

Female prisoners at HMP Low Newton prison work alongside Amey to learn new skills prior to their release

3 years ago



Making sure the UK's prisons are clean and well-maintained is something Amey's teams are used to doing each day as part of their role, but did you know Amey also supports the rehabilitation of prisoners directly, by providing meaningful work experience and employment support through its unique Clean, Rehabilitative, Enabling & Decent (CRED) programme?

Developed in partnership with the MOJ and HMPPS, Amey's CRED programme currently provides prisoners at 33 prisons across the country with an opportunity to undertake work placement roles alongside us, and at HMYOI Low Newton, near Durham, 10 female prisoners, over a 3-year period, have taken part, gaining new skills that will help them pursue their chosen career path after their release.

Guy Grant, Amey's Prison Services Client Lead said, "CRED was launched at HMP Low Newton in 2019, supporting women through a programme of activity and providing them with skills in areas such as painting and decorating. In addition, they've worked alongside our Amey Handyman to assemble new furniture and beds, as well as installing several noticeboards in the cells – it's been so successful that 193 cells have been refurbished so far, delivering almost 8,500 hours of purposeful prisoner activity. There are just 20 cells left before the whole prison is completed under CRED. The CRED programme has only been made possible through a collaborative approach. The joint onsite team members Diane Corr, Industries, Business & Engagement Manager HMPPS, Stuart Isherwood, Amey's Site Manager, and Mark Evans, Amey's Painter and Decorator have worked together to make the programme an outstanding success."

But CRED does so much more than provide prisoners with work experience – it gives them a voice, instils a

sense of pride, and gives them the confidence they need to make a fresh start in society:

"I enjoy being on CRED as it helps with my mental health, I feel the painting is very relaxing and my day flies by, it keeps my mind occupied."

It also raises the morale of prisoners who aren't part of the CRED programme: "My room feels like a totally different room, clean and fresh. Everything looks so much brighter, which helps me to feel more positive. Thank you to the women who worked hard to give me a room where I wake up feeling better every day."

Building on the programme's success, female prisoners who have enjoyed taking part in CRED are now able to progress their skills by working towards a vocational qualification in painting and decorating supported via the prison's education department. There are currently three women enrolled on the course, who combine classroom learning with hands-on practical experience.

Rob Young, Governor at HMP Low Newton recognises the benefits that CRED has brought to his prison, adding: "The CRED programme has been transformational for Low Newton, especially from a decency perspective. Our accommodation and general décor is of a high standard. In addition to this, because the work is undertaken by the women, I believe the general population and peer group respect and take pride in the changes. Levels of vandalism and graffiti have reduced. The sense of achievement by the CRED team is clear to see, their motivation could not be demonstrated more than during Covid restrictions where we were able to continue, although in limited numbers, the excellent work. The Amey team can take great pride in what has been achieved."