

# YCG provides digital access to Hardman Awards

Your Consultation Group (YCG) and The Hardman Trust have joined forces to provide access to training grants through YCG's digital platform. In a first for the criminal justice system, from June 2023 serving prisoners and prison leavers will be able to apply for Hardman Awards using a digital application process. This innovation will enable wider access to the prestigious awards which support successful reintegration into society through upskilling and personal development. The new functionality is intended to pave the way for other providers to make their grants process available digitally as the prison estate improves access to technology.

Hardman Award applications are currently paper-based and require the support of local prison staff to support the process. Whilst availability is very good in many institutions, digital access will make it easier for prisoners to access grants available via The Hardman Trust.

Access will now also be available on YCG's Prisons Digital Hub. The process will support efficiencies in the processing of applications for grant awards, reducing the cost to The Hardman Trust of processing awards.



**Hardman Trust CEO Kerryn Wotton (above)** commented: "We are working to make it easier for people on long sentences to engage with the Hardman Award scheme. We're excited to partner with YCG to enable more people to apply to us directly through their digital platform. We are grateful for YCG's technical expertise to make this happen. This development will enable people in prison to have a seamless experience of the

Hardman Awards. As digital solutions emerge in prisons, we're committed to growing our work. We're grateful to YCG for offering their skills and platform at the start of our digital journey.

The Hardman Trust supports people on long term sentences to take their next steps in life. We support each person to plan for their life after prison, providing practical support and up to £1,000 to turn that plan into a reality. This money can go towards buying tools for work, a laptop for university, or the cost of a training programme. Recent support has been given for business start-ups such as a laptop and printer; tools for many different trades; work clothing; support costs for academic courses; HGV and LGV training; forklift and dumper truck training and many other vocational courses from working at heights to dog grooming. We are currently developing the support we offer people on long sentences and look forward to updating you about our plans soon.



**Dr Darryl Brock, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of YCG Charity Trust (above)** commented: "We are committed to helping those who need support with their next steps and applaud the work of The Hardman Trust in pioneering new routes for access by serving prisoners to grant support.

"City & Guilds identifies that upskilling through vocational training can increase employability by up to 89% so grants to support training and the development of soft skills are essential resources for prisoners nearing release. YCG is committed to ensuring learners have increased availability of funding to support high quality development and take responsibility for their sentence planning and progression.

"The application process sets out the eligibility criteria for each type of support, so all applications will meet the identified criteria. We are delighted that funding for educational, vocational, and soft skills training will now be accessible through The Hardman Trust on our platform.

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"Our digital platform has been specifically designed for the prison estate so that it can be adopted by individual governors as it is technically compatible with all the existing platforms approved by HMPPS. Applicants who do not have direct access to digital services, or who need support with a grant application, can access our digital platform with the assistance of an HMPPS member of staff or with the assistance of a YCG Caseworker.

"Under this partnership, YCG will fund all the development costs of digital onboarding of The Hardman Trust application process and provide applicant support via its team of YCG Caseworkers. The Hardman Trust will, in turn, support applications by YCG Caseworkers for peer mentoring and essential soft skills training which will directly lead to employment on release as community caseworkers."

**Editor's note to HMPPS staff:** Access to the Prisons Digital Hub is obtained at [www.ycgcareers.com/hardmantrust](http://www.ycgcareers.com/hardmantrust)