



Pen on the Wing - Cat C inmate is given permission to purchase his own ReaderPen Secure™ Inmate Case Study

A breakthrough for individual prisoners with dyslexia:

Following participation in a ReaderPen™ study, Prisoner XX made a request to his governor to make a personal purchase of a ReaderPen™ to use in his prison cell in order to support his educational and recreational reading.

Prisoner XX used his own money to purchase the new ReaderPen Secure™. An individual risk assessment took place and after approval, the use of a ReaderPen Secure™ was approved for the prisoner's personal use.

Assistant Governor stated: "I am happy to approve the pen, I do feel they are an extremely valuable asset to support men with communication and education."



Independent reading support at any time



Clear diction, to support learning to speak English



Supports pronunciation and communication skills



Hearing words while looking at them supports development of reading skills.



Headphones provide privacy

Independent Researcher, and member of the PLA—Prisoners Learning Alliance—Christine Franklin, undertook a series of studies exploring the educational outcomes of learners in prison. The impact of the information she gathered is changing the way learners with dyslexia and other reading difficulties are supported in workshops and in prisoner education provision. Feedback gathered from Prison Governors, educators, and security teams has informed the development of a new product: the ReaderPen Secure™. This device was forged from a better understanding of security concerns around reading support technology.

The Security Manager at the prison made these comments about the value of this support measured against security assessments made:

“In my opinion, they are a valuable aid to those who cannot read. Provided the prisoner is risk assessed and the item has been put on his property card, then I don’t see it as a security concern.”

The ReaderPen Secure™ is a great alternative to human support as the device has no storage, unlike previous Scanning Pen reading aids. This difference to functionality enables the user to ensure data security. With no storage, the feedback is limited to the immediate action of scanning text and looking for dictionary definitions; the essentials for reading and decoding.

Scanning Pens have listened carefully to HMPPS service providers to help ensure that all the features needed to support use within prisons have been included. The ReaderPen Secure™ includes an EXAM LOCK function. This enables prisoners to take tests that are compliant with JCQ guidelines for support. They would not have any unfair advantage of using the pen’s dictionary definitions and would still be able to have the equality of access that reading support provides.

Pen on The Wing—The voice of the man in his cell:

We asked a prison resident what he would use his ReaderPen Secure™ for after making a request to his Prison Governor to purchase his own pen. His answers were clear and supported his desire for rehabilitation and learning independence:

“Helping to gain the knowledge to pass my functional skills English exam”
“Reading legal typed correspondence relating to my case”
“Reading for enjoyment and pleasure”

ESOL Prisoner

The ReaderPen Secure™ has the potential to support foreign nationals learning to communicate. The device supports pronunciation practice by reading back any scanned words as many times as needed to learn a sound and word shape. It is estimated that it takes around ten exposures to a new word to embed it into your vocabulary. The ReaderPen Secure™ gives the opportunity for this exposure through repetition and context that helps build new language learning.

“When I am reading, and I get stuck, I can use this magic pen; I can scan the word and I am no longer stuck. The pen tells me how to pronounce the word properly and then tells me exactly what it means. It is very good, very helpful, and very easy to use.”

