-centred, employer-focused, demand-led skills development, valued by all'. Mark pursues this purpose relentlessly with vigour, commitment and passion.

## **2. Number 22 (Training) Group, Royal Air Force Award**

**Winners: Scott Hyndman, Ian Loze, Wendy Thornton**

**Nominated by: Group Captain Stephen Dharamraj**

Traditionally, Livery Companies have an association with the military. We, the Educators, partner with the Royal Air Force Number 22 (Training) Group. The group is responsible for the recruitment, selection, initial and professional training of RAF personnel as well as providing technical training for the Army and the Royal Navy.

This is the seventh year of the presentation of the RAF Medal. Selection is carried out through a rigorous, competitive process within the Service. We are told that not only has the award gained a strong reputation among RAF personnel but also that, in these challenging times for the Services, it offers a much appreciated sense of value from the wider civilian community.

The 2018 award goes to a team of three flight lieutenant training consultants based within the Capability Development Wing at RAF Halton. They have two main roles. The first is to support the requirements analysis of internal and contracted RAF training to make it both efficient and effective. The second role is to provide specialist training advice to the Training Defence Line of Development leads at HQ Air Command, Force Headquarters and industry on training capability matters. Both require tact and diplomacy in addition to enormous professional competence.

Their Nominator praises the impact they have made on improving the training for a large number of stakeholders within the RAF. This includes Defence Equipment and Support, the aviation industry and bespoke programmes and projects which cut across the joint military environment, thus making a significant contribution to the field of education and training. Particular mention is made of their ability to demystify and positively influence training language, training procurement and its effective delivery from the tactical to the strategic level. They are commended for carrying out their complex duties with calm professionalism, consistently good cheer and enormous technical competence.

### **3. Geoffrey Bond Award for Art**

**Winner: Anne Petters**

**Nominated by Tamiko O'Brien, Principal, City and Guilds London Art School**

This award is supported by a bursary generously donated by Alderman and Honorary Liveryman Geoffrey Bond to support the professional development of a practitioner in the field of art education, reflecting his own interest in art and cultural history and his passion for education.

This year it goes to Anne Petters of the City and Guilds London Art School, nominated by the Principal of the College, Tamiko O'Brien.

Founded in 1854 for the specialist craftsmen of the City of London, the College is a small, independent, not-for-profit learning organisation dependent on funding from trusts, foundations and individuals. It remains true to its origins in the idea of 'learning through making', with an emphasis on the understanding of materials and developing the traditional skills of heritage crafts. However, these are combined with contextual art history, research and experimentation, preparing students for careers as contemporary carvers, sculptors, conservators and artists.

Anne Petters is a graduate of Fine Arts/ Glass from the Institute of Ceramic and Glass Art in Germany, with a Masters in Fine Arts in Sculpture/ Dimensional Studies from Alfred University, New York. She has been showing work in glass museums and art institutions across Europe and the USA. Anne has developed a specific glass kiln forming technique and is teaching internationally, including the Institute for Ceramic and Glass Art in Germany and the Royal College of Art in London.

Born in Dresden, Anne grew up in the German Democratic Republic. The political change in her country has had a profound influence on her artistic work. Her interest in controlling and displaying moments of our fleeting vulnerable existence leads her to a poetic, metaphoric use of glass and other materials, including natural phenomena.

Anne Petters is the Art School's Glass Technician. She has been a tremendous asset to the Art School, working with students in all departments. The funds awarded by the Worshipful Company of Educators Trust will support her participation as a presenter/demonstrator at the annual conference of the Glass Art Society, taking place this year in Murano, Italy. This is a major international showcase for both Anne herself and the Art School more generally.

#### **4. Mary Lou Carrington Award**

**Winner: Tazeen Ahmad, Investigative Reporter, Channel 4, and Journalist**

**Nominator: Ashley Hodges, Executive Director, *Speakers for Schools***

The late Mary Lou Carrington was a business woman and a Common Counsellor in the City of London with a passionate commitment to education. She joined the Educators in its early stages and was instrumental in its development and growth. Her death in 2008 sadly prevented her installation as Master. This award is in her memory. It is for a business woman who has made a significant and inspirational contribution to education.

*Speakers for Schools* was founded in 2011 by the broadcaster, Robert Peston. It is a charity providing state schools and colleges, free of charge, with expert speakers from leading industry professionals and academics. It has currently around a thousand eminent figures in their field who donate their time to share their knowledge, their insights and experience with students. Its primary mission is to broaden horizons, inspire and motivate the next generation.

This year's winner is Tazeen Ahmad who is an investigative reporter for Channel 4's current affairs programme, *Dispatches*. She has investigated and reported some award-winning *Dispatches* reports, including *The Hunt for Britain's Sex Gangs* which was nominated for a BAFTA award. Other investigations have included the NHS, the world of cheap fashion, credit cards, cruise-liners, supermarkets, schools and the cosmetic industry. She has also written a book, *The Checkout Girl* about working undercover as a supermarket till operative.

She is an experienced broadcaster in news and current affairs working in television and radio for almost 20 years with all the major UK broadcasting organisations as well as the American network NBC News where she was a foreign correspondent. She has won a number of awards for her reporting including from the Royal Television Society and the Association for International Broadcasting.

Tazeen is much in demand by schools. As well as an investigative reporter, Tazeen is also the founding director of 'EQ Matters' which provides emotional intelligence and strategic coaching for executives. She has adapted this material for schools in her foundation *'The Story Project'* which works with teachers delivering workshops on the importance of emotional intelligence using excerpts from literature as illustration and material for students to explore. For example, *Othello* provided Year 10 students with insights into the frailty of human ego, its susceptibility to anxiety and suspicion of the feelings and emotions of others, and the negative reactions this can produce. Tazeen provided insights into the different mechanisms that can be used to recognise destructive emotions in yourself, such as jealousy, and how it can be dealt with. According to the tweets, the students were gripped and thought she was amazing!

## **5. Keith Hutton Legacy Award for Theatre and Performing Arts**

**Winner: Belinda McGuirk, *Chickenshed Theatre***

**Nominated by Professor Lou Stein, Artistic Director, *Chickenshed Theatre***

The late Keith Hutton was a major contributor to the early development of the Educators. Sadly Keith died in 2016. He very kindly left a legacy to the Trust. Keith was a great enthusiast of theatre and performing arts so it is fitting that his bursary supports the professional development of teacher-practitioners in that field.

This year the award goes to Belinda McGuirk, Principal Performer, at *Chickenshed Theatre*, where she also is BTEC Programme Manager.

*Chickenshed Theatre* was founded in 1974 by teacher Mary Ward who believed that children who found the conventional curriculum difficult could be reached through music, drama and movement. She and singer-composer, Jo Collins, began a community inclusive theatre in a disused chicken barn in north London. It now has a purpose-built theatre complex with four performance spaces and a bar/restaurant, regularly hosting theatre, music and comedy evenings.

*Chickenshed* has an international reputation for its work with children, especially those with special educational needs and disabilities. As well as major musical productions, Chickenshed provides workshops run on weeknights, Saturdays and in school vacations. The staff delivers bespoke programmes for primary and secondary schools as well as education courses in inclusive performing arts at BTEC, Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) Levels, accredited by Edexcel and Middlesex University. The educational provision is designated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

Belinda McGuirk is a unique blend of educator and performing arts professional. She is a very fine actress and director in her own right and able to convey her specialism in inclusive performance with skill and effectiveness. She is particularly committed to working with vulnerable students and those with moderate to severe disabilities. She has honed her own skills to meet their needs. For example she is a BSL Qualified Signer. Her impact on young people's performance skills and life-time communication confidence is widely acknowledged by their parents, her colleagues and educational assessors.

Belinda has devoted nearly 20 years of her teaching career to *Chickenshed's* educational programme, placing the needs of her students above her own professional development and career opportunities. The Educator award not only brings external recognition for the quality of Belinda's work but also will enable her to attend a high level international conference on inclusive practice where she will engage with other advanced practitioners in the field and locate her own practice in a wider context. It may lead to new opportunities for her but, in the words of her Nominator, will also 'refresh the life-blood of educational excellence at *Chickenshed*'.



## **6. *Inspirational Educator Awards***

These eight awards celebrate the excellent practice and outstanding achievement of education professionals in a field or a setting of education chosen by the Trustees each year. This year the theme is prison education. The award winners were nominated by four remarkable charities which are pioneers in educational opportunities for prisoners in England and Wales. The Trustees are very grateful for their assistance.

### **Prisoners' Education Trust (PET)**

PET provides distance learning courses, materials, advice and support in every prison in England and Wales often in subjects and at levels not otherwise available from publicly funded providers, PET also carries out research to advise government and prison authorities. PET has been a driver for partnerships between expert charities, research bodies, universities and businesses which share their values and belief in the transformative power of learning for people in prisons, such as the Prisoner Learning Alliance, the Prison Learning Network and the Prison University Partnership in Learning.

### **RSA's Prison Education Programme**

The mission of the RSA is based on the belief that all human beings have creative capacities that, when understood and supported, can be mobilised to deliver a 21st century enlightenment. Over the last decade, the RSA's work on prisons has consistently stressed the importance of prison education and employment, identifying challenges to delivery and proposing wider system change. Its approach, exemplified in its *Future Prisons* programme, stresses the importance of an integrated approach, collaborative working and an emphasis on the active role that prisoners, staff and communities can play

### **Sheriff's and Recorder's Fund**

The Fund was set up by the Drapers' Company in 1808 to help prison inmates and their families as a reaction to the horrors of Newgate Prison. It has continued ever since to be supported by the Livery companies. It provides small grants to individual prisoners on release to assist them with vital needs and with training. It also makes large grants to prison-based charitable schemes which lead towards the rehabilitation of prisoners, such as mentoring, education and vocational training.

### **St Giles Trust**

The Trust's beneficiaries are severely disadvantaged people, especially ex-offenders, their families and vulnerable young people. St Giles delivers training in prisons using an under-utilised resource – serving prisoners themselves. Its award-winning Peer Advisor Programme trains prisoners to a Level 3 Advice and Guidance qualification which enables them to help other prisoners gain practical experience as part of the vocational element of the course. In this way the Trust is able to reach the most excluded, hard-to-reach individuals who rarely engage with statutory educational services and support.

**Winner: Jose Aguiar, HMP Pentonville, London**

**Nominators: Rod Clark, Prisoners' Education Trust (PET); Rachel O'Brien, RSA Prison Education Programme**

Jose Aguiar is so inspirational that he received nominations from two organisations, the Prisoners' Education Trust (PET) and the RSA, independently of each other!

A philosophy graduate, Jose is a teacher and educational consultant for the Ministry of Justice who has worked in prison education, developing educational projects for the last 10 years. He is a passionate and untiring advocate of education in prison.

At HMP Pentonville, a Category C male prison in London with 1200 prisoners, Jose has established a range of programmes and events as well as being a distance learning co-ordinator for PET. In 2016 alone he encouraged and supported 48 prisoners to be awarded funding for PET distance learning courses, despite the constraints of prison regimes.

He is also ingenious at finding creative ways to gain support from the prison authorities and to source funding to bring in learning partners on a regular basis.

One such initiative was the *'Learning Together'* project with London South Bank University where 8 students on the undergraduate degree in Education joined 12 prisoners in Pentonville Prison to take a module on *Education for Social Justice*. The success of this project led to a similar partnership with the University of Westminster in which regular students on the BA Criminology course studied in prison alongside prisoners. This course has been so successful that it is now repeated several times a year with excellent feedback from both groups of students. As well as academic learning, these programme help to challenge stereotypes and preconceptions and to break down barriers to understanding and empathising with others.

Another partnership Jose has initiated is with the London Shakespeare Workout, a charity that employs Shakespeare as an interactive tool to promote self-confidence and emotional intelligence using RADA graduating students as facilitators. This partnership has produced a programme of drama workshops for Pentonville prisoners. This experience was captured in performances in the first education conference held inside Pentonville, organised by Jose, along with poetry readings, testimonies from the men and presentations from some top figures in prison education policy.

In all his work Jose puts the prisoners' voice at the centre. This led him to joint-authoring *'Involve, Improve, Inspire – A Prisoner Learner Voice Toolkit'* with PET in 2013 and in promoting *'Learner Voice'* a project funded by the Ministry of Justice on rehabilitative cultures in 2014-5. Perhaps Jose is best summed up in the words of a prisoner who said he was a *'one man learning campus, always on the move looking for new ways to inspire and educate'*.

## **Winner: Shirley Boslem, HMP Downview, Surrey**

### **Nominator: Lady Tessa Brewer, Sheriffs' and Recorder's Trust**

Shirley Boslem is the Commercial Projects Manager of the *'Making for Change'* unit in HMP Downview in Surrey which houses around 350 women. It is a fashion training and manufacture unit established by the Ministry of Justice and the London College of Fashion in 2014.

*'Making for a Change'* is a key element of the College's *Fashion Education in Prisons Programme* which has demonstrated how the informal setting of fashion education can be an effective learning tool for people who have not always flourished in the traditional classroom. Its success is reflected in a number of awards including the Times Higher Award for Outreach Initiative of the Year.

*'Making for Change'* is an exceptional educational facility whereby training is offered alongside commercial production with the aim of increasing well-being and reducing reoffending rates amongst participants through equipping them with professional skills and qualifications within a supportive environment. Around 30 students undertake Levels 1 and 2 Fashion and Textile. Shirley brings in designers from industry and tutors from the London College of Fashion to work on projects with the women. Level 1 regularly achieves a 98% pass rate.

Much of this success is down to Shirley Boslem's dedication to the women prisoners, her professional expertise, her business acumen and her diplomatic skills with the prison authorities. Shirley is resolute in seeking out exciting and unusual commercial contracts for products which both inspire and educate the participants. As well as technical skills the women develop design creativity. She exhibits the students' work at design and manufacturing trade fairs creating ongoing opportunities for commercial contracts. Shirley presents the students with images of the *'Making for a Change'* stand at the trade fairs and of the stores or websites which sell the final products, enhancing the women's self-esteem and confidence.

Shirley has also given thought to post-prison opportunities. She works with the prisoners on design portfolios, which include photos of the women's products to show to colleges or potential employers, and she has forged links with *'Working Chance'*, a specialist recruitment agency for women ex-offenders to ensure employment and mentoring for the students on release.

A more personal initiative focusing on the well-being of the women was the introduction of 'incentive days' when the women can create products as gifts for their families and friends, a rare opportunity in prison.

Shirley's Nominator, Lady Tessa Brewer, believes Shirley wholly deserves the Educator's *Inspirational Educator* award, as 'she truly is an inspiration to the women prisoners with whom she has worked as well as prison colleagues and associates in the fashion and design industries.'

**Winners: Bill Davies and Helen Nichols, HMP Full Sutton, Yorkshire**

**Nominator: Rachel O'Brien, RSA Prison Education Programme**

These two awards are made to Dr Bill Davies and Dr Helen Nichols. Their Nominator, Rachel O'Brien, was unable to separate them in terms of citation as it was their synergic teamwork that produced their outstanding achievement – a case of the whole being greater than the sum of the parts.

Bill and Helen are Senior Lecturers in Criminology at Leeds Beckett University. Both studied criminology at undergraduate, Masters and PhD level, Helen's PhD thesis was on *Adult Male Prisoners' Experience of Education*; Bill's PhD thesis specialized in the experience of short-term prisoners. Both have published on prison education in the *Prison Service Journal*.

Bill and Helen began working together when they joined Leeds Beckett University in 2012. Bill, who teaches on the BA and MSc Criminology courses, had spent time in prison before becoming an academic. Together they developed (in connection with Cambridge University) an accredited *Learning Together* programme – where students from either side of the prison walls study together. This was introduced in the high security prison at HMP Full Sutton in Yorkshire as part of its strategy to support further learning. This is particularly important in a prison like HMP Full Sutton where people serve very long sentence. It provides a chance to work creatively, give hope and inspire those inside. The framework Helen and Bill used in developing the *Learning Together* programme provided an innovative and inclusive way to develop a more ambitious curriculum and break down some of the barriers faced by prisoners in gaining higher education credit.

In another initiative, Helen and Bill set up and lead the pioneering Prison Research Network (PRisoN), a research community that brings together academics, researchers, third sector organisations and anyone with an interest in the social impact of imprisonment to generate exciting research opportunities. The Network is multidisciplinary and includes members from academic backgrounds including criminology, sociology, speech and language therapy, history, architecture, play work, physiotherapy, sport, politics and many more. Following the official launch of the Network in April 2015, it has attracted members from across the country.

Helen and Bill together have made a very significant contribution to changing the way in which academics think about how they work with prisons and to changing how people inside prison think about themselves and their potential to learn. The integration of Bill and Helen's educational philosophy and their educational practice in this regard is a constant source of new initiatives. For example, Bill is working with colleagues across the country to develop Convict Criminology, a strand of Criminology led by ex-prisoner academics, thus capturing the emphasis on 'the prisoner voice' which is at the core of Bill and Helen's approach.

**Winner: Alison Drew, HMP Send, Surrey**

**Nominator: Maria McNicholl, St Giles Trust**

Alison Drew is a trainer and assessor on the Peer Advisor programme run by St Giles Trust. She also has a First and PhD in History from Cambridge as well as a PGCE and QTLS.

St Giles established the Peer Advisor Programme in 2002 at HMP Wandsworth, initially as a practical if unorthodox response to the adverse ratio of case-workers to prisoner needs. Prisoners themselves were trained to become advice workers for fellow prisoners. The programme turned out to be so successful that it was launched in other prisons.

Alison Drew joined the programme in 2010 at HMP Send. The prison holds up to 282 women, many of whom are highly vulnerable with complex needs around mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse and long-term homelessness.

Alison developed a creative and inspiring training package using highly interactive teaching methods. It has proved very popular with the women, many of whom have a negative experience of education. Despite the restrictive environment of custody, particularly that around internet use, Alison has managed to introduce and deliver a level 3 Advice and Guidance qualification recognised at vocational industry standard. Over 100 students have achieved Level 3 and 6 have progressed to Level 4, using the skills and knowledge they gained to support hundreds of other women in custody. Two students have been successful in the Training and Assessment, Quality and Assurance qualifications and have become Assessors. They acted as informal teaching assistants in Alison's training sessions and went on to become trainers and assessors after release. She has recently expanded her course to HMP Bronzefield, another women's prison, and to HMP High Down, a male prison.

Alison has also helped the women transfer their learning into the community through being instrumental in developing Release on Temporary Licence opportunities for them, so they can apply their learning in volunteering contexts beyond the prison gate. This has helped them prepare for their release as well as help vulnerable people in the community. A number of Alison's students have gone on to secure paid employment as a result, including seven who are now employed by St Giles Trust.

The training programme has been externally verified and received outstanding feedback. It is regarded as a beacon of good practice and Alison has been invited to share her learning and experience with fellow practitioners all over the country.

Her Nominator regards Alison's work as transformational, *'helping women to put often deeply troubled pasts behind them and use the depressing, stressful environment of prison to their best advantage.'*

## **Winner: Francesca Findlater, HMP Brixton, London**

### **Nominator: Rachel O'Brien, RSA Prison Education Programme**

Francesca Findlater is a successful business woman with a career in design and branding. She held several senior posts, including Board level in the private sector. Fran first started working with former prisoners in 2009 when she was involved in a Corporate Social Responsibility project run by her graphic design partnership. This led to her setting up the charity and social enterprise, *Bounce Back*, of which she is the CEO.

*Bounce Back* first started with training centres in the community dedicated to getting ex-offenders into paid employment in construction. Their success led them to open a state-of-the-art painting and decorating training centre within HMP Brixton in April 2014. A further training centre to teach Dry Lining was opened in 2015 and in 2016 a third centre was launched to teach Scaffolding, the first ever Scaffolding training centre within any UK prison. The centres are run with the support of large construction firms which provide funding, equipment, materials, industry know-how and jobs. There are now centres in five London prisons.

The training centres in HMP Brixton give prisoners the opportunity to learn skills and gain qualifications whilst still inside so they are better prepared upon release to obtain employment and resist re-offending. Peer support is an important element of the programme; serving prisoners are trained to fulfil essential roles in the organization, taking on responsibility and developing self esteem.

A core objective is to train and equip offenders not only with skills and vocational qualifications but also with an understanding of how to manage self-employment, benefits and tax so that they can move into the workplace with confidence and complete the transition from custody into paid employment. Furthermore, prisoners who graduate from the courses are employed immediately on release from custody in the *Bounce Back* painting and decorating social enterprise company or with partner construction companies.

The impact of *Bounce Back* is remarkable. Since it opened it has worked with over 1000 people achieving a re-offending rate of less than 12% against the national average of 60%.

Fran is extremely dedicated and very determined. She seems unable to accept barriers when they arise. Many of the learning and employment projects that start in prison struggle under the current commissioning arrangements; Fran works around them, holding on to the aspirational aims of *Bounce Back* and achieving amazing results even when things are tough. She also stands out as someone who is utterly unpatronising; she expects a lot from the men *Bounce Back* work with and has created a culture of aspiration but in doing so has also developed support mechanisms that help people to stay on course. Her guiding principle is summed up in the charity's vision statement: *We believe people deserve a second chance and improving employability is a first step towards reducing re-offending. It helps stop crime, keeps communities safer and reduces the number of victims.*

**Winner: Jo Sharp, HMP/YOI Isis, London**

**Nominator: Rod Clark, Prisoners Education Trust**

Jo Sharp is the Curriculum Team Leader at HMP/YOI Isis in South East London, a category C prison which holds male prisoners from the age of 18. Having previously led a Pupil Referral Unit, Jo knows the importance of finding innovative ways to engage the young men in education.

Jo helped set up a prison-university partnership between HMP/YOI Isis and nearby Goldsmiths College, University of London. This involved a group of Goldsmith students going into HMP/YOI Isis on a regular basis to learn about social research methods alongside a group of prisoners. Jo arranged study group sessions for the prisoners so they understood the reading material before the group sessions with the Goldsmiths students took place.

Jo was the life force behind making the partnership work in the prison, which, like many London prisons, was struggling for operational prison staff. Jo's radiant personality and 'go the extra mile' approach drew the partners together and ironed out the inevitable difficulties. The project has now gone on to offer three further *Learning Together* courses in philosophy, creative writing and anthropology. The curriculum offer in the prison was changed as a result of suggestions by the learners themselves, encouraged by Jo.

Jo has had an impact on the prisoners' study space as well. A special study room was dedicated to learners on these projects and distance learning programmes. The room is also used as a space for 'learner voice' group meetings. Jo has been involved in establishing a range of additional learning opportunities, such as a six week 'readiness for learning' induction programme including life skills such as cooking, money management ICT, art and goal setting. She also participates in family days for the young men with children to develop family learning. This was held in the education department and library rather than the visits hall. It involved a mobile zoo, a 'Gruffalo trail' and reading sessions. Jo describes her philosophy of curriculum planning and teaching as 'life-affirming change' and has given presentations on this theme at conferences.

At the graduation ceremony for the pilot *Learning Together* course the respect and affection the learners had for Jo was obvious. She had paid attention to the smallest details such as wrapping certificates into a scroll with red ribbon, making personalised congratulations cards for each learner and worked hard to ensure that prisoners' families and those prisoners who had left the prison during the course could attend. The prison students spoke about the impact of the course. One said that studying social science *'made me understand why people chase the lifestyle portrayed in music [...] things they can't afford, like new phones out every six months. When I'm out I'm not going to be chasing those things any more'*. Another said: *'I thought university students were going to be stuck up, but I now know university has a broad variety of different people. Uni could be a place for me.'* At the graduation, Jo told the group that they had inspired her to go back to university to do more study, that she was proud of them and loved them - to which they all responded in unison, 'We love you too, Jo'!

**Winner: Vilma Smith-Yates, HMP Wymott, Lancashire**

**Nominator: Rod Clark, Prisoners Education Trust**

Vilma is a Personal and Social Development Tutor at HMP Wymott, a Category C prison for adult males in Lancashire. In 2016 she won in the Outstanding Teacher category at the Prisoner Learning Alliance awards, having been nominated by the prisoners with whom she worked. One nomination letter said: *'I have never met previously a teacher so committed in what they teach. We are very lucky to have her. I feel she is an inspiration to us all.'*

Vilma joined the education team at HMP Wymott in 2006 as a sessional tutor, before which she taught Health at an FE College. Always looking for a challenge Vilma took her first steps into the complicated, demanding but also highly rewarding world of Prison Education. The quality of her work and her dedication to the prisoners resulted in her being offered a full-time permanent post.

Vilma has been involved in many initiatives at HMP Wymott. For example, she has been the driving force behind the Learner-led Peer Mentor Scheme. This both meets the needs of prisoners and supports the Mentors to develop professionally with on-going training and participation in group meetings to shape policy - all transferable skills useful for release.

She has also used her Health background to motivate the men to improve their health and well-being. She organises an annual prison-wide Men's Health Week where partners from a number of agencies come into the prison to raise awareness of a wide range of health issues as well as multiple themed health weeks, spot-lighting particular health issues.

One of her most notable achievements has been Wymott's Student Councils, one for Category C prisoners and another for Vulnerable Prisoners. Singled out as an example of good practice in Wymott's HM Inspection report and used as a case study in an Ofsted Report of 2014, the Student Councils differ from others in that the prisoners themselves take on role of chair, secretary and other offices, and the agenda is led by them. The Student Councils are made up of men who are engaged in education, and whose role is to promote and improve learning within the prison and to act as peer mentors within lessons and on the wings. The Student Council members undertake a Learner Voice Survey annually, produce a professional and comprehensive report for the Education Department and so help to shape the future of education in the prison.

Council members also have a voice in policy discussions around prison reform. For example, they provided a highly articulate and focused response from the prisoners' point of view to Dame Sally Coates' Report, *'Unlocking Potential'*.

Alongside these initiatives, Vilma has taken the lead for many years on numerous charity events that enable prisoners to participate as well as staff, creating opportunities for prisoners to give something back to society and experience what it feels like to contribute positively. Some of the charities supported have been The British Heart Foundation, The Zak Vali Charity for parents who have lost children to cancer, and St Catherine's Hospice, a local hospice supporting Lancashire families.