

## New Chapters 2018/19 report

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This report covers the first year of the National Literacy Trust's New Chapters programme in HMP Aylesbury.

### Key achievements

- 900 books donated to HMP Aylesbury by a total of 40 authors
- Four wing libraries established and stocked
- Cabinet provided for the segregation unit
- Three author events took place in the first year, including a successful panel show, recorded by National Prison Radio
- Staff and young people engaged with the programme
- Partnership established with the Comic and Cartoon Arts MA programme at Staffordshire University

*"They now relate the library to an entertainment space and associate it with positive experience." (HMP Aylesbury Librarian)*

### Programme overview

With support from the Rothschild Foundation, New Chapters is able to inspire the young people in HMP Aylesbury, who are often on very long sentences, to read and write for pleasure and make meaningful use of their time in custody.

<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> The project activities will enable young people to access quality literature, read more frequently and engage in book talk.</p>	<p><b>Year 1 milestone:</b> Reading groups, wing libraries and the reading champions programme are established, with a minimum of 883 books donated to young offenders and YOI staff.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> The project will improve awareness and attitudes among YOI staff and local community organisations on the value of reading for pleasure. They will be equipped with strategies that promote literacy and reading for pleasure among young offenders and ex-offenders.</p>	<p><b>Year 1 milestone:</b> Key staff from the YOI and local community organisations trained to promote reading for pleasure to young offenders.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> The project will deliver a roundtable event with local and national policy-makers and third sector organisations to strengthen the focus of</p>	<p><b>Year 1 milestone:</b> Local and national-policy makers are informed of the project's mission and the Year 2 roundtable.</p>

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reading and literacy in prisons and YOIs across local and national strategies for serving offenders and ex-offenders.

## Wing libraries

In the 2018/19 programme year, with generous support from publishers including Hachette, Pan Macmillan, Simon & Schuster, Own It!, Knights Of and Penguin, we donated 900 books to the wing libraries in HMP Aylesbury.



Titles donated were:

Title	Author
<i>It Shouldn't Happen to a Manager</i>	Harry Redknapp
<i>How to be a Footballer</i>	Peter Crouch
<i>Why We Sleep</i>	Matthew Walker
<i>Atomic Habits</i>	James Clear
<i>The Sorrow of War</i>	Bảo Ninh
<i>You Are a Badass: How to Stop Doubting Your Greatness and Start Living an Awesome Life</i>	Jen Sincero
<i>Ready Player One</i>	Ernest Cline
<i>The Master Plan</i>	Chris Wilson and Bret Witter
<i>Straight Outta Crawley</i>	Romesh Ranganathan
<i>Win or Learn: MMA, Conor McGregor and Me: A Trainer's Journey</i>	John Kavanagh
<i>Children of Blood and Bone</i>	Tomi Adeyemi
<i>Dead if you Don't</i>	Peter James
<i>Damaged</i>	Chris Wild
<i>The Life Book: Laugh More, Love More, Play More, Earn More</i>	Nina Grunfeld
<i>Refugee Boy</i>	Benjamin Zephaniah
<i>The Betrayer</i>	Kimberley Chambers
<i>A Dance with Dragons</i>	George R. R. Martin
<i>I, Robot</i>	Isaac Asimov
<i>Street Boys</i>	Lorenzo Carcaterra
<i>Long Way Down</i>	Jason Reynolds
<i>Born a Crime</i>	Trevor Noah
<i>Prisoner to the Streets</i>	Robyn Travis
<i>Pep Guardiola: Another way to win the title</i>	Guillem Balague
<i>The Prince of Peace</i>	Mark Prince
<i>Everybody Writes: Your Go-To Guide to Creating Ridiculously Good Content</i>	Ann Handley

<i>Rise Up</i>	Stormzy
<i>Cell Workout</i>	L J Flanders
<i>Bunce's Big Fat Short History of Boxing</i>	Steve Bunce
<i>No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference</i>	Greta Thunberg
<i>No Hunger in Paradise</i>	Michael Calvin
<i>Prison: a survival guide</i>	Carl Cattermole
<i>Natives: Race &amp; Class in the Ruins of an Empire</i>	Akala
<i>In Our Mad and Furious City</i>	Guy Gunaratne
<i>Lethal White</i>	Robert Galbraith
<i>Rich Dad, Poor Dad</i>	Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lechter
<i>Young Offender</i>	Michael Maisey
<i>Shoe Dog: A Memoir by the Creator of NIKE</i>	Knight Phil
<i>The Life and Rhymes of Benjamin Zephaniah</i>	Benjamin Zephaniah
<i>Graybar Hotel</i>	Curtis Dawkins
<i>Box to Box</i>	Curtis Woodhouse

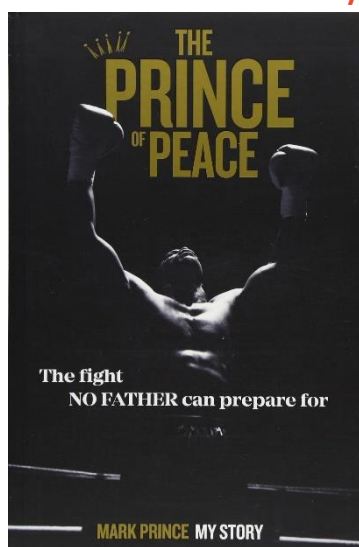
The wing libraries were established on a rolling basis throughout the year, once each wing had been refurbished following the prison going into special measures. To date, four wing libraries are established and stocked with books, and a remaining two will be purchased when the wings are ready. Each cabinet has a checking in and out book so we can monitor use; we plan to do this on a quarterly basis going forward.

## Author events

We organised three events in year one of New Chapters, featuring a total of six authors, a publisher and a sports presenter.

The events have been a huge success, proving popular with both staff and young people. Working with the Head of Learning and Skills, as well as the prison librarians, we have agreed that a section of shelves in the library will now be dedicated to New Chapters – showcasing the book of the next author(s) visiting and housing our creative writing sheets.

### Dr Mark Prince OBE – May 2019



Mark Prince spoke to 18 young people and numerous staff members about his book *The Prince of Peace*, his experience of turning his life around to become a professional boxer, and the loss of his son to knife crime.

The young people had the opportunity to ask Mark questions and were given a copy of the book to take away from the event. Staff commented that holding the young people's attention for such a sustained period of time was almost unheard of, and that it was clear how engaged they were.

*"When Mark Prince was talking about his son being stabbed you could hear a pin drop." (Librarian)*

## Author panel show – 11 July 2019



The main event of the first year was a panel made up of four authors – LJ Flanders (*Cell Workout*), Robyn Travis (*Prisoner to the Streets*), Carl Cattermole (*Prison: a survival guide*) and Mark Maciver (celebrity barber and author of *Shaping Up Culture*) – as well as a representative from Hachette publishers. The event was hosted and recorded by National Prison Radio and was really well received by the young people.

Approximately 30 young people attended the event, along with prison staff and external supporters from the Rothschild Foundation and BACO.

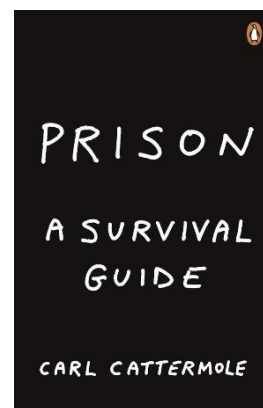
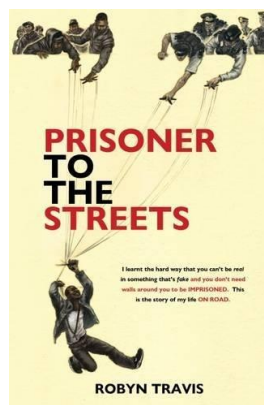
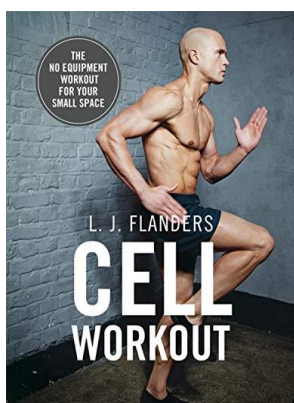
The staff reported that the young people talked about it for days afterwards, and discussed and swapped the books. The young people have also requested for Robyn Travis's other books to be

sent to the library as *Prisoner to the Streets* was so popular.

We promoted the event via word of mouth among prison staff and with posters displayed on the wings and in the library. We were delighted that a representative from BACO also attended this event.

*"It was good because it was motivational. We are all inmates and all have a release date and it is good to hear about other inmates who have gone through the same journey." (Participant)*

*"Hearing these stories gives them confidence." (Staff)*



*"They all wanted to talk about it afterwards – it took them longer to get them back into their cells." (Staff)*

## Sports Reporting – 10 September 2019



Based on the focus groups at the start of the project, in which the young people told us they were interested in reading and writing about sport, we organised an event which focused on sports reporting and journalism. The event was attended by Michael Calvin, one of the UK's most accomplished sports writers, Leon Mann, a leading sports presenter and filmmaker, and chaired by Hilary Ineomo-Marcus, who trained with National Prison Radio and now hosts his own NPR and BBC radio shows.

The event was attended by numerous staff members and young people who had been selected because of their involvement with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

*"I found the talk to be motivational for when I leave prison. I've learned that as long as I have a drive and passion I should go for it."*  
(Young person via feedback form)

*"I thought it was very interesting. They had a lot to talk about and opened my eyes to other opportunities."* (Young person via feedback form)

Based on our experience from the previous two events, and following conversations with key staff, we decided that the best way to capture honest feedback from the young people was to set aside time at the end of the event for them to fill out feedback forms. This was really insightful and will be adopted for all events going forward, where possible. Feedback told us that:

- **Nine** of the 11 attendees took away a book at the end of the event
- **Six** attendees (55%) said the event encouraged them to read more
- **Five** attendees (45%) said it encouraged them to write more

*"I found it very insightful. It was interesting to hear about their personal experiences with big stars."*  
(Young person via feedback form)

## Media coverage

We are delighted to have secured positive media coverage of our events in the Bucks Herald. Both the panel event and the sports reporting event were featured in dedicated articles which spoke about the power of reading and writing for people in custody. Senior staff at the prison were particularly pleased with this coverage as HMP Aylesbury has typically received negative attention in the media in the local community.



## The Bucks Herald

Our comms team have built up a good working relationship with the media team at the Ministry of Justice and have put procedures in place to ensure that our press releases are approved without delay following events. They have been informed of timescales for upcoming events in year two.

## Other programme activity

### Partnership with Staffordshire University

We have partnered with the Cartoon and Comic Arts MA students at Staffordshire University to create a bespoke comic book full of creative writing produced by the young men at HYMYOI Aylesbury, as well as some pieces from Medway Secure Training Centre.

In return for their writing, participants at the prison received a copy of a popular manga title to keep. The final product will be professionally printed and sent to the participating young people ahead of their family celebration day in December.



## Encouraging creative writing

We have used the author events to encourage the young people to tell their own stories via creative writing. Following the panel event and the sports reporting event we handed out writing sheets which featured hints and tips for getting started.

Hachette have offered to read any writing the young people would like to submit and offer feedback. This is something we will build on in year two of the programme, when the reading groups are established.



## Health and wellbeing day

We attended the prison's first health and wellbeing day in September in order to promote New Chapters events among young people and staff.

We met with each wing in turn and spoke to the majority of residents on each one, raising the profile of the events and the wing libraries. We also spoke to the young people about our work with Staffordshire University and received some creative writing submissions on the day.

We used the day as an opportunity to speak to staff about the events, inviting them to promote them on the wing and to come along and attend themselves. Feedback from staff who had already attended events was incredibly positive. We also spoke with the librarians about ways they can become more involved in the programme.

## Conclusion

The first year of New Chapters in HMP Aylesbury has been a real success despite operating under challenging circumstances. We have built strong relationships with key staff in the education team and in the library, and secured the support of numerous publishers and authors. Feedback from the young people indicates that they are finding the events interesting and inspiring, and are encouraging them to read and write more.

Based on feedback about what kinds of people they would most like to hear from, we will focus on securing author visits from people with lived experience of the criminal justice system; participants have said that they are more inspired by people who have been in their situation and turned their lives around.

We are hugely grateful to the Rothschild Foundation for their support in making this programme possible, and for their understanding about the unpredictability of delivering work in custodial settings.