



**HEADQUARTERS**  
One Lochside  
1 Lochside Avenue  
Edinburgh  
EH12 9DJ

**Our Ref:** HQ24016

06 May 2024

Dear

Thank you for your request dated 16 April 2024 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

For reference, you requested.

**RFI 1:** *“If the SPS had any material / information of what courses are either available, or even compulsory for the prisoners to undertake while in custody. Any information that would give me a rundown on the lessons / activities would be great.”*

We have now completed our search for the information you requested.

**RFI 1 Response:** There is a wide variety of lessons/activities that individuals in our care can access. The learning provision across all Scottish Prison Service (SPS) sites is delivered by a singular contracted provider, Fife College, having been awarded the national contract in August 2017.

On admission to an establishment, individuals in our care are invited to the respective learning centre to engage in a screening process. This identifies the persons existing literacy and numeracy levels. The individual will be offered literacy and numeracy lessons to support their development in these areas. In addition, there are sessions available in subjects such as therapeutic arts, history, music as well as the opportunity to study for their driving theory test. Individuals in our care also have the opportunity to apply for any Open University course and this may ultimately lead to a degree. However, such opportunities are restricted as these courses are funded separately by the SPS.

The example below shows what is offered to HMP Barlinnie by Fife College:

**Available Curriculum:** We deliver a range of subjects including:

- Core skills ICT,
- Numeracy,
- Communications,
- Modern Studies,
- History,
- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages),
- Art,

- Maths,
- English,
- As well as project-based learning,
- distance learning through Dumfries & Galloway, and
- Self-improvement courses such as volunteering and personal development and open university placements.

Individuals in our care have access to a range of courses ranging from introductory level through to Highers, with pathways to HNCs, HNDs and Degrees. Across all establishments there is on average 41,046 prisoner learning hours (PLH) per month on Literacy and 5,713 Numeracy. There is 561 PLH per month on distance learning and 3442 PLH on SQA courses.

The SPS also funds approximately 38 individuals in custody a year to undertake an Open University course at any level.

Attendance and engagement with learning is voluntary but the SPS encourages all individuals to attend to enhance their communication skills, improve confidence and self-esteem and develop critical thinking skills.

As it is a person-centred approach there is also 1:1 tuition available and support mechanisms in place for individuals with Learning Needs and Disabilities.

This concludes our response to your request.

If you are unhappy with this response to your request, you may ask us to conduct an internal review, by writing to The Chief Executive, One Lochside, 1 Lochside Avenue, Edinburgh, EH12 9DJ. Your request should explain why you wish a review to be conducted and should be made within forty working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within twenty working days of receipt. If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL