



The Coracle Inside Story





Together, we can reimagine prison education and improve lives.

The journey so far..



I stumbled into prisons whilst I was working with isolated learners in the shipping industry, and it led me to explore other environments where learning is restricted, or even denied. And you can't get a more restrictive environment than prison. But by working with prisoners, I have seen that prisons have the potential to be places of opportunity, discovery, and hope. It just needs a little courage to do things differently and reimagine our systems of education and rehabilitation.

That's what I've tried to do with the incredible team at Coracle. For the last few years, we have been on a mission to make sure no-one is isolated from learning. It hasn't always been easy. Sometimes it can feel easier to patch-up a broken system rather than change it. But from my very first prison visit, I knew that we needed the courage to take a new approach.

What you will learn in this brief introduction to Coracle is that, in everything we do, we put learners at the heart. Our goal is to help people leave prison with the right digital skills and self-belief to they can successfully connect with supportive communities and gain control of their lives. The only way we can do this is by listening to them, guiding them, and empowering them with life skills.

By creating new opportunities for individuals, we can drive significant change in our society. If we can continue to help more prisoners, then we can start to transform systems. So thank you for taking time to learn more about Coracle. We hope what you read here will encourage you to work with us.

Together, we can reimagine prison education and improve lives.

James Tweed

Founder and CEO, Coracle Inside



Digital literacy is a right

We believe that no-one should be isolated from learning.

Each and every one of us should have fair and easy access to information and services in their community that can help them thrive, and our society flourish. That's why we believe that digital literacy is a right for everyone – including people in prison.

For the prisoners we work with, digital

literacy improves their lives behind the gate, and increases their chances of successful rehabilitation beyond the gate. We know that when our learners develop the digital skills they need to get a job, find a home, use public services, or access healthcare, it improves their feelings of self-worth. It gives them confidence in their abilities and increases their chances of successfully re-joining society after release.

Today, our justice system is under extreme pressure. Many prisoners aren't being encouraged to learn and the digital divide is growing, leaving prisoners to feel further excluded and at greater risk of reoffending.

We are changing that by reimagining how prisoners can access and learn new skills.

Coracle laptops operate entirely offline so are approved by Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) for unsupervised use in prisons.

We can be found in 75% of UK prisons and, currently, over 2,500 of our laptops are in the hands of prisoners who want to change their lives. We enable access to hundreds of learning modules from over 20 quality content providers including the Open University and City & Guilds. Our site support team helps with one-to-one support so users can get the most out of our devices.

It's working.

The prisoners we work with are developing new skills and getting new qualifications.

Put simply, people are becoming more engaged in learning. Our devices are improving wellbeing and supporting a better prison environment.

We know we can do more.

By collaborating with innovative content and learning partners, we can give more people a chance to live better lives, both inside and outside of prison. We want prisons to feel safer. We want prisoners to feel valued and valuable. We want to see prisoner numbers go down and social impact go up. And we believe digital literacy is at its heart.

Coracle is ultimately about second chances. It is about the belief that every person counts. Whatever experience they have had up until now, or whatever they may have done, they deserve to improve their digital literacy.

We encourage you to join us and help build digital literacy so isolated learners can reconnect with their communities, and so we can build a society where no-one is left behind.

The impact we're having

Reach & footprint

2,500+

Coracle devices in use in the UK

86

Prisons in which Coracle operates

75%

Coracle's coverage of UK prison estate

Team & profile

30

People in the Coracle team (30 Sep 23)

100+

Articles in the media in last 12 months



King's Award for Enterprise (Promoting Opportunity)

Content & support

155

Courses currently available on Coracle devices. (30 Aug 23)

20+

Content providers

236

Visits to prisons, made by Coracle's site support team, each month



I've always been interested in helping others. With Coracle, I get to help individual learners. I can find out what they love and then help them tap into their passions.

ROSS, PRISON SITE SUPPORT

Some of our stories

Ross has always had an appetite for learning and a huge capacity for sharing. He enjoyed the stories he read in English class and the problem-solving in Maths and Physics, but the structure of traditional schooling proved restrictive for his naturally curious mind. So while higher education was the natural stepping stone for many of his peers, Ross sought a different path. He turned to internet resources, podcasts, and free online modules to learn more about the world around him. "My mates call me Wikipedia," he jokes. "There are digital courses for everything. I've taken Masterclasses in so many, unrelated subjects."

Along with self-led learning, he nurtured a strong desire to make a positive impact with his life. "When people asked me what I wanted to do growing up, I said: 'Change the world.'" This passion for positive change led him to a career as a prison officer, which he

loved, and which saw him doing more than his core responsibilities. He took on the position of Learning Disabilities representative and used his good humour and natural curiosity to build trust with prisoners over shared interests such as music and sport.

Ross left the prison service in 2019, feeling very aware of the limitations around his role and the growing reoffending rates. He believed that prison should be a place that improves and transforms lives. And it is this that has led him to his current role, working within Coracle's Prison Site Support team. "With Coracle, I get to help everyone," he says. "I've got the freedom within the jail to engage with prisoners in a different way. I can spend extra time helping individual learners. I can find out what they love and match their passions to the content we offer."



When I hear some of the prisoners' stories about being excluded from education, I think I could easily have gone down that route.

YVONNE, REGIONAL TEAM LEADER

In her role as Regional Team Leader, Yvonne helps people reconnect with education. It's a cause that resonates deeply with her. Yvonne describes feeling "written off" at school in those early years but she was determined and steadily built her literacy skills, practising at home with her mum. At 16, she signed up for a chef's catering course at college. She thrived on the practical tasks and hands-on learning.

Her cookery qualifications led her to a job as a prison caterer. While she prepared food, she listened to the stories of the prisoners who were working in the kitchen beside her. It inspired Yvonne to become a prison officer. There she started to notice her own strengths as a coach and champion for her fellow students.

When Yvonne became a prison officer she was assigned to work with young offenders.

"With juveniles, it's an opportunity to catch them at a younger age, to give them hope that they don't actually have to resort to a life of crime. I wanted to show them that they are good enough to do something else, and that they can do something else."

But prison officer roles became more restricted, and Yvonne found she wasn't able to work with the prisoners so closely. "I didn't feel I was making a difference anymore," she shares. So when a former colleague got in touch about Coracle, it re-ignited Yvonne's love of nurturing the best in people.

Yvonne explains, "Coracle allows learners to pick up knowledge at their own pace and in a safe way. That's really important for prisoners. There's no added outside pressure. If you need to read something five times before it sinks in, you can read it five times." For Yvonne the most important part of her work is making sure that no one gets left behind. She says, "By putting a Coracle laptop in their hands, I'm giving them an opportunity that says: 'Actually, it doesn't have to end here. You can do something with your life.'"



The most satisfying moments for me at Coracle are when we work on a challenge together and we get there in the end. Those moments are special because it feels like we've all hammered at the nail, and it finally goes in.

DÉSIRÉ, JUNIOR DEVELOPER

As a Junior Developer at Coracle, Désiré's role of working on code intertwines with the business' overarching mission of removing isolation from learning. "At Coracle, we're helping people be released into a digital world, yet some have never even held a device before," Désiré explains. "It means we need to consider things that, to many of us, would be second nature – like how to use a trackpad to scroll down a page. Finding solutions to those kinds of challenges is a unique opportunity to have as a developer."

Misunderstandings around the benefits of devices in prisons can create challenges around getting prisoners and prison officers to engage.

Désiré believes that this can be overcome if the experience of the platform feels fun, and intuitively helps learners access the things they love. He says, "As a developer, I need to use my skill to help create a good experience."

Désiré recently had the opportunity to go into a prison for the first time and describes those face-to-face conversations with learners as "gold." He said it shone a light on how the learners were interacting with the platform. "I was able to see the devices in action; to see prisoners enjoying using the laptops and accessing the courses on them. It meant I could see for myself the massive difference we're making in their lives. And, for me, that's ultimately what I want to do with my skills."





We believe our work will be more effective and impactful if we partner with people who share our values.

Our unifying values

Here at Coracle, we are united by 3 core values.

Security

We know that we are working in one of society's most challenging environments and that we need to uphold the safety of prisoners, prison staff and our wider communities. That's why our software is secure and our people are vetted and highly trained and why we are trusted by HMPPS.



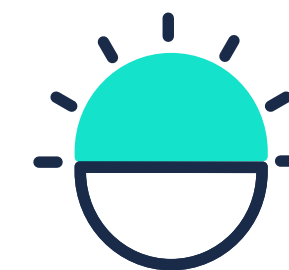
Equality

We fundamentally believe that everyone has the right to develop their digital skills, so that they can unlock opportunities and change their life for the better. Thanks to our work, learning is inclusive and no-one gets left behind. We create the same equitable opportunities within our team.



Creativity

Technology has been excluded from prisons for too long. Thanks to the creativity and innovation of our team, we have been able to reimagine education-based technology and put digital learning in the hands of prisoners.





Ways we can work together

We are always looking for collaborative and innovative partners to help us on our mission. If you believe, like us, that prisoners, isolated people, and marginalised communities should be supported through digital literacy then we would love to hear from you.

Try our service

If you are working with people at risk of digital exclusion, then our Coracle devices and service support could help. Learn more by contacting **James**.

Work with learners

We are always looking for new people to work with our learners. If you have experience of working in prisons or in education, please contact **Kathy**.

Become a content partner

We want to offer our learners diverse and engaging content. If you would like to become a content partner, please contact **Andrew**.

Help us create new technical solutions

If you are a technology provider or a developer and have innovative ideas about how we can enhance our service, then we'd love to hear from you. Please contact **Rich**.

Join our mission

Coracle is having impact and improving the lives of people every day. If our work inspires you, then we'd love to hear from you. Please contact **James**.

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