



Functional Skills Certificate

FUNCTIONAL ENGLISH

Component 1 Reading Level 2

Insert

The three sources that follow are:

- Source A: a news report about the conditions in a children's prison
- Source B: a magazine article about a mother whose son is in prison
- Source C: a webpage about a tour of Alcatraz prison in San Francisco.

**Please open the insert fully
to see all three sources**

Source A

Children in prison are being denied access to education and therapy because they are locked in their cells while teachers and social workers wait for them in empty rooms.



Cookham Wood Young Offender Institution (YOI) caters for boys aged 15–18. A report by the inspector of prisons found that there are not enough staff to ensure these young offenders are allowed out of their cells to attend teaching and counselling sessions.

Between April and June 2017, 40 per cent of planned groups had been cancelled due to poor organisation and delays in movements of prisoners.

poor

Once boys were at education the provision was “good” and the curriculum met the needs of learners. However, time out of cell was insufficient while staff shortages and unlock procedures “hindered access to important services and support”. Attendance was poor. Punctuality had improved but was still not good enough.

locked up

On average, boys spent about 19-and-a-half hours a day locked inside their cells and many were locked up for even longer.

Inspectors also found the prison had become less safe and more violent. One in four boys reported having felt unsafe – a figure which had more than doubled since the last inspection. Levels of violence and incidents of self-harm had increased.

violence

awful

The Howard League for Penal Reform campaigns to improve prisons. Its Chief Executive, Frances Crook, said: “The food was awful. Children were being given a very poor diet, so they were buying sweets and biscuits. No child is safe in Cookham Wood prison. It is shocking that boys as young as 15 are being held in such conditions.”

Campaigners said the regime was “damaging” children and accused the Government of failing to act on repeated warnings.

damaging

We cannot turn young offenders’ lives around if we can’t even keep them safe or get them out of their cells for long enough to get to classes.

Richard Burgon, MP

Boys were being locked up all day – teenagers with nothing to do, staring at bare walls for days on end.

Source B

My child is in prison...

Each time I visit my son, I feel everyone's eyes on me, as if they know where I'm heading. Past the grim Victorian gates, it's a different world for me. My handbag is searched; my possessions bundled into a small locker.



Passing through the security scanner I could be at an airport ready to embark on an exotic holiday. The full body search brings me back to reality.

Children's toys spill over in the far corner of the visitor room, reminding me of the playgroup I used to visit all those years ago with the child I'm here to see today.

The prisoners enter, dressed in tracksuits and fluorescent vests. I spot my child, 21 years old but for ever my child.

He walks towards me and I force a smile. Prison guards watch our every move. We sit down at the table and make small talk.

I ask myself how it came to this; how the son of a happy, professional, two-parent family came to be locked up in this place. He went to a good school, with siblings who are happy and doing well. As a parent, it's only human nature to blame yourself.



Despite how we brought him up, I think he would always have been attracted to risk-taking behaviour. He did what he wanted, followed his own path. We often talked to him about staying safe and legal. In his late teens, he moved away from home. His phone calls became fewer and I worried about him even more. I knew he was into the club scene; the music, the dancing and the drugs.

When the police told us he had been charged, I was shell-shocked. I'd never even walked past a prison; now my son was probably going to one. Our family felt like criminals too. I stopped being sociable and cheerful and became withdrawn and anti-social, paranoid that everybody knew. I couldn't bear the idea that people were talking behind my back.

Now, if friends ask, "How's your son?" I say "Fine" and quickly change the subject. I know friends think I've changed and will be wondering why, but I can't share this, not yet. I've moved beyond anger now. I know if I took that attitude I'd lose contact with our son completely. As a mother, that would be even more unbearable. I realise what he's done is wrong, but I need to stay in touch with him.



...which is why I visit when I can.

Source C

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END OF SOURCES

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**Open out this page to see
Source B and Source C**

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