

“Breaking the cycle of re-offending”

Project Progress Report -Year

Final Year

September 2012—August 2013

**Citizens Advice
& Law Centre**

ACCESS²ADVICE

**J PAUL GETTY JNR
CHARITABLE TRUST**

Meeting our Targets

The breaking the cycle of re-offending programme has not only used this final year to meet quantitative delivery targets but also importantly, to plan for the sustainability of the project. During this final year of the project we have, once again, 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 19 prisoners in the first programme and 22 in the second. This means that the attendance on the programme in the second year has achieved a total of 41 participating prisoners.

Recruitment based on Prison Population

We have continued to collaborate with the prison professionals by including in our recruitment process evidence of ethnicity trends collected at HMP Sudbury using their Offender Assessment System which is called OASys. This collaboration has assisted us to focus on individual prisoners who, according to OASys show the offenders with the lowest probability of quickly finding paid work upon release. The main barriers to work we have confronted are;

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

This has led us to develop our selection criteria and ensure the majority of places are made available to prisoners who face at least 2 of these for 3 main barriers to work. We know we are achieving this as the average age of our participants has increased to 44 years of age and the average length of their prison sentence is now 8 years compared to 7 years in our second year programme.

As in our second year programme we measure the achievement of our aim of supporting prisoners into paid work through quantitative and qualitative questionnaires completed by all prisoners during 3 separate key points of the programme journey; on entry, at an interim stage some 9 weeks through their programme and when they leave.

This 3 point survey method has continued to be a tool for both problem noticing prior to remedial action and ensuring we are meeting our outcomes. Our year final year surveying tells us that:

- **68% left to start full time paid employment after less than 5 interviews**
- **everybody on the programme was actively seeking work**
- **83% believe the programme helped a lot in getting prepared for work**

Our final year surveying tells us that the number of participants that left the programme to start full time paid employment has reduced from 72% in the second year to 68% in this final year. Following our discussions with staff, prison professionals and participants this reduction can be attributed to our policy of recruiting more challenging participants from the prison population.

Training Outcomes

We consider that one of the best ways to show our work (and your funding) has been effective is through 'storyboards' and case studies. Our trainer uses this evidence not only in his internal progress reports but also as a tool to enthuse new starters on the project and as a practical way to demonstrate to participants the value of their opportunities for reintegration through this project. To emphasise this we have used the picture, which featured on the front cover of our year 2 report, showing three of the successful participants achieving their certifications . We have mapped their progress during the first six months of their release. This mapping shows that;

Participant A

Completed his course and found a job prior to his release date which attended under the day release scheme working as a warehouse clerk. He commented "The data inputting skills I learnt on the course provided me with the skills to get and keep this job". He now has moved back into the family home and continues to work in the warehouse.

Participant B

Due to the nature of his conviction Participant B was ineligible for the prison's day release work programme. However, following his release he took a job as an office cleaner and has now returned back to his family in Cheshire. He has also transferred to his local branch of the national cleaning company he works for and remains employed and has gone back to living with his parents.

Participant C

Attended our programme under the released on temporary licence scheme (RoTL). He had held down quite a demanding job prior to his sentence. This allowed him to complete our training programme early and to go on to become accredited as a Session Supervisor through the Citizens Advice training scheme. Following his release he became a Volunteer advisor in his home town. However, he soon realised that he had begun frequenting with the same people who he had been friends with prior to being arrested. With this in mind he has moved to another geographic area and has gained employment as a telephone help agent for a national charity.

These story board illustrations have consistently influenced our rehabilitation work. The use of positive outcomes and descriptions of prior success are used across all project stakeholders. This means that new participants are encouraged to equal the positive achievements of their peers, project staff and those who work on a daily basis in the workplace with participants can visualize the impact of their contributions and these positive descriptions are regularly used by the prison professionals to communicate their rehabilitation work with their peers across the prison networks.

Social Impact Reporting

As part of this three year project we have consistently collected evidence on our progress. This evidence has underpinned any changes we have made to delivery. The collected evidence has contributed to our project evaluation. From this evaluation two pieces of work have emerged. First, we have used the information gathered from participants and the in-house specialisms in our Welfare Rights team to measure the impact our work achieves. To measure this impact we have used a Social Return on Investment model provided by the New Economics Foundation. This report clearly shows the impact of our work when measured quantitatively and financially. Secondly, we have used the qualitative reporting through

questionnaires and interviews with participants to build a sound understanding of the detailed processes of rehabilitation. This understanding of our work has led us to contribute to the 'reoffending debate' and allowed us to guide other organisations in their rehabilitation journey. The culmination of this understanding has been to see one of our contributions defining risks for the Third Sector published in the British Journal of Community Justice.

Sustainability

We continue to be grateful to your organisation for your support programme that has underpinned our project journey during this last three years. We have undoubtedly learnt a lot and positioned our organisation as one of the leaders nationally in this type of rehabilitative work. Our goal, during the past eighteen months has to be to ensure that our work can continue following the planned conclusion of your support. We are delighted to be able to report that we have been successful in our search for continued financial support. In October 2013 we received confirmation from the Big Lottery Fund that they would support this project for a further three years under their Reaching Communities funding theme.

Integral to them providing support was the description of our desire to embrace the new Ministry of Justice proposals for rehabilitation both within prisons and within the Probation Service. As part of this national reworking the ministry is looking to introduce a *Payment by Results* approach. This new approach to national funding for rehabilitation is untried and is less than universally popular within our sector. However, we consider that the learning and understanding that has directly emerged from your funded project support has also provided us with tools to be successful within this *quasi* commercial arena. Success in based on these new proposals will provide the sustainability theme after the life of Big Funding.

In closing this report we would all wish to express our thanks to the foundation for their support during this partnership—Thank You

Bob Clark
Citizens Advice & Law Centre