

## Site

HMP Brixton

## Name of project / initiative

Creating Green Spaces

## Overview

We are a small Victorian prison on a highly compact site, with a single exercise yard which is concrete, and outlying areas covered with grey tarmac and brown brick. Previously, the opportunity for staff and prisoners to see any green, or signs of nature, was almost zero. Our aim was to introduce sustainable green areas benefiting prisoners and staff. Working with HMPSS sustainability, Defra and A Pond in Every Prison, we made four ponds (of varying sizes – one with a water fountain, and mini garden around it), placed planters around the establishment, where they can be seen by prisoners and staff, planted cherry blossom shrubs, and set up “mini homes” for bees, bugs and butterflies. We’re also creating a small orchard. We used recycled items (pallets and railway sleepers) involving prisoners, industries team and volunteers. Both prisoners and staff helped to set the project up, and work together to maintain it. We are also hoping that staff from other prisons can use the spaces we’ve created as part of team building activities, and help with the upkeep on their “away days”.

## Longevity

This is a long term project, which is in its infancy at present but which we see building further in the future (including the orchard which will, of course, take many years to reach fruition).

## Benefits

Nature and green space is key for mental health, so this is a benefit for staff and prisoners. Directly it is a calming benefit for the prisoners can see the greening of the space. Staff can sit and de-stress in the green spaces.

## Uniqueness

Brixton is such a compact site, there is no other prison like it, and what Victorian prison has its own mini orchard?!

## Applicability

This could be done in any establishment, however little space it has available and however little “green space” it currently has. If we can do it at Brixton, it could be done anywhere!

## Requirements

You need a small space to carry out the work, the drive of the people involved and a small budget – but beyond that there are no special requirements.

## For more information

Contact: [julie.mcgowan@justice.gov.uk](mailto:julie.mcgowan@justice.gov.uk), Head of Reducing Reoffending – HMP Brixton  
See also: [KnowX.uk/Brixton-RMT22.pdf](#) [images]

## Submitted by

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