

“Breaking the cycle of re-offending”

Project Progress Report -Year 2

September 2011—August 2012

**Citizens Advice
& Law Centre**

ACCESS²ADVICE

**J PAUL GETTY JNR
CHARITABLE TRUST**

Meeting our Targets

The breaking the cycle of re-offending programme has continued to meet and in some cases exceed its quantitative delivery targets in this second year of your three year funding award.

For this second year we have exceeded the targets we laid out in our work plan. This work plan described how we would recruit up to 18 prisoners in a 26 week programme twice in the year. Our records show that we have in fact recruited 20 prisoners in the first programme and 24 in the second. This means that the attendance on the programme in the second year has risen to a total of 44 participating prisoners which represents a 17% increase in our target.

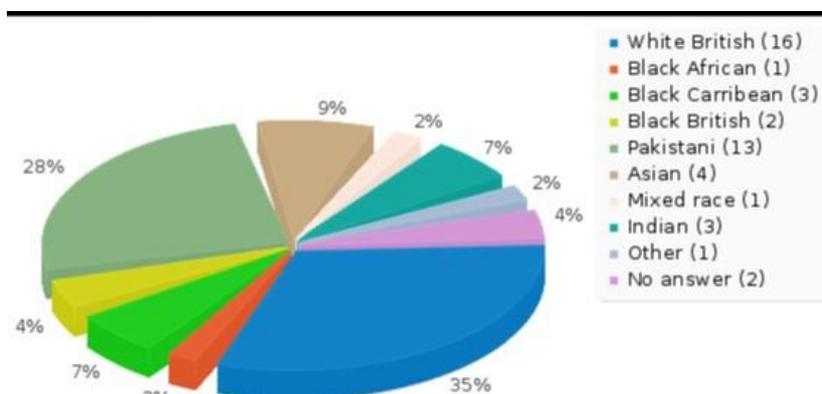
Focused recruitment

This recruitment drive has taken place in tandem with the prison professionals at HMP Sudbury. This partnership working has enabled us to focus on individual prisoners who, according to national statistics, show the least likelihood of quickly finding paid work upon release. The main barriers for quickly finding paid work are;

- **Lack of skills**
- **Age**
- **Ethnicity**
- **Isolation due to long term prison sentence**

This has led us to make more places available to prisoners who face at least 2 of these for 4 barriers. We know we are achieving this as the average age of our participants has increased by 11% to 41 years old and the average length of their prison sentence is now 7 years compared to 4 years prior to the targeted recruitment taking place.

Furthermore, our graph shows we have also monitored our recruitment work to ensure that we surmount the barriers of ethnicity when recruiting which means a fairness and equality of opportunity



for participants.

In respect of our key aim of supporting prisoners into paid work we continue to measure this through quantitative and qualitative questionnaires completed by all prisoners during 3 separate key points of the programme journey namely; on entry, at an interim stage some 9 weeks through their programme and when they leave.

This 3 point survey method has proven a useful tool for both problem noticing prior to remedial action and ensuring we are meeting our quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Our year 2 surveying tells us that:

- **72% left to start full time paid employment after less than 5 interviews**
- **everybody on the programme was actively seeking work**
- **75% believe the programme helped a lot in getting prepared for work**

Training Improvements

Our trainer in conjunction with prison professionals and prisoner participants has evaluated our 3 current training schemes using the evidence gleaned from our first year activities. This shows that when we measure the effectiveness of the training based on both the feedback from participants and the success of finding work we find that they remain effective.

Our training schemes are

- **Data Input**
- **Office and Client Administration**
- **Gateway Assessment for clients**

This knowledge has led to us consulting with participants at the end of each phase of their training This feedback has proved to be an essential tool in developing a belief within those participating prisoners that their commitment was rewarded which has led to an increase in their self-esteem which, in turn has benefited the whole programme through word of mouth referrals during the recruitment process. Our questioning shows that:

- **91% of participants believe they will have work within 6 months of leaving the programme**
- **most leave the programme with better computer skills**
- **everybody leaves feeling very comfortable talking with colleagues in the workplace**

New Training

This year, our training portfolio has been widened with the introduction of training for participants to become Telephone Agents. The understanding of the need for this skill has emerged from our work as a 'trusted placement agency' who regularly supports trained prisoners into paid work. The feedback from partners in the Voluntary Sector has highlighted the lack of opportunity to meet their need for trained Telephone Agents.

As our organisation had already invested in improvements to our telephone package this has allowed us to invest in a training module that mirrors the 'look and feel' of most modern packages that support telephone advice in the commercial sector. We have now added this training opportunity for prisoner participants. This element in our rehabilitation package is going well and proving a popular choice for participants. Our records show that to date:

- **From the 7 participants who have completed their training as Telephone Agents 4 have gained paid work using the skills learnt of the course**
- **91% of participants complete this element of the training programme feeling comfortable when dealing with advice giving on the telephone.**

Telephone Agent training will continue to form part of the programme and we will monitor the results from this addition as closely as the other training elements.

Reaching a wider audience...

Recently, our project featured in a 'good practice guidelines' publication that has been created by Citizens Advice to promote the opportunities for organisations who wish to share our success. This has led to an increase in interest from Bureaux who have a Category D prison within their catchment area. Our contribution was to provide decision makers from the Bureau and the National Offender Management Service practical examples of how our project can benefit participants, service users and the wider Voluntary Sector in 'Breaking the cycle of Re-

offending. We plan to contribute to widening the reach of our type of project..

We have agreed to contribute to a seminar on this subject which is to be held in October and intend to use prisoners participants to share their story.

Real life story...

Our prisoner participants come from all walks of life and find themselves in prison for a variety of reasons. As described, during this second year, we are using the experience gained to ensure that we challenge ourselves with positive recruitment techniques and the adoption of 'learning styles questioning' to ensure that we recruit those who most need help in the rehabilitation cycle rather

than those who we would find it easier to help. To illustrate this we have included part of response from a prisoner who completed his exit questionnaire.

my name is Greg
I was convicted of a serious crime after
emigrating to Australia in 2000
my sentence was to serve a minimum of 14 years.
After serving 7 years I was repatriated on
a government scheme to a UK prison and
I started work on the JPG Project in
January and when I started I had lost most of
my skills and confidence - this project
has done wonders for me and I have
just started paid work for our local
housing shelter. - they have also helped
me to arrange a flat as I am released
in October.
Thanks to all at CALC who have
help me turn around my life

JPG Exit Q page 3 section 2

Snapshot from our Exit Surveys during project year 2:

- **89% felt they were given every possible opportunity and used it to the full**

- **31% would have liked to have had the opportunity to continue working at CA&LC**
- **27% particularly appreciated the opportunity to give back to the community and help people in need a further 25% especially highlighted the pleasure of working with positive people**

What people attending the programme most valued from their training:

- **Self development**
- **Training as an Advisor**
- **Improving communication skills during telephone advice**
- **Changing the way I think and act**
- **Getting a certificate**
- **Working with good people who give you the chance to change**
- **79% did not want to leave the programme**
- **17% left the programme as fully qualified GA**
- **92% gained at least 1 certification whilst working on the programme**
- **everybody made more than 3 new friends who were not serving prisoners whilst volunteering on the programme**
- **most enjoyed helping people with their problems**
- **everybody helped coach and mentor other people joining the programme**
- **For most their primary goal is to get and keep paid work**