

# Waste Management Training for Offenders: Potential Opportunities for the Scottish Prison Service

Research Paper

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## Background

The Scottish Prison Service's establishments have around 6000 prisoners and 4000 staff, and produce a considerable waste stream. The development of recycling and waste management activities creates opportunities for significant cost savings. Experience from HMP Glenochil suggests that improved waste management could save the Scottish Prison Service £172,000 per year.

Several policy drivers aimed at reducing waste are expected to generate 12,000 new waste management jobs in Scotland and so waste management training in prisons could provide real opportunities for prisoners to get jobs in the collection, recovery and sorting of waste.

## Policy Issues

The Environment Protection Act 1990 led to the development of a Scottish Prison Service Environmental Policy in 2000 which sought to ensure waste was monitored, dealt with in accordance with legal requirements and that staff practiced waste minimisation techniques. The Policy also resulted in the employment of an Environmental Co-ordinator for two years to stimulate developments and rationalise waste management contracts throughout the Scottish Prison Service estate.

Despite the development of the Environmental Policy there is no pressure from the Scottish Executive to ensure opportunities from waste management are developed. The Environmental Co-ordinator's contract was not renewed and no-one appears to have directly responsible for the Environmental Policy. Evidence from HMP Barlinnie suggests that the award of a framework for a Scottish Prison Service-wide waste management contract to Biffaward has so far not necessarily been supportive of recycling activities.

The Environmental Policy tasks prisons with implementing waste management and recycling programmes and has led to the creation of 'Green Teams', which share information and best practice across penal establishments. No central management or co-ordination of activity has been established so each prison is implementing stand alone systems. This is felt to be a time consuming and an inefficient use of resources with individual officers having to learn about waste issues before attempting to introduce appropriate solutions.

Significant policy drivers have led to the potential for 12,000 new jobs to be created in the Scottish waste management industry over the next few years:

- Scotland currently recycles only 5% of its waste but aims to achieve 25% recycling and composting of municipal waste by 2006 and 55% by 2020. Significant funding has been made available by the Scottish Executive to local authorities to support their 2006 targets in the Strategic Waste Plan for Scotland and local Area Waste Plans.
- The EU Landfill Directive (1999) seeks to shift dependence away from landfill and sets targets for reducing the biodegradable fraction of municipal waste by 2010, 2013 and 2020.
- Manufacturers and producers have been made legally responsible to achieve set recycling targets e.g. The Packaging Directive, The Waste Electrical and Electronic (WEEE) Directive, and the End of Life Vehicles (ELV) Directive.
- Landfill Tax – currently £13 per tonne and due to rise yearly to £35 per tonne by 2020.



- Aggregates Levy – Increases price of virgin aggregates by £1.60 per tonne, aims to reduce demand for primary aggregates and stimulate use of recycled aggregates.

Addressing these policies and associated targets has the potential to maintain and generate a significant number of new jobs in waste management.

## Current Practice in the Scottish Prison Service

Development of prison recycling programmes does provide opportunities for significant savings. HMP Glenochil has introduced a series of measures to improve waste management, involving:

- A radical re-organisation of internal waste management practices
- Establishment of a Waste Management Unit to comply with legislation, improve environmental performance, reduce costs and maximise return from recycle
- Monitoring/assessment of waste generation within the prison and related targets

Through the implementation of these measures, HMP Glenochil managed to reduce its annual waste bill by 26%, achieving annual savings of around £17,266. If replicated throughout the whole Scottish Prison Service estate, this could represent total savings of £172,000 per year.

The development of the recycling programme at HMP Glenochil has also improved the environment of the prison and provided real 'life skills' and training for inmates.

Recycling opportunities for Aluminium foil trays, Electronic equipment and PCs are being considered, although such projects may not be viable for security, legal or other reasons.

HMP Barlinnie has had limited waste management success with recyclable materials arising in various departments but integration and expansion of recycling being hampered by no a prison-wide policy existing. However, the Recycling Unit at HMP Barlinnie has commenced recovery of a limited range of materials, without senior management support or resources.

## Future Potential

Waste Management activity elsewhere in the UK is believed to be better developed than in Scottish prisons.

- A Central Waste Management Unit (CWMU) has been established to support and guide all prisons in England and Wales.
- The CWMU has so far assisted 72 prisons develop action plans.
- The development of partnerships between prisons and outside organisations has resulted in a wide range of recycling opportunities.
- A series of developments and initiatives exist in other prisons such as training programmes for staff and prisoners, linking prisoner training in waste management with external employers and the development of other business opportunities.



## Recommendations

- A programme of Scottish Prison Service staff awareness is required to increase staff knowledge and understanding of recycling programmes and encourage their participation in initiatives.
- The Scottish Prison Service would benefit from a more formalised and coordinated approach to waste management such as the establishment of a Waste Management Unit which supports all prisons in the Scottish Prison Service estate and can benefit from efficiencies of scale.
- Linking of training inside prison to existing projects outside is likely to provide advantages to improve employment and reduction of re-offending.
- The development of recycling in prisons provides significant opportunities for skills and training for offenders which may support later employment. As recycling and other waste management activities are creating significant employment opportunities, the development of appropriate SVQs will be of real benefit to prisoners. SVQ levels 1 and 2, though not yet universally required, are increasingly important and relevant for entry into to the industry.
- Delivery costs to SVQ level 1 are £550-£650 per prisoner if delivered by external agencies but are minimal if delivered by trained and accredited prison staff. Increased management support and investment in training would secure the development of these opportunities.

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