



B Lab Statement on Coracle Online Ltd's B Corp Certification

B Lab and its independent Standards Advisory Council have determined that companies operating in the prison industry are ineligible for B Corp certification. In addition, companies in the U.S. and Canada who sell to prisons, including companies that use prison labor, are placed under an indefinite certification moratorium and are not eligible for B Corp Certification.

B Lab and its independent Standards Advisory Council have determined that, outside of the U.S. and Canada, companies selling to the prison industry, including companies using prison labor, are eligible for B Corp Certification if they have not engaged in specific prohibited practices in the last five years AND are meeting additional industry specific practice requirements. For more information on the specific requirements, please refer to B Lab's position statement [here](#).

The following questions will be used to evaluate whether your company must meet the industry specific requirements for companies selling to the prison industry to be eligible for B Corp Certification, as well as provide an initial indication whether your company is likely to be meeting them. Please feel free to add your responses directly to this document.

Depending on your company's responses, B Lab may request additional information and/or require a decision by B Lab's independent Standards Advisory Council to determine your eligibility.

Summary of Company

Coracle Online is a UK based company that sells digital learning services. The company is currently procured by the [Ministry of Justice \(MoJ\)](#) and [His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services \(HMPPS\)](#) and are currently contracted to provide digital learning devices (offline laptops and tablets) for educational use by prisoners through a program called [Coracle Inside](#). As of March 2025, Coracle online operates in 93 prisons, representing over 90% of the prison estate across England and Wales.

The intention behind this project is to help prison-based learners to access education, increase skills, and support their personal development. In 2023 the company was awarded [The King's Award for Enterprise-](#) Promoting Opportunity for their work in this area. The company does not use prison labor.

Prohibited Practices

Companies selling to the prison industry, including companies using prison labor, that have engaged in the following practices in the last five years, as demonstrated through company



disclosures or through material, justified, and unresolved stakeholder concerns, are currently ineligible for B Corp Certification:

- *Companies that contribute to the construction of new prisons or supply products and/or services designed to restrain or subdue people who are incarcerated, inflict harm or potentially used to inflict harm on people in prisons or other individuals, etc. are currently ineligible for B Corp Certification.*
- *Companies engaged in any form of lobbying or policy advocacy that directly or indirectly support mass, or increasing rates of, incarceration or prevent reform attempts to reduce incarceration. This includes membership, Board involvement, or funding of industry associations that engage in such lobbying activities.*
- *Companies with material, justified, and unresolved complaints about product quality, product price and/or work conditions for people in prisons.*

Coracle does not engage in any form of lobbying or policy advocacy that directly or indirectly support mass, or increasing rates of, incarceration or prevent reform attempts to reduce incarceration. The company does not have any material, justified, and unresolved complaints about product quality, product price and/or work conditions for people in prisons. The company does not contribute to the construction of new prisons or supply products and/or services designed to restrain or subdue people who are incarcerated, inflict harm or potentially used to inflict harm on people in prisons or other individuals.

Required Best Practices - Companies Selling to the Prison Industry, Including Companies Using Prison Labor

In order to be eligible, companies selling to the prison industry, including companies using prison labor, must be able to demonstrate that they have the following practices in place and disclose them on their B Corp Profile:

1. *A transparent mechanism to measure the impact of its products, services, policies and/or activities on reducing recidivism and outcomes for people in prisons and proof of positive impact deemed rigorous as a result of, for example, third party assessment and/or existing primary research.*

While the company makes no direct claims relating to reducing recidivism, they monitor device allocation and usage data to be able to track levels of engagement. By providing the means for user generated certificates to be created, they are able to monitor educational outcomes. This data is provided to the prison service for further analysis. Between 2017 to 2021, 3355 individuals who participated in Coracle inside



went on to reach NVQ Levels 1-3, 620 reached NVQ level 4 and above, 250 entered to further education and 250 entered to higher education. The company is working with the UK Ministry of Justice on a continuous process of outcome evaluation and to have an updated data set. This information was independently verified data as part of the process of the company's King's Award Enterprise award application in 2023.

In addition, [His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons \(HMIP\)](#) is increasingly asking prisoners about their use of laptops and is looking to assess how digital learning is supporting purposeful activity. As Coracle Online's contract utilizes public funding, they provide transparency around value for money, based on outcomes and impact for people in prison accessing digital educational resources. They support their data with qualitative research and capture testimonials and case stories from prison learners to help capture and evidence positive impacts of digital learning in prison. As a team, Coracle Online have invested in a data analyst to continue to build on these initial metrics and improve their social impact evaluation.

Coracle Online works with partners, such as universities, who have conducted a number of independent studies on how digital education contributes to reducing recidivism. In an evaluation report called "The development of accredited digital higher education distance learning opportunities for prisoners" from Nottingham Trent University (Spring 2024) the following third party research is identified:

- Evidence that people in prison who engage in prison education can:
 - Enhance their cultural and economic capital;
 - Increase their economic opportunities, and;
 - Demonstrate positive engagement in rehabilitative objectives ([Armstrong & Ludlow 2026](#); [Behan, 2014](#), [Costelloe, 2024](#), [O'Grady & Hamilton, 2019](#)).
- For prisoners who participate in higher education, the net benefits increase further, with estimates that reoffending rates fall by between 20-40% (PRT 2021; [Brown & Bloom, 2018](#)).
- Engaging in higher education has been found to increase a prisoner's chances of employment, encourage active citizenship and desistance from crime, and improve wellbeing- both during and after their sentence.
- Although there is a growing evidence base (Champion & Edgar, 2013; Coates 2016) to support the implementation of information technologies in prisons for the purposes of education (amongst other things), there currently appears to be limited knowledge, understanding, or indeed consensus about:
 - What technology currently exists that can be utilised to deliver higher education distance learning in prisons;
 - How to deliver high-quality higher education distance learning programmes for prisoners and what they might look like (outcomes, progression, qualifications) or;



- How such an offer might be operationalised: funding, marketing, recruitment, delivery, support, assessments.
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The Primary research revealed in the evaluation carried out by Trent University includes:

- Providing prisoners with professional, accredited digital, higher education learning opportunities, supported with the appropriate digital tools and infrastructure necessary for effective independent study, could help to bolster an open, learning culture across the prison estate.
- The findings from this evaluation project will enable prisons and higher education institutions to create similar tailored products, further contributing to the transformational potential of the educational landscape in prisons through partnerships.

2. *A public stance against mass, or increasing rates of, incarceration and other material issues related to the prison industry, approved by the highest level of governance (e.g., Board of Directors) within the company, and a commitment to making efforts towards collective action and/or engagement with stakeholders, focused on improving how people who are incarcerated are viewed and treated before, during and after incarceration.*

In alignment with the requirements and principles stated in B Lab's position statement for companies supplying to prisons, Coracle Online has the following philosophy with regards to mass incarceration, collective action and government affairs. The philosophy statement reads as follows:

Coracle Online has a public stance against mass incarceration or rising incarceration rates and other material issues related to the prison industry. This position is approved by the highest level of government within the company (Management Committee). In addition, we are committed to make efforts towards stakeholders, focusing on improving the way that people who are incarcerated are seen and treated before, during and after imprisonment.

Likewise, Coracle Online does not participate in any forum, lobby, business association nor promotes mass incarceration of the population.

In addition, Coracle online has the following mission on their website:

"We believe digital literacy is a right for everyone. We know that if we can put the right learning in the hands of prisoners, we will improve their chances of rehabilitation, and build safer societies inside and outside of prisons. That's why we're on a mission to create a world where no-one is isolated from learning. If we are going to close the digital divide that is standing in the way of opportunity, we need to find new ways to help people learn and empower them to



change. That's why we have developed the technology, systems and services that can support these isolated learners and put educational content in their hands"

- 3. Public disclosure detailing the company's approach to government affairs, inclusive of lobbying/advocacy and political activities. This should include disclosure of the material issues that the company lobbies/advocates for, their trade associations, and the controls they have in place in regards to political contributions, lobbying/advocacy on the company's behalf, revolving door policy, political contributions and donations.*

Coracle Online is not a member of any trade associations nor do they make or allow any political contributions or donations. The company does not engage in lobbying, however, they do engage with the Minister of State for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending (Prisons Minister) and civil servants to promote the concept of access to education. This is done through letters and responses to calls for evidence from parliament, should they occur.

The company has shared that they believe that a key element for change in the sector is digital literacy and the company is proud to be able to deliver this without compromising security. As such, they use their communications platforms to advocate for access to safe and effective learning for all prisoners. The company and founder and CEO, James Tweed, are [frequently quoted in the mainstream press](#) (including the BBC, The Times, Guardian, Thomson-Reuteurs, and Bloomberg, [see example here](#)). They seek to make the case that funding for access to education would be more effective than increasing prison capacity. Coracle Online is also often invited to speak at national education conferences and join discussions around improving conditions for prisoners and their families.

- 4. Policies and practices to address the concerns of mass, or increasing rates of, incarceration and the prison industry in other aspects of its operations, including its charitable efforts, fair chance hiring practices, customer screenings, affected stakeholders incorporated in governance structure, etc.*

Coracle Online has shared that [more than 200,000 children in the UK have a parent in prison](#). As well as working directly with prison learners through Coracle Inside, the company is a founding partner of Rebooted, a charity that recycles unwanted laptops and repurposes them so family members can reconnect to relatives in prison, improve their digital literacy and create new opportunities for themselves.

Within their team, Coracle Online has clear Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and recruitment policies in place that remove any bias from the selection of potential employees with criminal records. The company is also exploring the idea of bringing more



lived experience into their team, by inviting Coracle learners, on leaving prison, to become part of an alumni or advisory board so that Coracle products and services can continue to evolve and meet the changing needs of individuals in prison.

Required Best Practices - Companies Selling to the Prison Industry

1. *The company can prove that its products/services reduce recidivism and/or produce positive outcomes for people during and/or after incarceration. For example,*
 - a. *The company delivers training/skills building services proven to increase rates of employment after incarceration, or*
 - b. *The company supplies products or services that meet the basic needs that can be proven to increase the health and wellbeing of people who are incarcerated while in prisons (e.g. food, clothing, healthcare, entertainment, maintenance, etc. that are better options than otherwise available).*

The company has proof of how the provision of laptops can increase access to learning opportunities and reduce recidivism. Although the company claims to work towards reducing recidivism, they do not make direct claims in relation to this. They have shared initial data showing high levels of engagement with their learning content along with qualitative testimonials and stories of prison learners who have improved their knowledge, skills, mental health and behaviours through their digital learning devices and support services.

2. *For companies that charge people who are incarcerated and/or individuals acting on their behalf for products/services, the company can prove that its products/services are affordable for people in prison.*
 - a. *For example, a basic version of the products or services (meeting basic quality and safety standards) are offered at a price proportionate to the income available to people who are incarcerated.*

Coracle Online is contracted by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS) and do not charge people for using their devices, they are able to use and benefit from the products for free.

3. *The company maintains a transparent quality assurance system that includes direct and private feedback from affected people and where possible, takes action based on the feedback.*

All Coracle Online products and services are supplied to prison-based learners for free, under contract from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Services (HMPPS). With regards to feedback, all learners have the ability to give direct feedback via the platform on the secure, offline devices. Individual feedback is logged with any follow up



actions by the company's in-house development team. This helps to drive continuous improvements to the Coracle Online learning platform.