Awards 2011: Shortlisted entries

The PrisonerActionNet Awards - presented by Lemos&Crane working with The Monument Trust - recognise outstanding services that have generated positive outcomes for prisoners and ex-offenders in one or more of the following three areas:

1. **Identity**: supporting prisoners' and offenders' sense of personal identity (for example, through visual arts; writing; music and drama; learning and study; spirituality and belief; nature and environment)

2. **Independence**: prisoners' and ex-offenders' sense of independence (for example, generated through numeracy and literacy; employability; finding work; money management; health and well-being; housing)

3. **Relationships**: offenders' relationships with other people (family and lasting relationships; parenting; peer mentoring; volunteering; and restorative justice)

Over 70 high-quality entries have been received from a wide range of organisations working with prisoners in custody or with ex-offenders in the community.

In the following pages you can read the entries of the 21 shortlisted projects. You can also vote on the best examples at [www.lemosandcrane.co.uk](http://www.lemosandcrane.co.uk). The winner and runners-up will be announced on Tuesday, 1 November 2011.
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Organisation: **Access to Industry**  
Project Name: **Passport**

Describe your project in one sentence:  
Passport provides through the gate support for prison leavers in Polmont YOI and HMP Edinburgh helping them to turn their lives around moving away from offending behaviour and into work and education.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):  
Prisons- HMP Edinburgh for adult offenders (Male and female) and Polmont YOI for young offenders returning to Edinburgh and Glasgow

What are the project’s objectives:  
Passport exists to support prison leavers in their reintegration back into their communities. The project provides a dedicated through-care service aiming to:  
- Promote achievement within prison-linking into activities, providing 1:1 and group based opportunities  
- Promote educational attainment and address literacy and numeracy issues- all work completed with Passport leads to SQA accredited modules through partner colleges Jewel and Esk Valley and Carnegie College  
- Reduce re-offending by engaging with individuals post release to follow up their liberation plans and manage challenges in the journey  
- Link into existing provision in the community and develop additional opportunities to promote positive self-identity post release including work placements and training opportunities.

On a broader scale the objectives include:  
- To improve future service delivery of mainstream employability organisations for this client group to enable them to match the outcomes and targets delivered by this project in the future  
- To inform established networks nationally through the Scottish Government, Scottish Prison Service and the Voluntary Sector Criminal Justice Forum and locally through the Community Justice Authority  
- To address the Key National Offender Outcomes including: Employability Prospects Increased, Improved Literacy Skills, Ability to access and sustain community support, including financial advice and education, Improvements in the attitudes or behaviours which led to offending

What are the project’s activities?  
Passport supports adult and young offenders for 4-6 months pre liberation in Prison through 1:1 Caseworker support, followed up in the community by the same Caseworker.
Individuals work through action plans, complete tasks, link into other prison activities, create liberation plans, do disclosure letters and CVs and work on confidence and self esteem. In completing this work the individuals gain SQA qualifications in Personal Effectiveness and Jobseeking Skills through partner college Jewel and Esk Valley.

As individuals complete qualifications their status on the programme is a ‘student’ which is important for identity.

The project also addresses health, financial and housing issues providing wraparound support.

In HMP Edinburgh a group work programme is delivered as part of the Living Skills group, providing a Personal Development programme over 8 weeks to groups of 8-10 prisoners. In Polmont YOI through partner Media Education we deliver Media Training Programmes to 6-8 young offenders’ to train them in Media skills and to capture their stories and experiences in their transition to the community.

Passport Caseworkers operate as Case managers and work in partnership with a variety of agencies both in prison and the community. Notably in Glasgow individuals are supported to access Glasgow’s Regeneration Agency support and opportunities.

The project brokers and creates opportunities within the community to promote re-integration, these include Mechanics Fast Fit Training (delivered in partnership with GTG), a menu of work placements including a successful partnership with the Marriott Hotel Group, one off licence training events e.g. CSCS and Fork Lift Truck Licences (to enhance employment prospects) and Access:Courses through College partners.

Relationship- The Passport Caseworker develops trust with the individual in the prison and importantly with continuity this continues in the community- enabling difficulties or setbacks to be addressed and the Caseworker to advocate where appropriate for the individual.

Visit link below to see our latest Newsletter:
http://www.accesstoindustry.co.uk/view/article/13-january-june-2011-newsletter

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
(a)
The Passport Project has played a significant part in transforming the lives of prison leavers. Not in isolation, however and evidently the individuals’ efforts, sacrifices and resilience have played a crucial role in their journeys. In addition to the principal outcomes of work, college or training individuals have reversed in some cases decades of offending and substance misuse. In the cases of some young offenders offending has been the only lifestyle known to them in addition to a childhood of neglect, abuse and gang violence. These transformations often termed soft outcomes are the intangibles that truly make a difference and inspire others. Passport places a lot of importance on celebrating success- at twice yearly Certificate Ceremonies- where MSPs and VIPs present SQA certificates to successful students (we have witnessed prison leavers attending these ceremonies on their first day of liberation-which is testament to the levels of engagement).
We also nominate individuals for awards and in the past two years have seen a young offender - Terry and adult offender Steven recognised by Scotland’s Learning Partnership as Adult Learners of the Year - 2010 and 2011 (the first occasions that ex-offenders have won the award). Individuals’ stories are used as Case Studies and fed back into prisons to help change and influence attitudes within establishments - where often the only experience of offenders is their return.

(b) Stats:
To date the project has supported 459 offenders returning to Glasgow and Edinburgh, impressively engaging with 83% of those released (253), 158 gaining SQA qualifications and 59% progressing on to positive destinations (32 jobs, 30 FE, 87 employability training).

Significantly only 75 of those engaging post release went on to return to custody (30%) well below the national average of 60% (which ranges up to 70% for 16-18 year olds,) Passport is aware however that the journey is not always linear, due to external factors and elements that cannot always be controlled. Robert’s story demonstrates the importance of persistence both his own and his Caseworker’s. Phil, Mark and Ishmael are examples of the variety of journeys Passport students take.

Robert, 29, came to Passport midway through his sentence at HMP Edinburgh. He participated in a mixture of 1:1 and group-work, taking part in Passport’s very first Living Skills group. During this work – and in the subsequent post-liberation meetings – Robert identified the SVQ 1 Hospitality: Food Preparation and Cooking, at an Edinburgh College. By June 2010 he had been offered a place on the course. Unfortunately, Robert was then convicted of a set of new charges, and was returned to prison on the very week that college was due to begin, in September 2010. This setback was a disappointment to all. However, soon after his return to custody, Robert again referred to Passport, for further 1:1 work. Again this work went well, completing his SQA Level 1 in Personal Effectiveness and ultimately ending in an offer of an interview for the same college course, on the day after his release from prison, in June 2011. Robert formally enrolled on the course in August 2011.

Since then, he has completed a 2 week work placement with a leading Hotel group, in the position of ‘trainee kitchen porter’. On the last day of this placement and on the recommendation of his supervisor he was offered paid employment.

Phil, 21, worked with Passport for 4 months in Polmont YOI and when released on HDC he was supported to gain employment in a large retail store. Phil has now been promoted in his job after 6 months and the company are putting him through his HND in Business Management.

Mark, 20, completed 3 SQA qualifications with Passport before release. There was a big change in Mark’s attitude during this time and with new found self confidence he applied for a college course in Barbering and 5 days after leaving Polmont YOI he successfully got two interviews and accepted on the course.

Ishmael, 20, served a three and a half year sentence for armed Robbery. He engaged with Passport for 5 months in prison and is now in full time employment with a Glasgow sales company who were impressed with his CV, disclosure letter and his desire to change.
**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
We would be hopeful to expand the service to enable more offenders the opportunity to access Passport support, in order to further reduce recidivism in Scotland and increase positive re-integration in the community.

At present Passport operates in HMP Edinburgh and Polmont YOI. Polmont YOI is a national establishment and we are resourced through our funding arrangements to support liberations to Glasgow and Edinburgh. However in response to demand (interest from young offenders from other areas and Prison Officers) it would add value and hopefully reduce levels of recidivism in other areas and cities by extending Passport throughcare support.

In addition to expanding the service and increased collaboration with new partners, creation of opportunities is also a key thrust of our work. Increased links with employers and training providers are required to remove barriers to positive progression for prison leavers and continued influence for improvement of mainstream practices and opportunities encountered by offenders.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
The winner’s prize would be used hopefully to lever in additional funds and certainly raise project profile. It would be used to create the optimum impact and value.

3 options have been suggested which would be finalised within the team and with offenders’ to best meet their needs.

Considering the time of year, one proposed initiative included a Festive Charitable Project. The suggestion is to create a short focused training programme to include voluntary work either restoring or renovating (painting and decorating) a partner Care Home or Community Resource. The funding would be used to purchase resources and materials for the work, which could clearly demonstrate community benefit, provide valuable experience and gain for the individuals involved.

Utilise the prize to create a small fund to pay for specific training/ licences/ identification or clothing required by Passport clients to access employment/college with a formal offer.

Prize funds could be put towards purchase of a laptop- which would greatly enhance the training environment we use in the community at our 156 Cowgate Office (linked up with a new donated Smart Board). It could also be used on an outreach basis with clients to promote engagement and/or during meetings to assist online testing for licences (eg CSCS) and applications.
Organisation: DISC
Project Name: DISC Yorkshire and Humber Peer Mentoring Project

Describe your project in one sentence:
To reduce reoffending and promote recovery and social capital through peer mentoring opportunities.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
Peer mentors are currently based in the community, in criminal justice projects and community drug treatment projects.

What are the project’s objectives:
The project seeks to train and develop stable ex offenders and substances users (service users) into becoming peer mentors who then with an understanding of recovery and personal experiences can encourage, support and promote recovery and the reduction of reoffending, in other ex offenders and substance users. The peer mentors support service users through one to one work on DISC premises and through group work. Within one specific service, a group of peer mentors have developed and are now currently running a recovery group and recovery art group. Based on the success of the current groups we would like to run at least a further two peer led groups and are seeking to utilise this award to further enhance our structured mentoring opportunities for individual with offending and/or substance misuse issues.

What are the project’s activities?
The peer led art group acts as a diversionary activity away from offending and substance use by expressing oneself through art and by introducing secondary learning such as developing literacy skills and knowledge including history, geography and religion. During the first session attendees were asked to create a collage portrait using images from magazines to represent oneself. This acted as an ice breaker and encouraged people to safely open up about each other and enabled the peer mentor to gain an understanding of each service user and where they were at in their recovery to then enable him to identify next steps (for example support needs and signposting / referral opportunities).

This activity alone enabled people to explore their sense of identity through art. As the weeks have gone by the members have started asking more and more about artists and their work which in turn has resulted in new learning and some have gone away and studied further bringing in copies of peoples work that they have found to be of interest and then using this to develop their own pieces. This work is then being gathered into a portfolio to be used in an application to college. The members of this group have bonded well and two of them have now referred themselves into the peer mentor project and will undertake the training in November to become peer mentors themselves after being motivated and inspired by the peer mentor running the group. The service users have identified that being around a peer mentor who himself has stayed away from offending behaviour has given them hope and belief that they too can do the same.
The peer mentors attend initial DISC peer mentor training, ongoing training updates and regular group supervision. The peer mentors are all asked to write regular reflective logs which with evidence of the work they have done as a peer mentor builds up a portfolio of evidence which can then be used when seeking volunteer opportunities / applying for paid positions. The peer mentoring assists the peer mentor them self in their recovery, motivates other service users in theirs and provides transferable skills to increase their employability status.

The projects also aims to support peer mentors and service users in strengthening existing relationships / developing new relationships with family, friends, peers and professionals to name a few, in addition to supporting them to improve and enhance their own individual self esteem and confidence. To achieve this, some of the peer mentors have visited the board of trustees and senior management team at DISC and talked to groups of other professionals about their experiences and how peer mentoring had impacted on them.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:

The attendees of the groups have all stated they have not committed any crimes whilst being part of the peer mentor project and none of them have been arrested during this period. One peer mentor in particular feels now, that with his expanding achievements and lifestyle changes he is ready to think about contacting his family again. The service users were asked to complete an evaluation form recently to monitor progress and have said:

- “It has given me a positive focus and a constructive way to spend my time with other people who have been through the same as I have”

- “My recovery has been a lot easier. Joining various groups has enabled me to mix with other people who have been through similar experiences”

- “It has given me something positive to do with my hands and brain and brightened my days”

- “I can now draw better than before, I have learnt to notice art, I have kept myself busy and I’ve got myself out of the drug ring”

- “It keeps my mind occupied so i don’t think about drugs and gets me out of the house”

- “It has made me more confident ion wanting to do things and get involved in more groups which is helping my recovery a lot”

- “Helping me keep busy (...) meeting new people”

- “It keeps me busy as boredom is a trigger for me”

What are your plans for developing the project further?

Initially the project would like to set up more peer led groups / projects and then allow us to train more peer mentors. We also want to have a team of peer mentors who can support people in their
motivation from the moment they are referred into the service to enable people to see a way out of services and concentrate on social inclusion / reintegration into society.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
With the desire to increase the numbers of peer mentors we would produce further training materials and purchase resources to run at least 2 more peer led groups at the current site. We would also look to continue the running of the peer led art group for a further 6 months after this 6 month pilot based on its success to date. To cover travel expenses for the peer mentors which they have identified as a previous barrier to attending. If we were successful we would also open this up at our other site in Leeds as at present it is only operating from one. This in turn would give more service users a chance at moving away from offending through peer mentoring.

**Organisation:** Essex Library Service, HMP & YOI Chesterfield  
**Project Name:** Story-time Learning

**Describe your project in one sentence:**
It is a children’s visit organised in partnership between Essex libraries and resettlement which promotes and introduces education and reading to all the family using fun.

**Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):**
Prison Library (part of Essex county council libraries), HMP & YOI Chelmsford

**What are the project’s objectives:**
1. To promote family learning by:
   - Creating a safe/normal environment
   - Showing prisoners and their families that education can be fun.
2. Promoting reading to all the family:
   - Children’s literacy improved
   - Gives parents skills in reading and sharing stories
   - Gives everyone a better understanding of public libraries and what they offer to families.
3. Reducing reoffending by:
   - Strengthening and maintaining family ties
   - Families keep in touch / keep connections
   - Dads make/ build relationship with their children
   - Help dads communicate with their children
   - Men have better parenting skills
4. Increasing the well-being / good mental health of prisoners by:
   - Empowering fathers
   - Increasing family links and support

5. Improving employability by:
   - Motivating prisoners to attend Education and improve their own literacy and other skills

**What are the project’s activities?**

**Background**

We have built upon pilot activities in the prison and established practice in Essex public libraries to develop a family learning project. We organise 4 visits a year in conjunction with resettlement, timed to coincide with school holidays, each based on a different theme.

**Activities**

There are a variety of activities to suit an age range of 18 months to 14 years and designed to encourage fathers/grandfathers and their children to interact. The children and their fathers and grandfathers then select what they would like to do. All the activities are educational and aimed at the children learning something new.

A treasure hunt where fathers and children work together to find posters hidden around the library with pictures and information on the chosen theme on the picture is very popular. For example, at the Under the sea event it was pictures of creatures of the deep and fish and at the Space event, planets. Fathers/Grandfathers and children work together to complete a related quiz which then leads onto more activities. Once the children find the picture they have a sheet to fill in with a question that can be answered by reading the information written on the poster (e.g. the name of the planet or the size of the fish). The first letter of each answer then spells a word they need to find linked to the events theme. Other activities include mazes, puzzles (which can also be numerical), drawings and colouring, creating objects and art. The visit ends with a rhyme time session and a story time session for the children and families. These follow the session’s theme and are led by library staff who encourage everyone to join in the fun. Rhyme time includes a sing-along and we always choose a book for reading aloud that will encourage interaction, especially the sound effects!

**What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:**

**Impact on participants**

All prisoners and their families enjoy attending story time learning events and find the atmosphere relaxed and fun; the most common comment is that it is like being in an outside library and everyone forgets for a while where they are.

Feedback from participants about the safe environment to their peers has encouraged some prisoners to bring their children in for the very first time. Previously they had never had a visit from them before as they were worried about bringing children into a prison. However other participants were able to provide reassurance by sharing that it was a different experience, and an enjoyable, pleasant one for all concerned.
For many children it is their first experience of reading as a family and one that allows them to spend time with their fathers and reconnect/maintain links with them. A father who had taken part said that it was the first time he saw his children leaving a visit without crying whilst another child said as he was leaving that he wanted to apply for the next visit for his daddy to make sure they could come.

The main aim of the project is to introduce all the family to reading and educational activities in a way that is fun and not intimidating so that the children will keep on reading on the outside and visit their local library. We hope that by introducing the children to reading and education in a fun way, we will motivate them to learn, therefore giving them a better chance in life.

This is what one of the fathers who attend the last visit wrote in a letter to us:

“To all the Staff in the Library and Education and all the People who helped to make Story Time Learning for Dads and Grandads and their Families such a wonderful time and an invaluable experience. The activities were spot on and they loved the story that was read and they wanted to keep the face painting on for days. They loved the time they had and hopefully will continue to read on their own as it made it an exciting thing to do. Once again thank you very much. And personally I’m looking forward to the next one and I’m sure I’m not the only one.
Yours sincerely Mr J”

Impact on reducing reoffending
Family ties are an important factor in reducing reoffending and the aim is for the fathers to build and sustain links with their families on the outside and to motivate them to avoid reoffending for the sake of their families. For those who need to improve their own reading skills, this initiative offers them the support and encouragement they often need to start or keep learning giving them a better chance of a job once released. Introducing them to libraries and what they can offer strengthens community ties and thus contributes to helping individuals to avoid reoffending.

One of the prisoners, who regularly attended story time learning visits, joined his local library with all the family shortly after his release, stating that he found the atmosphere in the library so enjoyable and relaxing that he wanted to keep experiencing that with his family on the outside. He had also found out thanks to story time learning that it is possible to do fun things with the children in the library making it an enjoyable day out at a small or no cost.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
We always seek feedback from the participants and other stakeholders and use this to evaluate and plan the programme. Our improvement plans include:

- Working with other agencies: We are linking up with the Toe by Toe project to target prisoners who are beginning readers and writers. Prisoners are able to see the pleasure that their families and children derive from spending time together in reading related activities, such as reading aloud. It’s hoped that this will encourage them to improve their own reading skills and encourage their children read and learn. This will then help to break the offender cycle.
- Extending the programme to support other activities: We already run Storybook Dads in the library with our own editing suite and hope to start ‘ping pong stories’. This is where children start writing their own story but finish on a cliff hanger to send to their dad. He will continue till the next cliff-
hanger and send it back to the child. In this way, the story will ping-pong back and forth until it is completed when it will be typed up for the father to record with sound effects on a CD and send to the child. We will encourage children and the fathers to work on this as one of the activities in a story time learning visit.

- Work with Essex library staff to identify and develop library activity themes that can be transferred and promote public libraries further.
- Developing the existing input by volunteers

All this strengthens the links with the families but also increases employability through the opportunities provided to develop new skills that they can use when looking for jobs outside.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**

We would like to use the prize to move forward Story time learning and start ping pong stories. We would like to buy more children books to use in Story time learning visits and to offer an even wider variety of activities to the children. We would also like to look at how to make this provision more accessible for families who live further away and may be excluded due to the distance they have to travel. This could include running the event over a whole day and we would use some of the prize to fund the additional costs of that.

To start ping pong stories we need the funding for the postage to and from the families as well as the cost of printing and creating the booklets.

**Organisation:** Fresh Start New Beginnings  
**Project Name:** Fresh Start New Beginnings (FSNB)

**Describe your project in one sentence:**
To relieve poverty and promote the care, resettlement, rehabilitation of offenders and ex-offenders, in particular but not exclusively by providing support services and mentoring on issues such as employment, training and housing, that will enable them to take control of their lives and remain free from offending.

**Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):**
FSNB works with those who are currently serving a custodial sentence in prisons across the West Midlands and who have identified Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin as their home area. Referrals have also been received from establishments outside of the region who have heard about the work of the Fresh Start New Beginnings and have someone being released to the area. It works with prisoners whilst they are in custody and offers a ‘Through the Gate’ approach’ thus supporting to transition from Custody to Community.
What are the project’s objectives:

- Reduce crime, the fear of crime and the number of victims of crime by working with those who are committed to changing their lives and breaking the cycle of their offending lifestyle.
- Add to community cohesion by providing individual mentors to guide improvement in the quality of life for people who have offended and the communities in which they live.
- Provide an additional community resource and effectiveness of existing resources by working with, and drawing from, a range of organisations to reduce crime and the number of victims of crime, and therefore support community development.
- ‘Supporting Offenders through Restoration Inside’. SORI courses bring victims of crime, offenders and community members into personal contact with the intention of repairing the emotional and physical harm caused by an offence.
- Have the support of criminal justice and community agencies and leaders.
- Be professional and ethical in all we do. The work undertaken by Fresh Start New Beginnings is too important to be jeopardised by any form of unprofessional or short term action or activity.

What are the project’s activities?

Five carefully coordinated streams of activities, all focused on supporting and promoting a change in lifestyle that will assist in reducing re-offending. They are Training; Counselling; Mentoring; Housing Support & Advice and Employment Support & Advice. Further, FSNB works with all relevant agencies, including local crime reduction organisations, to ensure that the most appropriate level of support is achieved and ensure coherence and efficiency in the help offered.

Working in partnership with HMP Shrewsbury, the charity has now secured a workshop in order to open a Handmade Craft & Hobbies workshop. Selected prisoners are employed by the prison to work in the workshop. FSNB provides the resources and prisoners make jewellery; knitted items; needle work; match models. All items that are made in the workshop are then sold by the charity to raise money as part of our fundraising strategy. A carpentry workshop also provides qualifications for prisoners whilst producing quality items that are sold in the same way. This work is now being developed in other establishments across the region.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:

Since December 2008, the charity has received over 450 referrals.

- A 100% success rate in securing accommodation for prisoners who would have otherwise been released NFA.
- Secured 40 jobs with a rail company. Further development has now progressed to delivering ‘Trackside’ training during their sentence. Pivotal in the co-ordination of the installation of rail track within the grounds of the prison, enabling training to be delivered whilst in custody and opens opportunities for those who qualify, to apply to any rail company for employment.
- S.O.R.I – 100 successfully completed course - “If I hadn’t done the SORI course I would have probably lashed out but I took a step back and thought of the consequence. So thank you for teaching me some very important life skills as well as the conscience to think about the bigger picture when it comes to victims of any kind”
• Counseling – 60 prisoners; 15 on waiting list
• Mentoring
• One example is that of an offender who was responsible for 95% of all burglaries in the Telford area over a 2 year period. This client had never been out of prison or ‘clean’ from drugs for more than 3 months over the last 10 yrs or more and was on the PPO Register in Telford (Persistent & Prolific Offender). However, with the support of FSNB, accommodation was secured and deposit paid, and as agreed, he is paying the charity each month a set amount in order for the deposit to be paid back to us. He is now preparing to marry, has full custody on his child, has worked voluntarily for NACRO; is in the process of setting up his own business and will become a Volunteer Mentor for FSNB in the very near future.

A recently released client states:
“*What they (people) need to understand, my previous lifestyle is a normal to me as pouring milk on my cornflakes. It’s hard to change what you are used to, but I know that I have to in order to live a crime free and drug free life. This work (workshop) has given me something to focus on, I have ADHD and I find work at times hard... this has helped me believe that I ‘can’ do something worthwhile.*”

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
In addition to grant applications, the charity organises a cross section of fundraising events in order to regenerate income and reduce long term grant dependency as well as raising the profile of the charity and highlight the issues faced by offenders who are committed to changing their lives. Charity Concerts; Charity Auction of Prisoners Art; BBQ & Garden Party – an annual event supported by prison staff, their families and the local community; Auction of Promises – this has been organised by a member of the community; London Docklands Open Water Swim – HMPS staff member; Charity Skydive – FSNB staff member. This work enables us to take FSNB right into the heart of the community.
Increase the number of volunteers thus enabling us to further develop across the service; Develop workshops in establishments across the West Midlands Region.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
To support prisoners with housing deposits in order to secure accommodation on release.

**Organisation:** HMP & YOI Doncaster (Serco)
**Project Name:** Community Re-entry Team (CRT)

**Describe your project in one sentence:**
CRT provides a resettlement service that encourages offenders and ex-offenders back into employment and training through effective mentoring by supporting them into a stable lifestyle throughout custody and their return back into the community to prevent a return to crime.
Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):

HMP & YOI Doncaster is a Category B local prison with a capacity of 1,145 male prisoners aged between 18 years and above. In the course of our resettlement support we maintain contact with ex-prisoners in their communities throughout South Yorkshire.

What are the project’s objectives:
To ensure the successful reintegration of offenders back into the community and to reduce re-offending by:
1. Enhancing the prospect of employability.
2. Provide offenders with the knowledge for basic money management.
3. Ensuring prisoners have accommodation on release.
4. Supply support from mentors whilst in custody and upon release for up to 12 months.

What are the project’s activities?
The Community Re-entry Team has been consolidated into a robust team of professional service providers and individuals, working with a like minded approach that supports the client and his family by offering a successful resettlement programme to help reintegrate them back into the community. The team consists of a Deputy Manager, three Employment, Learning & Skills Advisors, three Housing Support Advisors and three Outreach Support Workers.

- **Employability** - the Community Re-entry Team improve offender’s prospects of employment by providing vocational courses, CV writing skills and ‘interview techniques’. Using their knowledge of local provisions the team support prisoners into voluntary work placements, further education and apprenticeships. All this work is done in conjunction with local employers and training providers. These skills guarantee offenders/ex-offenders are employable upon release.

- **Money Management** - the Community Re-entry Team provide prisoners with basic numeracy and budgeting skills by providing knowledge of basic money management. We provide identification for offenders to open a bank account in conjunction with a partnership with Barclays Bank. We work closely with the South Yorkshire Credit Unions who provide a savings deposit account to assist offenders raise funds towards a bond for accommodation and crisis loans.

- **Accommodation** – the Community Re-entry Team ensure at least 90% of all prisoners leaving the establishment have been provided with accommodation. By working with the Local Authorities, Supported Housing Associations, the Probation Service and private landlords we ensure that all offenders have an option of accommodation.

- **Mentoring** - the Outreach Support Workers in CRT work in partnership with Catch22 to provide a robust peer mentoring scheme. The mentoring support is there to provide a one to one mentoring support service that is available throughout the prisoners’ custodial sentence and the team maintain this support for up to twelve months upon release in the community. Allied with a determination on behalf of the prisoner/ex-prisoner means more progress in helping to avoid a return to crime and custody.
What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:

With a brief to deliver services that leads to a reduction in re-offending for the local community, the Community Re-entry Team at HMP & YOI Doncaster is delivering services and generating results that are simply not being replicated within other prison establishments in Yorkshire & Humberside. Their performance is indeed timely given the recent announcement of the formation of the Payment By Result (PBR) and an increased focus on provision of joined up services to support offenders and reduce re-offending. The success of Doncaster’s CRT serves as an ideal template of how local stakeholders can band together to offer its people a new beginning.

CRT highlighted that many prisoners/ex-prisoners were in need of an extension of resettlement expertise to be made available using outreach support and volunteer mentors. The provision of a continuous resettlement and mentoring provision in the community has produced significant benefits for local communities including less crime, fewer victims of crime, and a more skilled labour market.

From April 2011 the CRT have achieved an average of 20% of releases returning to back into employment and 26% into employability training schemes. By working closely with South Yorkshire’s Local Housing Authority, Supported Housing Associations and private landlords we have successfully placed into accommodation over 95% of our clients into secure accommodation. Our money management programme has assisted over 107 prisoners to successfully open a bank account. Our mentoring programme is a new project to assist in reducing re-offending and the resettlement of vulnerable people serving under a twelve month custodial sentence beyond the prison walls in South Yorkshire. CRT offered a mentoring support service to prisoners serving their custodial sentence in HMP & YOI Doncaster and this support continues upon release. Assisting in the success of this project is Catch22 with a bank of volunteer mentors. This service has a holistic approach which encompasses most problems (i.e. homelessness, worklessness, finance, benefits and debt, and family problems). The mentor assists wherever necessary to provide companionship, knowledge, empathy and understanding. Utilising ex-offenders as volunteer mentors is a valuable asset in the delivery by allowing the ex-offenders to use their own experiences of imprisonment and difficulties they had reintegrating back into society. The mentoring element appears to be a far more important factor to the prisoners/ex-prisoners’ than the level of expertise and experience that the volunteer mentors has in their knowledge of housing, benefits or employment. The support provided strikes a balance between help and support not only for the prisoner/ex-prisoner but their families too.

CRT has an unshakable commitment to deliver the resettlement and mentoring services to offenders released from HMP & YOI Doncaster. This enthusiasm and trust permeates through to the other service providers, giving them the confidence to work closely with our organisation and they have been unswerving in their drive to deliver first class resettlement services to the Doncaster Prison community. All this support will play a key part in the regeneration of the communities and contribute to the overall aim of the Criminal and Youth Justice System to prevent reoffending and protect the public to enable us to achieve the shared target of 15% by 2015.

What are your plans for developing the project further?

- A drop in centre that employs ex-offenders as mentors to help with employment, training, family support and personal development.
- To engage more Volunteer Mentors to work with ex-offenders in the community.
• How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
I would like to see the prize money offered to assist a Social Enterprise Employer, employ or offer training to ex-offenders upon release.

Organisation: HMP & YOI Doncaster
Project Name: Families First

Describe your project in one sentence:
An extensive and innovative approach to reducing re-offending through the maintenance and strengthening of prisoner family ties

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
Within the Prison walls, situated in the visits area in a dedicated suite of rooms

What are the project’s objectives:
An estimated 160,000 children in the UK have a parent in prison. 45% of prisoners lose contact with their families during the course of their sentence, and many separate from their partners. However, those who maintain family links are up to six times less likely to reoffend. With that in mind, HMP & YOI Doncaster’s Families First Initiative offers a comprehensive programme of activities aimed at strengthening the ties between prisoners and their families. The team have made significant improvements to the lives of both prisoners and their families by providing opportunities for important bonds to be developed.

What are the project’s activities?
• The Daddy Newborn programme encourages fathers of babies less than ten months old to bond with their child, teaching them how to bath, change, dress and feed the baby.
• Treasure Box helps prisoners who have lost contact with their children to create boxes of mementoes, photos and pictures for them in preparation for future contact
• The Families First Team have also developed weekly toddler mornings, school holiday activities such as Sports Days and arts and craft days.
• Accredited parenting and Early Learning Foundation courses that Mum and Dad can attend together.
• Family Album for families to create their own album (photos are the next best thing in absence) prisoners learn how to use a camera then the whole family get together and design their own album.
• Homework Dads enables the older school children to have their quality time with dad discussing their school work or any projects they may be doing, this lets dad play an active part in their education.
Story Sack provides mum and dad to bring the child’s favourite story to life through designing a bag, fact book, puppet and educational games all surrounding the book.

**What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:**

We follow a zero tolerance within the prison at all times, the activities we provide are extras and do not come out of their visit entitlement. We support and guide families on family life and educating children through play. Their [the prisoners’] behaviour improves once they understand the value of families which has a knock on effect throughout the prison especially on the wings as prisoners do not want to lose the right to spend quality time with their family. The passing of contraband as reduce through the visits plus violence is at its lowest within the prison. Prisoners understand that their behaviour has consequences but for some they are learning how to be a better father and how important families are and the others are maintaining their bond and family ties. The impact on the mothers is fantastic as they can relax on the visits knowing that dad is going to play an active part for the duration of the visit, instead of him only being allowed to sit on the (yellow chair) that he cannot move from.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**

We are in the process of expanding due to the fact Families First has been a huge success story and is having a great impact for all concerned in the reoffending programme and the families are getting a lot of benefit. We have programmed events 5 days per week and on both sessions of the visits

We have had a commercial children’s park installed on the grass area outside the visits hall which again encourages family life with fine and gross motor skills for toddlers and gives normality to the children. We are looking at a small kitchen to be placed in one of our rooms so we can concentrate on healthy eating and family meal times.

From the outside visits centre all the way through to the visits hall we are re-vamping the area to encourage family life and educate families coming through, more support and help with the through the gate service. We have a big vision for families as this is the way forward to reducing reoffending, HMP Doncaster is the first Families First and I believe this is the way forward.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**

It would always go back on the children for more educational toys as we have exhausted our budget. Everything we do is aimed at education through play with fine and gross motors skills, role play and physical play for the children and for dads to understand the importance of this.
Describe your project in one sentence:
To encourage prisoners into various creative and educational activity and to motivate prisoners to engage in courses and to present their work to the public once a year at the Inside Out exhibition.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
Prison, both male and female, which includes all ages from young offenders upwards.

What are the project’s objectives:
Prison shouldn’t stifle intellectual and creative development. I teach students aged from 15 to 70 for whom art is a mental release and a way of expressing themselves. That is so important since, not only can participation in artistic pursuits encourage a prisoner on to seeking to further study in academic areas, it can also provide a huge boost to his or her self-esteem, a lack of which is so often a hugely contributory factor to their being in prison in the first place. Some of my students have, by their own admission, failed at school and shy away from academic courses, but art provides a therapeutic metier and, as such, can encourage them on to achieve success in other areas.

For rehabilitation schemes to be successful it is vital to educate the person as a whole, not just in terms of the qualifications for employment. This offers skill and knowledge development that can have a real impact on the willingness of the individual to embrace change as a person: it can stimulate a sense of personal well-being and improve self-esteem, so increasing the likelihood of a successful reintegration into the community.

It is important to communicate the importance of prison education to the general public and an outcome of any strategy for reducing rates of recidivism is the potential benefit to the wider community. Creative activity raises individual self-esteem and opens minds to engage in other educational opportunities and behaviour management programmes: all geared towards helping prisoners to make life improving decisions.

To engage prisoners in other educational activities such as horticulture and carpentry which have an additional impact on personal identity, self value and value to the community. As a result, you can see improved levels of independence, motivation and better relationships, as there is a fundamental need for communication and teamwork for these areas to function successfully.

What are the project’s activities?
Our Inside Out project aims to encourage prisoners to create artwork which will be seen by their families and the general public. Students work throughout the year on various projects and have an opportunity to display and sell their work at a local gallery in March. We also hope to engage prisoners in horticulture, creative industry and carpentry to teach them valuable skills and encourage work to be shown in the community to improve links.
What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
The prisoners I taught and those that have contributed to the Inside Out exhibitions fed back to me how their involvement with the project had made them feel.
- “It gives us a chance to express ourselves and our inner being.”

- “Art is something we look forward to each week as it breaks the daily grind.”

- “Having the exhibition makes us feel really good and proud.”

- “I am very proud and my parents are very proud of me too.”

- “Finishing a project gives me a sense of achievement.”

- “Life in prison is very boring; it is nice to escape here.”

I have been working across the whole prison offering painting, drawing and ceramics classes. The enthusiasm and talent amongst the prison population is considerable.

In March 2008, we had the very first exhibition of our prisoners’ artwork at the Harbour Gallery, a well known local art gallery in Jersey. ‘Inside Out’ was a mixed media exhibition based on what students have learnt in art classes. We have since done two more exhibitions.

The exhibition has made such an impact on our prisoners here. They are committed to their work and passionate about showing it to the general public. It has gone a long way to boost prisoners’ self esteem.

Using Art as therapy is helpful in the prison environment, given the disabilities extent in this population, contributed to by organicity, a low educational level, illiteracy, and other obstacles to verbal communication and cognitive development.

Art therapy has the advantage of bypassing unconscious and conscious defences, including pervasive dishonesty. Art therapy supports creative activity in prison and provides necessary diversion and emotional escape. Quoted from create-ability, the arts space “A powerful space for personal reflection had evidently been created along with the possibility of new insight leading to a change in attitude and behaviour in the future.”: “Drawing on the Buddhist idea of mindfulness, the suggestion is that focused concentration on artistic striving, because it requires meditative patience and searching reflection, brings with it a calmer and perhaps more spiritual state of mind.”

The exhibition has given prisoners a voice; they may have otherwise gone unheard. That connection to the community is invaluable in terms of reducing recidivism. There has been a huge increase in motivation and levels of uptake and engagement in other educational opportunities throughout the prison.

What are your plans for developing the project further?
I have just begun teaching Ceramics here and plan to continue to branch out into other areas of art, both two-dimensional and three-dimensional. The exhibition will continue to expand with the addition
of ceramics to add to woodwork, painting and horticulture. Art classes will have the opportunity to become classes in a therapeutic setting. Many people lack the ability or outlet to express emotions intrinsic to human existence. This can either result in people bottling up their feelings (proven to be psychologically and physically damaging) or discharging them in ways that are destructive to self or others. Art classes will become a platform in which the emotions can be expressed safely.

We are also about to employ prisoners in creative industries such as toy making and educational toys. Continued development of both horticulture and carpentry to engage prisoners in valuable, educational work. I will also develop the project further by completing an advanced diploma in the therapeutic and educational application of the arts from the Institute for Arts and Therapy in Education (IATE). I feel this will benefit the prisoners immensely. This course will give me the experience of art therapy practice as well as closed group work and current theory. My learning will be underpinned by the principles and practices of psychodynamic psychotherapy practised within the context of mental health care, and informed by contemporary art practice. The course covers the Therapeutic Application of: Art, Drama/Poetry, Sculpture/Clay, Poetry, Music and Dance/Movement. In the long term, I would like to involve all these disciplines at the prison.

Creating expressive art can help an inmate avoid a confrontation by giving him a way to work out his anger. If the means are available, aggression can be channeled through the creation of physically demanding three-dimensional objects, for example, ceramics. Releasing emotion can be problematic in a prison environment, for it can either be considered threatening or a sign of weakness to both officers and other inmates. Inmates who engage in art are less disruptive, having less of a reason to act out.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**

I would put it towards the setting up of creative work opportunities here at HMP La Moye. This would enable the continued development of the Inside Out project.

HMP La Moye is unusual in that it houses all security levels and types of prisoner. There are 5 separate secure units within the institution and prisoners from the different areas are not allowed to mix with each other for any activity or programme: this makes the provision of education and productive work expensive and logistically difficult, limiting the funds available for developments that are outside of the core needs of the prisoners. Despite the problems, the Learning and Skills Department has established a wide range of opportunities over the last four years, stimulated by some prison improvement grants becoming available. Art classes and vocational training classes have played an important role in this development and we are hoping to find funds to link carpentry and art together as a way of extending opportunities for prisoners to be engaged in work that is both creative and practical. A suitable workshop has been identified in a wing that lacks employment and the award money would be used to fit this workshop out.
Describe your project in one sentence:
The Art of Living course (AOL) is a six session programme that has been developed at HMP/YOI Parc to motivate prisoners to partake in self developmental work. It uses all aspects of artistic activity to engage with the men involved. The intention is that through improved self-awareness, prisoners will more readily engage with other interventions and activities that enhance their likelihood of remaining offence free and living fulfilling lives.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
AOL is delivered to all prisoners throughout the prison (excluding YP’s 14-17 years), This includes Adult location, Young Adults (18-25), Care and Separation Unit, Vulnerable Prisoner Unit and Safer Custody.

What are the project’s objectives:
The Art of Living is a motivational programme that is delivered in Parc prison to support offenders to make changes in their lives and engage in the facilities that prison has to offer. Unlike conventional motivational programmes, the Art of Living (AOL) uses art in its broadest sense as the medium to deliver psychological concepts. This more visual approach makes the programme more accessible to those with limited basic skills or high levels of resistance to ‘traditional interventions’ and who could subsequently “fall through the net”. A willingness to engage in full participation for the 6 sessions is essential.

The stigma of a custodial sentence often alienates irreversibly an individual and colours self-perception as well as the perception of society. AOL is non-offence focused, so rather than concentrating on ‘what’s wrong’ with a person, it focuses on ‘what’s right’ (strengths based approach). The programme recognises and supports this side of an individual so that changes can be made from a position of strength rather than weakness.

Originally designed for sex offenders in denial, the purpose of the programme was to encourage prisoners to engage with the RSOTP (Rolling Sex Offender Treatment Programme) and thus address their offending behaviour. The two main obstacles identified with not wishing to engage with RSOTP were the stigma of accepting being a sex offender in the light of society, family and other prisoners and secondly, a fear of programmes generally as they may compromise any fabricated identity. Hearing prisoners referring to the short corridor walk to the programme room as ‘the green mile’ illustrates this.

Being non-offence focused, it was soon realised that the benefits of the course were not limited to any particular group of prisoner. Areas such as Safer Custody and Substance Misuse have engaged prisoners in AOL.

The outcomes of AOL are to:
- Build self-confidence
- Promote objective self-reflection
- Promote healthy attitudes towards diversity
- Encourage dialogue and communication
- Develop teamwork and inclusion
- Kindle motivation to make changes

**What are the project’s activities?**

AOL is different from other motivational programmes in that it engages the men on several levels at the same time. Its methods include artistic and physical activity as well as cognitive teaching practice. As a result the course can be described as holistic in the true sense of the word as it presents all subjects intellectually, visually and experientially at the same time. Thus allowing all men the opportunity to take part regardless of academic/educational skills.

The six, three hour sessions of the course include discussion, painting, drawing, story-telling, games, co-ordination skills, biography work, exercises and more.

The areas covered:
- Communication
- The Temperament model
- Looking at our life lines
- Tony Ward’s “Good Life Model”
- Self portrait work
- Developing a team ethic

**What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:**

AOL is an extremely popular programme in HMP & YOI Parc. To date over 250 prisoners have completed the course since its origin. There is a waiting list of over 60 at present. In terms of progress we have achieved the following:
- A training programme has been devised for facilitators in order to increase our capacity to deliver the number of AOL courses run each year.
- AOL has been successfully accredited with ‘Edexcel’ as an educational programme in 2011.
- AOL has won two arts and business awards 2008.
- AOL has been the subject of a BBC documentary called ‘Inside Art’.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**

- One current outcome study monitored self-esteem, loneliness, locus of control and motivation for treatment. These exploratory findings recorded no significant change, but provided direction for future research into the effectiveness of the programme. This research will aim to identify further the outcomes of AoL in motivating offenders to engage. Future research will also consider effects on re-offending rates.
- We plan to deliver facilitator training in Jan 2012 to enable a wider spread of facilitators across the prison and to further embed the intervention and ownership of it across the prison. For example, for the Safer Custody Unit and Older Prisoners Unit to be able to deliver the intervention.
- We plan to make AOL available to other g4s prisons, particularly in relation to recently acquired institutions such as Birmingham and Featherstone II.
How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
The money would be used to supplement the purchase of essential and quality art supplies in order to support the learning environment and to practically support the intention of rolling out AOL on a larger scale both locally and nationally.

Organisation: HMP & YOI Parc (G4S)
Project Name: MPACT – Moving Parents And Children Together

Describe your project in one sentence:
Adopting a whole family approach to addressing problems of substance misuse within a family and the effect it has on the children

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
Prison

What are the project’s objectives:
Moving Parents And Children Together – a pilot intervention PSF is developing in conjunction with the charity Action On Addiction, offering a ‘whole family’ approach, focusing on the impact and support needed for prisoners who substance misuse within a family setting, emphasising the effect on the children and family life. It addresses the affects not only in the family setting, but also the repercussions following the imprisonment of the father.

The programme is run by experienced professionals from Parc who have completed specialist training delivered by Action on Addiction and accredited by Bath University.

The programme has been evaluated by the Mental Health Research & Development Unit (MHRDU) at the University of Bath whose findings have shown that all the families involved felt that they had been helped by attending the programme. It is the result of a growing awareness that services for children and young people suffering the consequence of parental substance misuse have been limited, fragmented or non-existent across the UK.
Following successful pilot programmes in the community it was realised that M-PACT had and could continue to make a difference to families suffering the consequences of substance misuse. Until now, the programme has only been available within the community through referrals by professionals dealing with ‘problem families’ and under Licence by selected agencies.

Despite attempts being made in the past to run the programme in a prison setting, it has never happened. As a result of Parc’s successful negotiations with Action on Addiction and the support from the Director of Parc, Licence was granted to allow Parc to pilot the scheme for the first time in a custodial setting.

The programme is open to anyone who has had a problem with any form of substance misuse and has a child / children aged 7 -16.

**What are the project’s activities?**

Four facilitators work with parents and children (age range 7 – 16) from up to eight families at any one time. The programme is made up of 12 sessions; this includes an individual family assessment, eight consecutive weekly core sessions, an individual family review session and a group reunion.

Although it is a ‘whole family’ programme, for certain activities the adults and children work in separate groups, thus allowing the children the opportunity to express their feelings without pressure or feelings of guilt. Facilitators working with the children do not focus on substance misuse, but allow the children to progress and open up at their own pace by letting them identify other shopping, the X-box, MSN, etc., then gradually reaching a comfortable point where they wish to discuss more serious addictions.

Sessions are held on an evening after school in the family interventions lounge which provides an environment similar to a lounge at home. A buffet meal and refreshments are provided because many of the children have come from school or travelled some distance.

The course does not involve ‘standing up in front of everyone’ and telling them all about how many drugs you take, but more interactive and practical activities that allow families to relate to their individual circumstances.

Sessions include:
- Introductions – boundaries and rules, badge making
- Creative expression – understanding addiction
- The seven Cs (I didn’t cause it, I can’t control it, etc.) – effects of addiction
- Family genograms – the wider implications of addiction
- Communication styles & role models, how your children see you
- Self-esteem –all the good stuff about you (including the children)
- Family first-aid kits & toolboxes- how to deal with problems and obstacles
- Group reunion & family day!

Activities include, group work (adults and children), group work (family groups), games, art, discussions and creative expression.
What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:

In terms of the families involved, despite all the family programmes I have been involved in, I have never experienced one with such emotional outcomes. The hardest part was recruiting families, everyone seemed to be denying the existence of a problem or they didn’t want their children to know. When we did begin the programme, the first night was full of conflict between partners and doubts about what it was all in aid of and fears that the children may end up in care if they admitted they had a problem. The children did not engage at all. They were withdrawn and looking down on the floor. One girl aged 10 went so far as to pull her cardigan over her head and ‘hide’ silently.

However, as the sessions progressed, everyone opened up and by the end of the programme the families were not recognisable as the same people who had begun the journey. Everyone was smiling and the children were happy, families were talking and interacting and a ‘bond’ and sense of community had grown amongst the group. A sense of realisation and new direction was evident amongst. A sense of belonging and no longer being the lost child, able to talk to the parents was evident amongst the children.

Feedback from the families during the session where we discussed what they had achieved and learnt followed the same themes, they had started communicating, they felt like a family again, they felt loved, they knew what they wanted to do. In the case of the prisoners, all agreed they had no idea that their actions had affected the family and more importantly the children so much or that the children knew so much about what was going on.

Below is a summary of an email from Bath University researchers that attended a session to talk to the families:

“Dear All,

I just wanted to thank you all once again for your time, assistance and hospitality during our two days to Parc last week. It was an incredibly valuable experience, and also extremely useful in terms of the research. It was also a privilege (and pretty moving) to be there on Friday afternoon and see how M-PACT has helped one father/family in particular. It was such an emotional experience to see the interaction amongst the families and listen to their feedback about the programme. The welcome and input from all the fathers, and their families, was amazing.

Please pass my thanks on to the facilitators and everyone involved. I do wish you all the very best with the amazing work that you are doing at Parc, including M-PACT, and hope that there may be further opportunities for collaboration in the future.

Best wishes, X”

One of the families involved was three generations. Two of the adult brothers were in prison here. The grandmother had custody of one of the boy’s children; the other son’s ex-partner wouldn’t allow him to see his children. For this family it was the ‘last chance’. The grandmother had coped with the boys being in and out of prison for years and made it clear she could cope no more and would have nothing to do with them if they didn’t change. By the end of the course, she accepted their sincerity in changing on release and never returning because they had finally accepted their problems, the causes and triggers and looked at how to address them. For the son who had not seen his children for over a year, his partner turned up with the children at the reunion session to surprise him because, following
feedback from the course, she also realised he meant what he had said and planned and was prepared to allow him to see his children and prepare for release.

Another prisoner who was on the drug rehabilitation unit when the programme started completed all necessary programmes to become drug free and achieve enhanced status on the new unit. The outcomes have been presented at various seminars throughout the UK since the pilot ended in June and the reaction to the programme and what it achieved has been consistent, with numerous enquiries from other establishments to help set a similar system up for them. Limitations here do not allow me to add all the feedback we have received about the programme, but further information is attached.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
To support staff in other prisons to complete the training for MPACT and set up programmes within their organisations. Eventually it would be ideal for all prisoners and their families with issues of substance misuse to have access to the programme and the support it offers. Staff at Parc are working towards establishing a bespoke ‘add on’ training programme for other facilitators that is more prison specific than the initial training with Action on Addiction. We have also written an OCN module for the programme and submitted it for accreditation. The ultimate aim would be to ensure that all children of prisoners who are affected by substance misuse within the family are given a ‘voice’.

Interim evaluations carried out by researchers from Bath University indicated an outstanding success with the programme and they will continue to work with Parc, evaluating their delivery, the outcomes for families who attend and the effect on recidivism.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
- Art materials for the children to use in their workshops
- Resources and materials for the family workshops
- Funding a ‘re-union’ event for graduate families

Use towards developing training resources for other prisons to run MPACT

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**Organisation:** LLU+ at London South Bank University  
**Project Name:** Best Start For Families

**Describe your project in one sentence:**
Best Start for Families is about strengthening family ties of prisoners and their children through engagement in fun learning activities.

**Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):**
Best Start for Families takes place at HMP Holloway and HMP Pentonville.
What are the project’s objectives:
- The project’s objectives are many fold:
  - To enable prisoners to see how they can continue to play an active role in their children’s development and learning despite their imprisonment
  - To enable prisoners to understand the importance of their role in helping their children to develop and learn
  - To contribute to reducing re-offending by helping prisoners to maintain family ties through their term of imprisonment
  - To encourage positive communication between children and their parents
  - To empower families by helping them to develop the tools to work together as a team
  - To enable families to make the most of the time they spend together at visits
  - To help adults to reflect on the their situation and the effect of their imprisonment on their children and from that to reflect on their children’s needs and how best to meet these
  - To enable prisoners and their children to understand that they can learn, that learning can be fun, rewarding, empowering and life-enhancing as well as key to employment and reducing re-offending

Best Start for Families does this by:
- Engaging families in fun, informal learning activities
- Providing training for prison officers, volunteers and others involved in working with families affected by imprisonment
- Training staff from museums and other external agencies to deliver family learning activities in a prison setting and supporting them in delivering these activities
- Running family learning courses for parents in prison
- Producing packs of family learning activities for staff working in prisons suitable for use in a prison setting

What are the project’s activities?
The project’s activities are:
- To run sessions for imprisoned parents to enable them to continue to play an active role in their children’s education and development
- To deliver family learning workshops for parents and children during family and children’s visits
- To provide training for prison officers and other staff working in prisons to enable them to share an understanding of the aims of children and family days
- To run training for museum and other staff who want to deliver family learning in prisons
- To invite museums and other external organisations to run workshops for families in prisons
- To train Local Education Authority family learning staff to work in a prison environment to enable the continuation of the work at the end of the Big Lottery period of funding
- To produce a pack of activities suitable for family learning in a prison setting
- Organising visits to museums for carers and children whose parents are in prison e.g. Sleepover at the Science Museum
What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
The project has, to date, exceeded all its targets. During the three years of the project we have worked with well over 800 children and 500 hundred families (our target was 200 families). In terms of the impact on the people involved below are evaluative comments made by a range of project beneficiaries: “This (family learning) has had a major impact. The fathers have demonstrated that they need to have that link with their children. It has contributed to stronger ties within the families involved.” - Prison Officer HMP Pentonville.

- “The mothers and kids have really enjoyed working together, you only have to look at the kids as they carry their work home with them to see how proud they are.” Prison Officer HMP Holloway

- “I’ve learnt to listen and communicate more. To understand my child’s feelings and where she is coming from.” Mother HMP Holloway

- “I would like to make things every time I come and see mum. It’s nice to be able to do something creative with my mum. It makes us closer to each other.” Child HMP Holloway

- “I have really enjoyed seeing my children communicate with their dad.” Visiting mother HMP Pentonville

- “Fathers feel they have an excellent opportunity to bond with their children for a short time in a relaxed atmosphere. The overall impact may have a really positive result in the long-term.” Prison Officer HMP Pentonville

- “My daughter who has just started primary school will be an adult by the time I leave prison. Family learning gives me the opportunity to still be involved in her education.” Mother HMP Holloway

- “Mr A has been an inmate at HMP Pentonville for about 9 months and has shared with me the fact that he had only seen his 7 year old son once in all that time. He didn’t want to see his son during ‘normal’ visits because he felt that the atmosphere and restrictions of them both having to just sit still facing each other for 2 hours would make the whole visit extremely fraught and stressful for them both, and he didn’t want to put his son through that, and it wouldn’t do much for their relationship. He was so excited to be on the family visit. His son arrived with Mr A’s mother and sister. When they were invited to take part in the family drawing/artwork activities, he was bit reluctant to take part at first saying he was no good at that sort of thing but because his son was keen to get involved he gradually started to contribute. When they all moved to the larger area later, it was wonderful to watch the interaction between the whole family. Dad couldn’t stop hugging and touching his son and they were both smiling from ear to ear. It was very moving. At one point when his son had encouraged him to help him work on the wall painting with him I saw Mr A’s eyes fill with tears. This heavily tattooed guy was obviously overwhelmed by the whole thing. On Tuesday I went into the visit’s hall, Mr A called me over to say what a fantastic time they’d all had. He said that his sister said it was brilliant too. She said that it was the closest they’d been as a family for a long time.”
PACT worker HMP Pentonville

- “The best training I have received so far!” Prison Advice and Care Trust volunteer
In terms of reducing re-offending:

We know that maintaining family ties whilst in prison is key to reducing re-offending and breaking the offending cycle:

- “Evidence demonstrates that over half of offenders (58%) will be reconvicted within two years of discharge from prison, but research shows that prisoners who maintain strong family ties whilst they are in prison are up to six times less likely to re-offend.” www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

- “Maintaining strong relationships with families and children can play a major role in helping prisoners to make and sustain changes that help them to avoid re-offending.”
  http://www.emcett.com/offender/two/seven_pathways.html

As the project is taking place in remand prisons we do not have statistical or other evidence to prove that our project has contributed to reducing re-offending however the comments quoted above testify to the project’s impact on maintaining family ties and therefore on reducing re-offending.

What are your plans for developing the project further?

All LLU+ staff were made redundant by London South Bank University on 31st July 2011. Two members of staff have been retained on part-time hours to the end of the Big Lottery funding period 5th October 2011. Despite these difficulties the team has managed to ensure the continuation of most of the project’s activity in the following ways:

- We have produced a high quality publication Family Learning in Prisons – A complete Guide to ensure that experience, lessons learnt and practical tips and ideas can continue to be disseminated nationally (and internationally)
- We have managed to secure funding through Camden and Islington Family Learning to continue to run the children and family days at Holloway and Pentonville for at least another academic year
- We have managed to secure NOMS funding for one year to continue to run family learning sessions in resettlement at Holloway prison
- We held a dissemination event which was attended by over 80 delegates in July 2011 to share lessons learnt and provide opportunities for networking. The keynote address was made by Dame Anne Owers DBE former Chief Inspector of Prisons
- We are currently actively seeking additional funding to enable prisons to continue to work with the Science Museum post October 2011
- We plan to work on obtaining funding for the continuation of the work post September 2012

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?

We would spend the winner’s prize of £1,000 on booking sessions with the Science Museum to ensure that their highly creative work specially adapted to the limitations of the prison requirements can carry on at both HMP Holloway and HMP Pentonville. We would also use some of the prize to set up another Night at a museum opportunity for the children of prisoners which was so successful in 2010.
“I would like to say a very big thank you to you, for arranging our night at the museum, myself and A had a lovely time, meeting other people, and doing something that we wouldn’t of had the opportunity to do, if it hadn’t been for you and the staff and the museum. It is so nice knowing that everyone is in the same situation, and I didn’t have to be on edge wondering if A would slip up and tell someone that his daddy was in prison. It was lovely to spend some quality time together, and for me to experience things from a child’s point of view, and to see the excitement on his little face, he had been talking about his night at the museum for weeks.” Mother from Science Museum Sleep Over Night

Organisation: Media For Development
Project Name: The Media House and Time TV

Describe your project in one sentence:
A prison educational media course and prisoner made community prison television channel.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
Women’s prison – HMP Downview

What are the project’s objectives:
To deliver a high end media course specifically designed with the client group in mind. To deliver a 24/7 community television channel to the prison (watched in each cell) offering information, advice and guidance, celebration of cultural and religious festivals and peer to peer programming. To promote work ethics, confidence, self-esteem and better communication skills. To engage people into further and higher education, to help towards resettlement and future employment and ultimately reduce re-offending.

The Course
Teaching media is a tool for teaching life skills and resolving past issues. You can’t address criminal behaviour and past experiences such as domestic violence whilst learning dressmaking skills but you can address these issues whilst teaching media skills. At the core of our teaching is that the process is just as important as product. Through the carefully developed and structured course we aim to help and contribute to resolve the past and develop the future for the women. Through the work women can address issues of experiences such as:
- Drug Mules
- Domestic violence
- Sexual abuse
- Rape
- Trafficking
- Sex industry
- Drug abuse
- Alcohol abuse
This carefully developed course tailored to address the rehabilitation of prisoners while meeting the requirements of a nationally recognised course framework provides participants with:

- High-level qualification opportunities
- Improved literacy
- Improved IT skills
- Opportunities to reflect and develop higher order thinking skills
- Resolve past issues

Teaching through media offers valuable transferable skills:

- Team work
- Better communication skills
- Self discipline
- Meeting targets and deadlines
- Responsibility
- Presentation skills
- Developed attention skills

Individually for the participant it offers:

- Creativity
- Challenge
- Commitment
- Expectations
- Achievement

For the prison it offers:

- Better behaviour on the wings
- Prisoners with a greater understanding of themselves
- Prisoners feeling valued
- Prisoners discovering opportunities
- Prisoners becoming articulate
- Prisoners taking responsibility
- Prisoners with potential careers
- Achieving educational and employment targets
- Employment upon release targets

**Time TV**

The Time TV Broadcast Unit is made up of 5 – 9 graduates from the educational courses and the aim of the Broadcast Unit is to produce a weekly TV channel broadcasting 24/7 on in cell TV.

The Broadcast Unit offers participants:

- On-the-job training within a “real work” environment
- Routes into employment on release
- Multiple award opportunities for broadcast and wider project content
The broadcast material and content of transmissions offers the prisoners and the prison:

- A current and relevant prisoner-to-prisoner community channel through which information impacting on prisoners’ lives both inside and outside of prison can be broadcast
- A sense of community between prisoners
- Better staff to prisoner communications
- A platform for the promotion of work opportunities, education, vocational training, and offending behaviour programmes on offer in the prison
- A platform for permanent information films relating to key issues such as induction/first night in custody/ drugs strategy/ and all regular prison regimes
- A platform for showing who the key staff are in the prison
- A popular platform for broadcasting of relevant externally-produced material such as mental health awareness films, diversity films for different communities, drug awareness etc
- A more appropriate and current means of communication in an environment where illiteracy is higher
- Improved communications to foreign national prisoners through specifically made programmes and subtitles
- Reduced risk of misinformation and harmful gossip regarding significant changes in prison systems and regimes.

What are the project’s activities?
The Media House delivers, in 20 weeks, a Level 3 BTEC National Diploma in Creative Media Production. Designed specifically with the client group in mind we concentrate on documentary. The three staff working in the media house are all media industry professionals and the course is deliberately challenging to make participants raise their game to match our professional standards. The students undertake a series of practical film making tasks culminating in making a 5 minute documentary. Upon graduating the students have the opportunity to join the Time TV Broadcast Unit to make the internal prison community TV channel, Time TV. They then take on the responsibility of delivering a new channel each week, generating ideas for programmes, liaising with prison departments who commission work and encouraging fellow inmates to participate on the channel.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
Since the Media House began in 2006 a total of 139 students have graduated, and many of those have stayed on to work in the Broadcast Unit. We currently take 12 students per course and run 2 courses a year graduating 24 women annually. We maintain between 5 and 9 women on the Broadcast Unit.

The current success of courses delivered by Maria Esposito and Sian Williams for the last 22 students are:

- 1 Double Grade Distinction Star Distinction Star (the highest grade achievable)
- 7 Double Grade Distinction Star Distinction
- 14 Double Grade Distinction Distinction
- 4 Double Grade Merit Merit
- 6 Double Grade Merit Pass
We have 100% success rate for all students enrolled on the course. Under the management of Maria Esposito Time TV and The Media House has in 5 years become a multi award winning project with Maria herself this year winning a Butler Trust Award.

The total number of Koestler Arts Awards the project has won are:

- 2 Platinum
- 4 Gold
- 1 Silver
- 8 Bronze
- 5 Highly Commended
- 8 Commended

Adult Learners Week Awards:

- 2010 BBC Digital Participation Award
- 2011 Certificate of Achievement in Commitment to Learning

Since 2009 we have had success with women working directly in the media industry as well as many women securing full time employment in a variety of other careers. Many have gone on to University and this last academic year we have women studying at Goldsmiths, Birmingham, London Metropolitan, and City Universities. The project manager connects with media organisations to find exciting workplace training opportunities for those participants who want to follow a media path. However, as highlighted, the skills gained on the media training provides all participants with a better skill set in which to enter the job market.

- 8 graduates have taken up work placements with media companies including a graduate now working as a junior factual editor at the BBC, a graduate who is a technical and teaching assistant at the London Met Film School, graduate interns with Inside Job Productions, traineeships with Ginger Productions and most recently a woman who returned to Mumbai and within a week was offered a position as a trainee director with a Mumbai film company.
- 9 graduates have undertaken and are undertaking higher education degrees in Business Studies, History, Events Management, Social Sciences, Web Design and Journalism and photography. Many graduates continue their education whilst in prison doing distance learning courses as well as continuing with many prison based courses.
- Numerous graduates have successfully been employed during their resettlement period with a variety of organisations including Citizen’s Advice, Bentley Day Care Centre, Church organisations, Sue Ryder Charity Head Office, St Giles Trust and Koestler Arts

All of these women have discovered that they have more powers of concentration than they had ever thought and they have all grown in their own self-belief and confidence. They have all improved their communication skills and are able to work with confidence as opposed to arrogance in a team. All of them believe that the opportunities for work on release will be much greater with the skills they have learnt through media training.

Student 2008:

“It has given me hope for the future because the skills I have learned have made me feel that even though I have a prison record, once I leave prison my life with my new skills is just beginning.”
Student 2009:
“This course has helped me to gain an understanding of what I want to do in my future, and that my future can be bright and productive which will help my family and community.”

Student 2010:
“The project has given me confidence I never had, I now look forward to attending interviews without being nervous.”

Student 2011:
“As a person who has been in and out of the prison system for 10 years, doing this course has made me grow in confidence and self esteem. The knowledge and skills I have enables me to focus more on my rehabilitation and who I want to become once back in the community.”

What are your plans for developing the project further?
I would like to develop the course content tailored specifically for female offenders. I would like to be able to use a professional play out system. I would like to share the films that we produce at relevant conferences and film festivals. I would also like to be able to share our good practice within other custodial settings and at prison conferences on why teaching media literacy is vital in the 21st century and the impact it can have on changing lives.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
Purchase new computers for the broadcast unit so that more people can work on the TV channel. I would like to buy professional playout software for the prison to enhance how we transmit as well as buy subtitle software so we can transmit our programmes in other languages.

Organisation: NHS Warrington  
Project Name: HMP Risley Wellbeing Mentor Scheme

Describe your project in one sentence:
The aim of the scheme is to provide peer support with reference to health/wellbeing for all prisoners, and to improve access to health information, education, and services across the prison.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
HMP Risley is a Category C Training Prison with an operational capacity of 1085, for prisoners aged 18 years upwards. In the 2011 Health Needs Assessment the most frequently reported physical health conditions were dental health problems (16.8%), asthma (13.1%) and arthritis (7.3%). The most frequently reported mental health problems were depression (21.9%), stress (15.3%) and anxiety (10.9%). A substantial number of offenders also reported a history of substance use, particularly alcohol, and the majority indicated that they smoked tobacco at the time the HNA was conducted.
What are the project’s objectives:
1. To provide a wellbeing service for all prisoners. The scheme has been developed to provide information/advice on all health/wellbeing services within the prison, and also to create greater accessibility to these services/general health information.

2. To provide a peer support system for all prisoners and engage with hard-to-reach prisoners. Undertaking essential training, including active listening training, enables the mentors to draw out important information while in conversation with other prisoners, and with their knowledge of health/wellbeing services they can recommend the right service/self-referral opportunities for that particular prisoner. The scheme also enables hard-to-reach prisoners to access health/wellbeing services within the prison. As documented in a study by Howerton (et al, 2006) on understanding behaviour of male offenders; the prisoner and officer/health professional barrier reduces the likelihood that hard-to-reach prisoners will engage with prison health/wellbeing services. This scheme presents an opportunity for the mentors to bridge that gap in service access by providing a service delivered by prisoners for prisoners.

3. To improve access to health information, advice and services by:
   - Supporting the prison health events for prisoners/staff
   - Signposting prisoners to services within the prison community
   - Working in line with the National Health Events Calendar

4. To work in line with PSO3200 and health promotion action plan. Prison Service Order 3200 (PSO3200) was created to ensure prisoners have access to health services broadly equivalent to those in the general public. Through this PSO a Prison Health Improvement Group (PHIG) was created to ensure there was a whole prison approach to health promotion. The PHIG action plan stemmed from this detailing all health improvement work across the prison. All mentor work falls in line with the targets of the action plan, the mentors were involved in the development of this.

What are the project’s activities?
- Drop-in Clinics. Mentors run health promotion based drop-in clinics for all prisoners. The information available at these sessions covers all health/wellbeing topics in the form of leaflets, posters, booklets, magazines, bookmarks, postcards, and activity sheets. The mentors also offer self-referral application forms for prisoners wanting to attend services within the prison, and give advice on health/wellbeing topics such as nutrition and stopping smoking. The mentors keep a record of the drop-in sessions.
- Road-shows. The mentors run prison wide road-shows providing health/wellbeing information/advice for all prisoners. These sessions are supported with extra services such as Chlamydia testing from THT, and cancer awareness raising with Cheshire & Merseyside Cancer Network.
- Older Prisoner Groups. A group of Wellbeing Mentors aged 50 plus have been trained to provide support for other prisoners aged 50 plus. They support focus groups, lead walking groups on the exercise yards, and give feedback on behalf of other prisoners regarding health/wellbeing issues.
• Peer support. The mentors provide an open-door-policy at association times (when not running clinics) for any prisoners wanting to discuss health/wellbeing issues (the mentors receive confidentiality training to support this).
• Health Events. The mentors run health/wellbeing stalls at the prisoner health events.
• Health Representatives. The mentors are health representatives for their respective wings; they attend older prisoner meetings, health/wellbeing meetings, mentor meetings and all health events.
• Newsletters. The mentors collectively write bi-monthly newsletters consisting of health advice/information, personal interviews with prisoners/staff, puzzles and quizzes, and information on the Wellbeing Mentors Scheme. The mentors also produce a yearly pull-out calendar including health information and events that run throughout the year.

Over the past 2-3 years the scheme has developed into a prison wide health/wellbeing peer support scheme, created by prisoners, for prisoners. The scheme is accepted/supported across the whole prison.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
• Career development: the mentor scheme provides employment/career development opportunities for prisoners both whilst in custody and upon release. Mentors undertake the Royal Society of Public Health Level 2 course: Understanding Health Improvement which focuses on working with others, communication skills, and motivational skills which means the mentors have a good level of understanding and experience to be employed in health/wellbeing fields such as gym instructors and community health trainers. We have trained 65 mentors to date.
• Healthy lifestyle choices: by making healthier choices, whether it’s about food choices, education/employment course choices, activity/exercise choices, or the decision to quit smoking; prisoners and mentors are equally likely to improve their overall health/wellbeing through positive lifestyle changes.
• Improved self-esteem: the mentors have reported feeling good about themselves when they help peers achieve a goal or complete something they’ve found challenging. The prisoners making a change to their lifestyle have also reported feeling more positive.
• Reducing re-offending: improving career opportunities, positive lifestyle changes, and levels of self-esteem all help to reduce the likelihood of a prisoner re-offending after release.
• Health Events. An annual men’s health event was held in June with 150 prisoners in attendance. To support the event Wellbeing Mentor Road-shows ran throughout the same week with over 451 prisoners attending. Through both the health event and road-shows 601 prisoners were successfully engaged with, which is over half of the prison population (426% increase from the health event the previous year which didn’t include Wellbeing Mentor Road-shows).
• Peer Support. The scheme provides a peer support system for all prisoners. The mentors are well respected and trusted by other prisoners and present opportunities for prisoners to discuss personal issues that they might not feel comfortable speaking to a prison officer about. This is therefore likely to increase the number of prisoners who access health/wellbeing information/advice. Good peer relationships are key to the success of this scheme and have enabled the mentors to reach out to all prisoners.
What are your plans for developing the project further?
- Improving Older Prisoner Activities: to include carpet bowls, puzzle clubs including Sudoku/crosswords, low intensity exercise groups including chair based exercises, and book/movie clubs. These activities will encourage more older prisoners to engage with the mentor scheme and to make more positive lifestyle changes.
- HMP Risley Healthcare Health Needs Assessment (HNA): the mentor scheme will work with the recommendations from the 2011 HNA to help improve the positive impact of the scheme on prison healthcare services.
- Team leaders: as the scheme has developed the mentors have built up their knowledge in health/wellbeing, improved their confidence in dealing with different and sometimes difficult situations, and increased their motivation to be respected representatives for health/wellbeing issues on their wing. This has provided an opportunity for some mentors to be promoted to Team Leaders for the Wellbeing Mentors on their wing. These mentors will undertake the City & Guilds Level 3 Certificate for Health Trainers and once qualified will deliver one-to-one support for other prisoners (as a step-up to brief intervention advice delivered by other mentors). They will also become the main representative at meetings and forums concerning health/wellbeing including older prisoner/health improvement meetings, and they will ensure the drop-in clinic attendance monitoring/set up is completed. Becoming a Team Leader will help improve leadership skills, knowledge, and confidence, as well as improving employability and reducing re-offending.
- Wellbeing Mentor DVD: we intend to create a DVD explaining/promoting the mentor scheme and how it can benefit all prisoners. The DVD will be incorporated in the programmes on the prison channel available on all prison televisions. The DVD would also be an ideal way to introduce the mentor scheme and improve identifiably of the mentors, and it’s a great way to promote health/wellbeing for all.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
- Interactive resources will help to provide information on health issues. The mentors work with the ethos of making every contact count and interactive resources such as harmful effects of smoking posters, alcohol units and tar/tobacco displays help to reinforce the impact of information given by mentors, and increase the number of prisoners who make positive lifestyle changes.
- Older prisoner activities: purchasing carpet bowls sets, exercise bands, and puzzle packs would help the mentors to encourage older prisoners to take part in low-intensity activities and social activities which can improve overall health/wellbeing.
- Wellbeing Mentor T-shirts: T-shirts for the mentors would help to clearly identify the mentors and it may help other prisoners feel more confident approaching the mentors.
- Wellbeing Mentor DVD: as the prison has the facilities to film the footage for the DVD we would use some of the prize money to edit/produce the DVD for use within the prison.
Describe your project in one sentence:
BaCC supports the successful resettlement of ex-offenders through the restorative community of small groups of volunteers, drawn from local churches.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
In prisons and in the community

What are the project’s objectives:
The aim of BaCC is to support low risk offenders who are at a high risk of re-offending to achieve a purposeful, independent and ultimately crime free lives as part of their local community. The project is based at HMP Wandsworth with new projects now getting underway in Brixton, Bristol and Forest Bank prisons.

The scheme draws on the support of small groups of volunteers (usually 6 in number) who are drawn principally from local Christian church communities with each group supporting one ex-offender (who we shall call ‘Robert’ here) at a time. Volunteers take it in turns to meet with or make daily contact with Robert both before and after release, welcoming him at the gate on the day of release and supporting him as he begins his journey back into the community.

BaCC provides a sense of community and belonging to ex-offenders; it helps to develop their confidence and sense of self-worth and encourages them in the discipline of keeping appointments, meeting with volunteers at agreed times and establishing a purposeful routine and structure to their days. It offers a reliable and supportive community they do not want to let down and to experience, often for the first time in their lives, relationships of trust.

The project is ecumenical in character and non-evangelical.

What are the project’s activities?
BaCC volunteers provide daily support for Robert in the critical early days and months following release; this is usually by meeting with Robert or making contact by phone. Each Robert has different needs so the nature and time of the contact is flexible. The volunteers and Robert also meet together as a group each week to catch up, provide mutual support for one another and simply to enjoy each others company.

As well as offering a ‘listening ear’ the BaCC teams offer practical support on a range of issues such as finding or maintaining suitable accommodation, accessing healthcare, identifying training courses, preparation for job interviews, helping find out about new hobbies or volunteering opportunities, claiming benefits. “They didn’t tell me what to do but we discussed things as they always said ‘two heads are better than one’ and it has kept me on the right path. I’m not saying I’ve had it easy, I’ve had
issues but I’ve dealt with them in a constructive way.” (Robert) Sometimes BaCC groups have supported Robert in re-connecting with family members where contact has been long lost. For many, of course, there is no supportive family or other natural ‘positive’ community of friends to return to and BaCC offers an important stepping stone on the way to finding a new place and role in society.

Other activities include ‘Group Support Sessions’ – for ex-offenders ready to move on from a BaCC group but still in need of support from other ‘Roberts’ e.g. meeting for a meal, coffee or a chat. This is a new development which has been created in response to feedback from Roberts. Another feature of the project is the provision of BaCC Packs – a ‘survival kit’ for ex-offenders, who need them, on release – containing clothes, underwear, bedding, shoes, toiletries, an Oyster card for those in London. Many prisoners leave prison with very few essential items and no money to buy them.

BaCC has over 50 active trained volunteers. It works closely too with prison Chaplaincy and resettlement teams in identifying Roberts who are genuinely committed to making a fresh start. This arrangement has extremely well and this partnership approach has been a key factor in the project’s success.

BaCC has been cited as a model of support by both HMPs, Probation and by the Centre for Social Justice.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:

a) In terms of the people involved in the project
BaCC has been transformative both for the ex-offenders and for the volunteers who have been involved with it. Remarkable progress has been made for people who have been accustomed to repeatedly re-offending. Some examples:

- Robert 1. Has completed a course in building, off drugs, in a flat, and now back in work
- Robert 2. Re-connected with son, off drugs and signed up for course
- Robert 3. Has shown real motivation and direction. He is attending his drug course, is part of a football team each weekend; is on a book keeping course and doing well. Has started training as a BaCC volunteer and is applying for a job.

“My attitude was always that if something didn’t work once, I gave up and walked away from it and I said to the group, you know what I’m not doing it again but they convinced me to try again and I’ve now passed all my exams with flying colours. It really taught me to persist and I couldn’t have got here without BaCC” (Robert)

In the autumn of 2010, we began working with Manchester University Business School to create a new performance management framework to evaluate the impact of BaCC, and performance assessment tools, for its development from a small scale pilot to a national programme. We are focusing on ‘honest’ outcomes, rather than ‘tick box’ measurements, which so often incentive the wrong kind of behaviours. As well as being concerned with reducing re-offending, BaCC is also concerned with change, and the work with MBS is helping us to ‘measure’ its impact more authentically and comprehensively.

b) In terms of re-offending, of the 24 Roberts who have been supported since the pilot project began two years ago, 16 Roberts have not re-offended. One Robert is now out for two years and a number of others for over a year.
Given that BaCC works with offenders who according to OASys are at a high risk of re-offending, this is a considerable achievement.

Even if a Robert does re-offend, (most commonly this has been for breach of licence) then the group does not close the door on Robert returning to the group again. Indeed on two occasions, Roberts have returned successfully to the group for support. This is a very important aspect of the work; we do not give up on anyone.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
BaCC has established a firm base at HMP Wandsworth (from where five BaCC groups with 50 active volunteers run) and work is underway at Brixton, Bristol, Forest Bank prisons. Our ultimate aim is to create a national network of BaCC schemes with the next phase extending the work in London, Lancashire and Greater Manchester. Underpinning this development is a commitment to ecumenical collaboration.

We are keen to develop the project soon at a women’s prison also.

We are delighted to have secured support from Porticus UK for the appointment of a National BaCC Co-ordinator to help roll out the scheme for the benefit of much larger numbers, from the Henry Smith Charity and the Joseph Rank Trust to expand the work in London, and from the Mary Strand Trust to develop the work in the North West.

We will be using this fresh funding to scale the project up so that we can use the framework provided by Manchester Business School to demonstrate the project’s effectiveness to commissioners at a national level.

Your support in recognising its value would be a tremendous help.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
We would use the money to support the roll out of BaCC to new prisons in the North West and in Bristol for the benefit of many more ex-offenders who are keen to make a fresh start.

**Organisation:** Prisoners Education Trust  
**Project Name:** Distance Learning Access and Support Programme

**Describe your project in one sentence:**
The programme enables prisoners to study a wide range of courses at levels and in subjects not otherwise available in prison, providing advice, grants and support to learners and enhancing their chances of building a better life in prison and after release.
Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
The programme is available to all prisons in England and Wales, and is usually accessed by around 90% of prisoners and YOIs each year, with the support and engagement of prison education and advice staff.

What are the project’s objectives:
The programme provides prisoners with access to further education and learning beyond the basic prison provision. For prisoners who have already achieved level 2 qualifications, before or inside prison, there are almost no opportunities to progress, but with distance learning they can access over 400 different courses, both academic and vocational, from freelance journalism and counselling, to sports nutrition and landscape gardening. This wide range of choice ensures that each prisoner’s learning is tailored to their own needs and aspirations and provides a sense of identity as they become a student within a particular field, closely connected to their specific interests. The Trust also provides advice and support, creating a positive re-enforcement network for prisoners who wish to undertake distance learning.

The programme as a whole helps prisoners to develop an increased sense of motivation and self esteem, but is also practical, equipping the individual with skills and knowledge that can help them either to further learning or to a greater chance of employment on release. Increasing their ability to secure employment is important as they can then contribute positively to the communities they resettle in and are less likely to fall into the 70% who reoffend within six months of release.

What are the project’s activities?
We enable prisoners to access distance learning and assist them as they select and apply for courses, providing advice and support to them and prison education staff throughout this process. With the wide range of courses available we are able to help individuals identify the right course that suits their individual needs and help them identify the best provider, for example accessing horticultural courses from the RHS Horticultural Correspondence College, to ensure the qualification they gain is the most recognised. The distance learning support we provide aims to fill gaps in the advice and guidance given in prison, focusing particularly on distance learning and connections to potential employment paths, and advising on the challenges ex-offenders will face in gaining qualifications and employment. As a charity, we can take a holistic and supportive approach, building a relationship as well as providing high quality information and advice, via email, telephone or post as appropriate.

We have produced 12 career briefings covering key sectors of employment in which prisoners are interested, such as ‘Working in Bookkeeping’ and ‘Working in Sport and Fitness’. We have distributed hundreds of these to prisoners and prison staff across England and Wales, by post, and in visits and electronically. We also use them as a reference tool internally and ensure they are shared widely though other relevant networks. Feedback is very positive, telling us that this service is needed and used.

Most prisoners carry out their distance learning in their cell, or sometimes in other places within the prison as allowed, for example in the prison library. They control the time they give to their study and the rate at which they achieve each course completion. Once they have completed a course, we can advise on next steps and continue to support them in any further learning.
What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:

The programme opens a door to further learning that would have not been available otherwise. Self-chosen self-directed learning nourishes and encourages personal identity, as individuals choose a course that suits their own learner needs and personal aspirations, and then study in their own way and their own time, allowing them to manage their progress at a rate that suits them. Feedback from prisoner learners provides evidence that they also feel they develop valuable ‘soft skills’ which we know are relevant to employability. Engaging in distance learning means that instead of being labelled a ‘prisoner’ or an ‘offender’, he/she becomes a student or learner, and feels acknowledged as an individual.

As one prisoner told us recently, “In times when you believe that everything is against you and you get used to hearing ‘no’ to every answer, it really gave me a lift to hear ‘yes’ from Prisoners Education Trust.”

The letters we receive from prisoners tell us the difference that we make and show the growth in self-esteem and motivation that can result from their learning, a path they have chosen and committed to independently. So far in 2011 we have received 2255 applications and made 1823 grants.

One of those we supported was ‘Alan’ who told us, “I have never been so motivated in my life to make changes and do good where my education, future, and my kids are concerned.”

Another, ‘George’, completed a level 2 course in horticulture and we have now funded him to do the level 3 course. He wrote to us saying, “Upon release I am hopeful that I can set up my own landscaping business with the knowledge I have, and hope to continue gaining from the RHS courses. I have also completed a number of finance related courses and business venture courses whilst in custody, which I will need to run a business project upon release.”

We monitor all students with the help of prison education staff and the prisoners themselves using feedback forms, monitoring forms sent to the prison staff and other mechanisms. In our 2010 annual customer satisfaction survey 96% of respondents who were still studying felt they were learning something useful, and 85% were very satisfied with their distance learning course. Of those who were no longer studying, 97% saw their course through to completion. 65% felt their distance learning improved their prospects, 51% stated their self esteem had improved as a result of distance learning and 81% had developed a desire to learn more. “Colleen” at HMP Holloway told us “I am getting quite high marks for my essays, and I feel I am doing very well. I would like to take this chance to thank you as I wouldn’t have been able to do it without your help. I think you provide great support for all prisoners by helping them getting into higher education.”

There is independent evidence to suggest that distance learning facilitates a rehabilitative change. The Home Office followed up 377 of prisoner distance learners funded by the Trust two years after their release and found that their reoffending rate was less than one half that of the predicted average rate.
What are your plans for developing the project further?
We aim to expand the service and develop the advice and ongoing support provision further. This would include provision of a ‘one stop shop’ for comprehensive, detailed knowledge of distance learning courses and related progression and employment pathways. We will:

- Expand the existing range of career briefings including information on progression routes and career pathways linked to distance learning courses.
- Provide information regarding how particular courses are viewed by employers and the impact of criminal records on employment prospects.
- Develop a knowledge bank of information and support regarding other sources of funding and access to external mentors for distance learners both in prison and on release, and include signposting to agencies that work with ex offenders to help them find other learning and employment opportunities.
- Continue to respond to individual prisoners advising on courses, and telephone or email prison staff advising on distance learning courses and progression routes.
- To underpin this work, we hope to ensure the resources produced by the project are available on the virtual campus, the emerging limited access online learning provision now being implemented in prisons.

Also key is a continual process of prison visits and relationship development with prison staff. It is essential that staff and prisoners are aware of distance learning opportunities, so that we can continue to help as many prisoners as possible in their learning aspirations.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
As well as our main learning access grant programme, we have a small annual awards scheme – the Allt Awards – through which we make additional grants to high achieving or highly constructive learners (i.e. those who act as role models, volunteers etc within prison, assisting other learners), assisting them with tools, books or other costs associated with continuing study or resettlement. We only award around £1500 each year from this fund, but this winner’s prize would enable us to run an expanded awards process in 2011.

Organisation: Prison Fellowship England and Wales
Project Name: Sycamore Tree

Describe your project in one sentence:
The Sycamore Tree programme helps to break the cycle of reoffending by helping prisoners to understand the impact of their crimes on their victims, communities and themselves.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
The Sycamore Tree programme is facilitated in both adult and YOI establishments. Members of the community attend a session within the prison in order to witness the Acts of Restitution (symbolic acts
What are the project’s objectives:
The Sycamore Tree is a victim awareness programme that aims to break the cycle of reoffending by helping prisoners to understand the impact of their crimes on their victims, communities and themselves. It also gives victims the chance to be involved in the reparation process. Sycamore Tree also works to raise awareness of the positive impact of Restorative Justice. Members of the public are invited to witness the final session of the course where the prisoners are able to make a declaration that they are willing to make amends and turn away from crime. This helps to show prisoners that there are those willing to offer second chances and helps communities to realise that their support is needed in the process of Restorative Justice.

What are the project’s activities?
Sycamore Tree is a six-session accredited programme taught in prison to a group of up to 20 learners. Each course is presented by a fully trained Tutor and several small group leaders, all supported by one of Prison Fellowship's Regional Coordinators.

The Sycamore Tree programme raises victim awareness among offenders and teaches the principles and application of restorative justice. Participants explore the effects of crime on victims, offenders, and the community, and discuss what it would mean to take responsibility for their personal actions.

For most offenders on Sycamore Tree the most powerful element of the programme is when a victim of crime comes in to talk through how crime has impacted their lives. At the end of each programme members of the community are invited to support and bear witness to the offenders' intentions to put into practice their improved attitudes and behaviour. Offenders have an opportunity in the final session to express their remorse - some write letters, poems or create works of art or craft.

Sycamore Tree currently runs in over 30 prisons and YOIs in England and Wales, and over 2000 offenders participate every year. The programme is taught using a variety of methods: large and small group discussions, tutor presentations, DVD clips, drama, and personal study time.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
Since its inception in 1998, Sycamore Tree in England and Wales has taught over 16,700 offenders, (male and female, adults, young offenders and juveniles). For learners, this has had the impact of showing them the effect their crime has on others:
- “This course has made me think about nearly every mistake I have ever made and how those mistakes affected people. About how much I’ve taken from society, and how I can start to pay it back by rebuilding my life in the right way. It’s made me see things from many points of view and has opened my eyes to a lot more things. It’s made me realise that there is good within me, and has given me a lot of self-confidence and has made me see what’s important in life.” ST Learner

on the part of the prisoners where they can demonstrate that they wish to make amends and turn away from crime.)
Restorative Justice also gives victims the chance to play a meaningful role in getting prisoners to understand the need for reparation and it gives them the opportunity to ask questions of offenders and their behaviour. Victims of crime are also helped by the course as they share their story with the prisoners – many have reported that they have found the process a positive experience that has helped them on their journey of healing:

- "I do feel that both the prisoners and the victims get such a lot out of their meeting and feel that a lot of healing and understanding happens from both sides. I am a staunch believer in this programme and talk about the benefits at talks and presentations throughout the borough." Jan Stanley, Chorley Branch Manager, Victim Support Lancashire

Inviting community members into the final week of the course helps to show prisoners that there are those willing to offer second chances, and helps communities to realise that their support is needed in the process of Restorative Justice.

To provide evidence of the quality of the programme and its delivery, and its impact in reducing reoffending, Prison Fellowship commissioned Sheffield Hallam University's Research Centre for Community Justice to carry out an evaluation of more than 2,000 prisoners who had taken part in Sycamore Tree. A report was published in March 2005 carrying the statement: "Based on the analysis of the whole sample there was a statistically significant reduction on all the Crime Pics II scales indicating that the programme had the desired impact on participants and reduced the attitudes that are known to be conducive to offending behaviour".

A larger scale evaluation, taking into consideration around 5,000 sets of Crime Pics II data was carried out in Spring 2009.

The Sheffield Hallam reports can be downloaded here:
http://www.prisonfellowship.org.uk/downloads.html

- "The results are really encouraging and I was pleased that the positive impact which prisoners so often report is replicated in the outcome of the research ... I think the fact that Prison Fellowship has taken such an 'evidence-based approach' significantly improves the credibility of Sycamore Tree and I hope that it will continue to be delivered and developed." Michael Spurr, HMPS Operations Director

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
We aim to offer Sycamore Tree to every prison and YOI in England and Wales.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
The Sycamore Tree programme costs £3,600 per course and is priced on a cost recovery basis. Due to cuts in prison funding, more and more courses need to be paid for outside of the prison service. £1,000 will pay for 5 learners to take part in Sycamore Tree. If the cycle of re-offending is broken for just one learner this will save the government over £40,000 a year, which is the cost of keeping one person in prison for one year.
Organisation: **Prison Radio Association**
Project Name: **National Prison Radio**

**Describe your project in one sentence:**
National Prison Radio (NPR) is a national radio station created by the charity, the Prison Radio Association (PRA), in partnership with NOMS, which broadcast programmes made by prisoners for prisoners 24 hours a day directly into prison cells across the estate, as an innovative way of informing prisoners of services available to them, creating a sense of community and supporting measures to reduce reoffending.

**Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):**
NPR is received in prisons and Young Offender Institutions of all types across England and Wales.

**What are the project’s objectives:**
The PRA was established as an education charity in 2006. Its overall aim is to contribute to a reduction in reoffending using the power of radio. In 2007 the PRA conceived the idea for NPR and in May 2009 entered into a no-cost partnership with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to set up and manage the project. NOMS is responsible for installing the satellite reception equipment required for prisoners to access the service in prisons. The PRA runs NPR from its headquarters in HMP Brixton and its satellite project in HMP Styal (opened autumn 2010 by HRH The Princess Royal). NPR is the world’s first national radio station providing educational and resettlement programming exclusively to prisoners around the clock. Content is produced by prisoners trained in radio production who work alongside the PRA’s team of professional radio producers (all ex-BBC). The service is broadcast via in-cell television sets.

The primary objectives are:
- To reach as wide a listening audience as possible by broadcasting high-quality, relevant and credible programming to the prison community;
- To contribute to a reduction in reoffending by providing prisoners with the knowledge and information, in an accessible format, that they need to change their lives;
- To promote the work of partner organisations who work within the prison and wider criminal justice sectors.

The service currently reaches 60 prisons (a potential audience of approximately 35,000 prisoners) and the national installation is due to be completed by spring 2012. In addition, the PRA aims to engage hard-to-reach prisoners in the production of radio for broadcast on NPR through its projects in HMP Brixton and HMP Styal.

**What are the project’s activities?**
The charity works to achieve its objectives through two specific mechanisms:
- Through the delivery of participative learning activities – engaging hard-to-reach prisoners in the production of speech-based radio programming;
- Through the provision of a dedicated communications service (NPR) – broadcasting programmes to...
prisoners via in-cell television about a range of important issues.

To date the PRA has worked directly with over 100 prisoners producing content for broadcast and has engaged several hundred as contributors to the service. A recent report of an HMP Brixton inspection (December 2010) by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons cites the radio project as an example of best practice in supporting the development of employability skills.

- “Working in prison radio can be an incredibly empowering experience for prisoners. Prisoners take on a high level of responsibility for programming, editing and presentation. It helps to build on literacy, numeracy and presentation skills and improve communication and team work. Just as importantly, it can greatly boost confidence and self-esteem, and motivate prisoners to think about leading more positive lives beyond custody.”
  Katharine Hamilton, Head of Learning & Skills, HMP Brixton

Prison radio offers an accessible and innovative way of drawing hard-to-reach prisoners back into the classroom. Crucially, it is a by prisoner for prisoner service; making it credible with its audience.

- “I thought my life was over, I’d lost my flat and my girlfriend, I was scared when I arrived at Brixton… Then one day a leaflet about a radio production course came through my cell door… It changed my life. I loved the work and the people. It gave me the opportunity to focus on something positive and constructive.”
  Anthony – NCFE Level 1 and 2 Radio Production

Prisoners directly involved in the production and presentation of intelligent, speech-based radio programmes benefit significantly from the experience. However, the real potential of prison radio is in reaching the wider prison population; delivering key messages on behalf of a range of statutory and voluntary agencies that support NOMS priorities in reducing reoffending.

Broadcasts are targeted to specific demographics and include a mix of speech and specialist music programming. Educational programming addresses a variety of issues, including: learning and skills; health and well-being; family and relationships; offending behaviour; safer custody; resettlement. Through targeted campaigns in particular, NPR complements existing education and training provision. Recently the PRA broadcast its first literacy campaign, ‘Reasons to Read’. Working with the Shannon Trust, the campaign promoted its award-winning peer mentoring reading scheme, Toe by Toe. Through these radio broadcasts, and by giving a voice to a range of agencies, the PRA encourages its prisoner audience to become active learners; engaging with the range of advice, support services and opportunities available to them.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
a.) The PRA works with prisoners, one of the most marginalised sections of society, addressing complex issues such as low average literacy levels, drug and alcohol misuse, low self-esteem and mental health problems. The project aims to support those most in need to turn their lives around.

- “National Prison Radio has had a powerful impact on listeners at HMP Brixton. The service communicates vital information about the educational opportunities and resettlement programmes...
which can help prisoners to make the most of their time in prison and turn their lives around. The sense of prison community has been strengthened by the presence of prisoners’ voices on air and the ability for staff and support services to address important issues in a way that is accessible to everyone...”
Governor Ed Tullett, HMP Brixton

- “Prison radio programmes about the importance of maintaining family relationships play a crucial role in keeping families together. Prison radio also helps to cement family relationships by broadcasting messages of love and support from family members to prisoners. The impact of these broadcasts should not be underestimated.”
Deborah Cowley, Director, Action for Prisoners’ Families

Since its establishment in 2006 the PRA has been building up a respected track record in the field of offender learning and broadcast media sectors. The PRA has received a number of awards in recognition of its pioneering work:

- 2011, 2010 & 2009 Sony Radio Academy Awards – six wins, including two Gold Awards
- 2011 Butler Trust Award – for the PRA’s National Prison Radio Service Manager, Andrew Wilkie
- 2011 Greater London High Sheriffs Award – again for Andrew Wilkie’s pioneering work
- 2011 Sandford St Martin Trust – Merit Award
- 2010 Jerusalem Awards – Good Friday Category Winner
- 2009 IVCA Clarion Awards – Radio Station Category Winner
- 2008 Charity Times Awards – Best New Charity

The PRA’s work has also been recognised by Ofsted the Royal Society for the Arts and the Centre for Social Justice, amongst others.

b) NPR has a remarkable reach across the prison estate. In the largest survey so far of listenership to the radio station, 93% of prisoners able to access the service had heard of NPR, and 74% of prisoners listened to the service. 42% of prisoners say they listen to the service every day. Prisoners communicate with the radio station by letter, and the numbers of letters received per month has steadily increased from around 50 individual correspondents in March 2011 to over 400 in August. A key role NPR plays in reducing reoffending is in signposting prisoners towards interventions which may address their offending. The ‘Reasons to Read’ campaign is one example – in those prisons which receive NPR, the Shannon Trust reported a 91% increase in new learners signing up across a month, compared with the average from the previous five months, while the number of new mentors increased by 27% over the same period.

A key part of the campaign was the launch of the National Prison Radio Book Club with the book The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time and an interview with the author Mark Haddon. Working with the Cilip Prison Libraries Group and Prison Reading Groups project, NPR informed listeners and prison library users that free copies of the book were available, courtesy of a previous collaboration between World Book Night and PrisonerActionNet. The success of this partnership is replicated in partnerships with dozens of other organisations such as the Department of Health, Adfam, Forgiveness Project, English PEN, Prison Reform Trust and the Samaritans.

The PRA is working towards a number of outcomes, including:

- 2,500 prisoners to have a raised awareness of support services by October 2012
What are your plans for developing the project further?
The PRA’s ambition is to increase prisoner access and interaction with NPR. By providing a freephone number for prisoners, they will be able to contribute to discussions by leaving voicemail messages for broadcast, provide general feedback, or request further information on services featured on-air.

This approach would bring several benefits – increasing the on-air representation of prisoners from establishments that do not have radio facilities, enriching the interactive element of the station’s programming and allowing the PRA to better evaluate the effectiveness of the service. In addition, the PRA plans to further develop its work to promote partner organisations to the prisoner audience by positioning NPR as the best solution for prisoner communications, increasing the number and quality of on-air social action campaigns and opening up the service’s core, mainstream programming for sponsorship by partners within and outside the criminal justice sector.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
The prize money would help the PRA to implement the freephone number detailed above. It would also allow for production of a special programme for broadcast on NPR featuring the work of Prisoner Action Net award winners and nominees, in order to raise their profile and the profile of the scheme.

Organisation: The Conservation Foundation
Project Name: Tools Shed

Describe your project in one sentence:
Tools Shed collects broken and discarded garden tools which prisoners repair and recycle to give out free as start-up packs to schools and community gardens.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
Tools Shed is delivered at HMP Wandsworth, Highdown, Dartmoor, HMP YOI Thorn Cross and Feltham, HMP Morton Hall. HMP Bullingdon, Edinburgh and Castington & Acklington are pending.

What are the project’s objectives:
Threefold:
1. To recycle unused and or broken garden tools
2. To give them to prisons where they provide semi-skilled work to a wide range of prisoners.
3. To provide prisoners with the chance of becoming involved in a national recycling scheme which links them with their local schools and community gardens in an original and practical way.

2) and 3) are particularly relevant to this application. Through Tools Shed thousands of tools are now collected nationally on special tool amnesty days and delivered to the prisons above. Tools Shed help prisoners gain accreditation and semi-skilled work throughout the year. Tools Shed integrates into each prisons’ recycling initiative. And provides a small, efficient and self contained project which gives a positive outcome and forges links with the outside community. To bolster the prisoners’ self esteem and feeling of usefulness knowing that their work does make a difference to cash-strapped local schools and community gardens.

What are the project’s activities?
1. To liaise with national garden nurseries, the RHS, and others to collect unused and broken garden hand tools and to arrange for delivery to prisons
2. To provide all necessary materials which the prisons need to repair the tools to good order (lathes, paints, varnish, sand-paper, gloves, etc)
3. To visit the prisons and prisoners to ensure that contacts are kept up.
4. To liaise and invite schools and community gardens – through our website, facebook, twitter and contacts – to come and collect garden tools and to distribute the story to the media.
5. To liaise with the prisons at distribution and to help out at distribution days.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
For HMP Wandsworth it has given the prisoners repairing the tools, an opportunity to work together, learn about safe working practices, tool use and maintenance procedures.

Another benefit is the positive media coverage which involvement with Tools Shed can provide. “The media always like to promote the negative aspects of prison life. Anything that is a good news story coming from Wandsworth is a great achievement.”

HMP High Down comments that Tools Shed encourages commitment, self discipline, with a progression through the workshop to take on further woodworking skills.

High Down has shown that the contact it has made with its local primary schools during the distribution days has forged some very good links. Because of Tools Shed the wood workshop at High Down is now designing and making items for their local schools.

Tools Shed shows that “High Down is a community based prison that tries to help prisoners back into society and gives individuals a sense of purpose, self belief and recognition that they are still contributing to society” (High Down)

At Wandsworth Tools Shed gives a small team of prisoners regular work and a strong sense of identity. Through the distribution days which are held at the prisons, the prisons and the prisoners by association have a new connection with the wider community. At HMP Wandsworth up to 150 parents, children, teachers and gardeners visited the prison to collect a 100 free start up packs. Packs consist of a garden
fork, spade, rake, hoe and hand tools. There are also garden loppers and shears which can be taken individually. All tools are finished to a high quality.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**

HMP Bullingdon, Edinburgh and Castington & Acklington have all expressed an interest but until Tools Shed can raise further funding these prisons have been put on hold. Alnwick Garden will link with HMP Castington & Acklington and collect tools for the prison which would provide a positive community connection. (HMP Dartmoor is linked with The Eden Project) Ideally to set up as many prisons where they can be linked with a local source. (eg Eden and Dartmoor) as possible.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**

£1,000 would enable Tools Shed to equip HMP Wandsworth and HMP High Down with materials and certification for the prisoners for one year.

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**Organisation:** The Reading Agency  
**Project Name:** Six Book Challenge

**Describe your project in one sentence:**

A simple but powerful engagement tool, the annual Six Book Challenge is designed to engage less confident readers in an enjoyment of reading and enable them to improve their literacy skills at the same time.

**Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg. prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):**

The programme is delivered in a range of settings such as libraries, colleges, adult and community education and workplaces but is particularly suited to partnership work in custodial settings. Around 100 prisons and YOIs have been taking part in 2011.

**What are the project’s objectives:**

In prisons and YOIs the Six Book Challenge aims to:

- Engage people in an enjoyment of reading, often for the first time
- Encourage awareness and use of the prison library
- Contribute to skills development, progression to resettlement and employability and thus reduce re-offending
- Create a buzz about reading by involving a diverse range of offenders and staff who can support each other
- Kickstart social reading activity such as reading groups and book swaps
What are the project’s activities?
The Six Book Challenge invites people to pick six reads of their choice and record their reading in a diary in order to get a certificate. This work can be enriched with events to launch and celebrate the scheme and creative reading activity such as reading groups and book swaps along the way. The scheme is usually led by the library in prison settings with staff working in partnership with other departments such as Education, Resettlement, Workshops, the Chaplaincy, Visiting and activities on the wings. Staff are also welcome to take part and this has proved particularly successful to engender a common goal.

"The Six Book Challenge is so easy to do in prisons,” says Sue Wilkinson, Chair of the Prison Libraries Group. “All of the components are there to make it successful. And it’s an ideal opportunity to work in partnership across the prison."

Participants can choose whatever they like to read ranging from books specially published for less confident readers such as the Quick Reads, to titles selected for this audience (www.readingagency.org.uk/findaread) and any other longer titles. Staff have adapted the scheme to take account of different regimes. Some such as HMP YOI Brinsford run it over a short intensive period to maintain interest from the young men and help them to complete it before discharge. Others such as HMP Lewes run it on a roll-on roll-off basis as new offenders are introduced to the library on induction. Others such as HMP Forest Bank link it closely to Toe by Toe in order to inject progression to reading for pleasure into the peer mentoring scheme.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
The Government stated in Making Prisons Work: Skills for Rehabilitation in May 2011 that skills development is crucial to reducing re-offending. According to the Evening Standard, Shadow Justice Minister Sadiq Khan suggested at the Labour Party Conference on 28 September that prisons should be penalised if they failed to teach offenders to read. Prisoners cannot be ‘made’ to read however – they have to want to learn to do so. Research tells us that reading for pleasure, at whatever level, can motivate and inspire people to continue reading and improve their skills at the same time. Impact research carried out in the first year of the Six Book Challenge found that 94% of respondents felt a sense of achievement, 88% said they gained from the experience and 60% reported an improvement in their skills – a finding endorsed each year by tutors. The Challenge clearly encourages participants in custodial settings to develop a reading habit and improve their skills which can only benefit them when preparing for release and increase their chances of rehabilitation.

The Six Book Challenge has been run in prison settings since its launch in 2008 with participation rising to around 3000 offenders and staff in 2011. Feedback has been overwhelming positive. We’ve chosen two very different examples for this submission but can provide more on request.

HMP Whatton has now run the Challenge for three years with the library taking a very pro-active approach, inviting everybody who comes to the library to take part and encouraging prison orderlies to promote the scheme on the wings. 129 prisoners registered this year of whom 95 completed, plus 25 staff including the Governor Lynn Saunders who comments:
“The Six Book Challenge provides the opportunity for prisoners from all abilities and backgrounds to participate and celebrate the value of books and reading. At Whatton the enthusiasm and commitment of the prisoners is supported and encouraged by library and education staff and the annual celebration is a useful boost to the self-esteem of all the participants.”

Comments gathered from participants by Librarian Gill Peto demonstrate the range of positive outcomes relating to their sense of identity and independence:

- “I am doing this challenge as it helped me learn to read and I will do the next one if I have enough time left.”
- “Reading books is something new to me. Only since coming to prison have I got into it with the helpful library staff helping me to get the books I’m into. I do enjoy it and will continue to read books. Thank you.”
- “If you have lost interest in reading good books this will get you back into it and because it’s a six book challenge this keeps you motivated.”
- “I don’t read very much so this was good and I can’t wait for the next one.”

And it’s not just literacy that has improved at HMP Whatton as librarian Rachel Stevens reports. “The Challenge is also a proven stress release. We have a number of self-harmers, one of whom came to the library and asked us to find him another Challenge when he completed, saying that he hadn’t harmed himself while he’d been doing the Challenge.”

Librarian Ian Orchard runs the scheme with young offenders at HMP & YOI Warren Hill: “It continues to be very popular with the young people (juveniles 14-18) in our care. We frequently get asked by YPs completing the challenge if they can do it again. There aren’t that many things you can give them. The Challenge is very important and is the library’s main promotional tool.”

Nearly half of all offenders at HMP Warren Hill took part in 2010. One lad read 70 books and was so proud of his achievement that he took his certificate to court to show his mother. When quizzed by the judge on whether he really had read so many books, the prisoner proceeded to give a detailed account of each book, and answer questions, putting everybody in the room in no doubt that he had indeed achieved what he claimed.

Roger Plant, former Governor at HMP & YOI Warren Hill, commented: “It’s as good an intervention as there is and it’s illustrated to the young men that all occupations/hobbies don’t have to be physical and tough looking to be cool. The added spin-off is that the Challenge and the habit of reading can be started in a controlled environment and hopefully continued on release, thus alleviating some of the boredom that in some cases keeps them on the streets, and maybe prevent re-offending.”

What are your plans for developing the project further?
Our aim is to introduce the Six Book Challenge to every prison and YOI across the UK so that participants can complete the scheme as they move around the system. In order to deepen the impact of the scheme we will continue to work closely with prison libraries and encourage them to link with a wider range of partners to encourage take-up among people who do not come to the library or education. This includes a project to achieve mental health outcomes for Six Book Challenge in all London prisons in

PrisonerActionNet - www.lemosandcrane.co.uk/prisoneractionnet/
which we will support partnership working between libraries and those departments dealing with mental health issues among offenders.

Through our work with the TUC’s learning arm unionlearn we will continue to work with the Prison Officers’ Association to encourage take-up by prison staff. This has already taken place at the Eastchurch Learning Centre in Kent. We will also develop further working links with other initiatives such as Toe by Toe, Storybook Dad, Writers/Readers in Residence and prison reading groups because we believe that the Six Book Challenge can complement and enhance these programmes through its flexible and motivational framework.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**

We would put the prize towards a deeper evaluation of the impact of the Six Book Challenge in custodial settings. This will lead us to a greater understanding of how the scheme can be used most effectively to benefit offenders both within and beyond the prison walls.

| Organisation: The Reader Organisation  
Project Name: Get Into Reading |

Describe your project in one sentence:

Our shared facilitated reading groups aid wellbeing and build community.

Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):

Prisons, Approved Premises, Community initiatives to prevent reoffending

What are the project’s objectives:

The Reader Organisation envisages a world in which everyone has access to literature, and in which personal responses to books are freely shared in reading communities in every area of life. We work to promote reading literature as a vital life skill, to give everyone the confidence and ability to find pleasure in reading, to bring attention to the power of reading in contributing to personal and social well-being, and to build reading communities in which shared meanings can be constructed across social and cultural boundaries.

Get Into Reading is the innovative model of shared facilitated reading through which we pursue these objectives. Our groups with offenders and ex-offenders encourage social inclusion and positive interaction with others by providing opportunities for purposeful activity, in particular through the reading of literature and the sharing of experiences. Shared reading also leads to improvements in concentration, greater personal confidence, improved mental health and a growing sense of connectedness. In the short and long-term, Get Into Reading prompts authentic engagement and a unique opportunity to reflect on society, personal responsibility and accountability.
What are the project’s activities?
Get Into Reading brings people together through regular weekly sessions in which stories and poems are read aloud by trained facilitators with group members joining in as they wish. This makes it possible for a wide range of socially disadvantaged, excluded and isolated people to improve their lives and communities through shared reading. We currently deliver over 250 groups, reaching approximately 1000 beneficiaries each week, including people involved with the criminal justice system, young people at risk, Looked After Children in therapeutic fostering, adults with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, recovering drug or alcohol abusers, the homeless or vulnerably housed, carers and the elderly, people living with dementia and the unemployed.

The Reader Organisation’s projects with offenders include groups at HMP Liverpool, reading with Vulnerable Prisoners, in the Education Department, in the Healthcare Centre and with the Don’t Do Drugs programme. We also have a 12-month project with the Greater Manchester Probation Trust which has led to shared reading groups in 7 approved premises and 18 probation staff trained as shared reading facilitators. Reading for Life is a three-year delivery and research project which provides shared reading groups in Low Newton Women’s Prison in Durham and Hydebank Wood Women’s Prison in Belfast. Researchers are examining whether a literature-based intervention with women in prison, who have a diagnosis of personality disorder, is effective in developing empathy, understanding and social engagement.

At the Liverpool Women’s Turnaround Project, our reader in residence delivers weekly sessions. This initiative is a partnership between the National Offender Management Services and PSS (a social enterprise providing social and health care services) to provide a ‘one-stop shop’ for women offenders and those at risk of offending. Based at the Community Justice Centre, LWTP aims to reduce women’s offending and re-offending, to improve women’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being; to reduce the number of avoidable family breakdowns and to improve support for family members. This project includes training for staff and support for women to read with their children.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
“We need this. We can share stuff here,” was the opinion of one of the vulnerable prisoners at HMP Liverpool. When the men learnt the funding for their group was at risk, they produced a PowerPoint presentation, which they worked on in their own time with the support of the IT tutor, explaining the value of the group sessions to them. This comment is typical of their level of appreciation. “I have never read out in front of anyone before. The atmosphere was so laidback and encouraging I decided to throw myself in at the deep end. As a result I came out chuffed with myself.”

The presentation was warmly received at The Reader Organisation’s Annual Conference and prompted the Offender Health Team at the PCT to recommission the group. In Manchester, the hostel groups are now run by trained probation staff, all of whom speak of their appreciation of the power of good writing and impact of shared reading. “It’s made a difference to the men,” said one. She described how one resident who has been attending the reading group has become much more reflective. His attendance of Manchester College sessions has noticeably improved. His discussions with the staff member have altered beyond recognition – he now discusses poetry and writes his own. He also discusses music and
guitar playing. Another staff member, listening to this, recalled an incident, before the reading group began, when this resident’s aggressive behaviour had necessitated calling the police. Both ascribed this transformation to attendance of the reading group.

In the APs the reading sessions are now a weekly highlight, with shared reading creating a strong sense of community and ownership. The following is from Wilton Place Approved Premises: “We have regular attendees at the reading group, sometimes as many as eight, with some of the younger ones bobbing in and out. As well as serving such things as hot bacon butties or hot sausage rolls, I showed the group how to make carrot soup, which we ate during the reading. This has branched out into one of the group offering to make pea and ham soup for this week’s group, with others raring to and planning ahead with their menus. The short stories are going down well and prompting good conversation with loads of laughing.” When the project was independently assessed by The Revolving Doors Agency, 15 residents attended the focus group, including a former resident who came back especially.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
We want to ensure ex-offenders can go from their valued shared reading group in prison or in the approved premises to a similar shared reading group in the community. This would provide continuity and familiarity as well as the benefits of shared reading and thus help establish a routine to combat the issues which cause reoffending.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
Run a 12-week pilot project in a community setting in Manchester which ex-residents of APs could attend. Our existing links with the Greater Manchester Probation Trust and with Achieve would ensure the group would be established in a setting both accessible and welcoming, and would ensure referrals to the group. Stringent evaluation using questionnaires, interviews and a focus group would enable us to gather evidence to support a long-term project at the end of the pilot.

**Organisation:** University of Roehampton  
**Project Name:** Prison Reading Groups

**Describe your project in one sentence:**
The project provides support for the establishment of new reading groups in prisons and in community settings for those at risk of offending.

**Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):**
Most of our work is in adult prisons with some newer initiatives in supported housing and community centres.
What are the project’s objectives:
Our main objective is to extend reading groups and the culture of reading more widely in prisons. We aim to develop the benefits of reading for prisoners:

- Critical self-reflection
- Commitment and self-discipline
- Mutual respect and sociability fostered in group discussion
- Empathy with the lives of others through reading
- Connectedness with a wider culture

These benefits all contribute to the development of self-worth. They are also valuable employability skills.

What are the project’s activities?
We initiate and support the establishment of new reading groups in a range of prison settings: main wings; as part of mental health provision; on vulnerable prisoner units; in specialist groups such as those for older prisoners and the partially-sighted.

We make contact with prisons (usually the librarian), we recruit volunteers to work with the groups and we provide ongoing support and mentoring through written materials, a group e-list, workshops and visits.

There is no single model for our groups. We aim to help each one develop the format that best suits its target readers: experienced or emergent; read-aloud or in advance; VPU or those with mental health issues; older readers or the partially sighted etc. Groups may meet weekly, fortnightly or monthly and for an hour or a morning. We co-ordinate a monthly column for Inside Time, the national prisoners’ newspaper. The ‘Reading Group Roundup’ allows each group to have a voice and gives the project important publicity in prisons. We attach pdfs of some of these reports.

We are also working with the Prison Radio Association to develop and deliver a book club on National Prison Radio. So far we have helped establish 25 groups.

What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:
The longest-standing of our groups, at HMPs Bullingdon, Send and Wandsworth, have been running for eleven, ten and eight years respectively. Most of the others started 12-18 months ago. Turnover rates vary but on average 50-60 people attend over a year.

Impact has been assessed through prisoner self-reporting in questionnaires, facilitator reporting orally and in questionnaires, and validation by third-party observers including prison governors and members of the Independent Monitoring Board. Prisoner members comment on a range of perceived pleasures and benefits: wider and more ambitious reading; increased groups skills; greater empathy and understanding of others through reading; increased connection with family and society outside.

- “Books are great for learning about life.”
- “The reading group is a chance for civilised socialising.”

- “It’s a real joy to be able to disagree and remain friends afterwards.”

- “When I got over my disappointment that it wasn’t about gory murder, it really made me think about things; it’s a book about the consequences of our actions.” (on Emile Zola’s Therese Raquin)

- “Another connection I have made due to the book group was Call the Midwife by Jennifer Worth. It’s the only book I have ever discussed with my mother, an avid reader, and it gave me yet another feeling of joy that we shared a common interest rather than our usual differing tastes.”

For less experienced members, reading the group book may require discipline and determination but these are important transferable skills for work or further formal education. One member’s reading diary shows this process in action:

“Day 1: Not really looking forward to reading this book (Joe Simpson’s Touching the Void) but I’m gonna read it for the book club. But finding it hard going, like trudging up the mountain itself.”

Day 4: Really into the book now – just want to get to the bit where Joe finally makes it back
Day 5: Joe’s made it! I agree it’s a story worth writing home about.”

Reading groups build solidarity and members support each other. In one group a non-reader was taught to read and then persuaded into the group by his cell mate. This is how he described it in a letter to the librarian:

- “When I was asked to join the reading group, I thought at first I would be way out of my depth. But Peter persuaded me to come and I haven’t missed a meeting since…I never knew you could get so much fun from books…If I can get so much out of it, think how many other people can be helped. I’m also putting the word about on the landing about the book club, to get more people to come. Some people don’t realise what they are missing. I used to be one of them. Not anymore.”

The Deputy Governor of a women’s prison wrote the following evaluation of the reading group in her prison:

- “It generates positive interaction between a diverse mix of cultures, backgrounds and experiences, united in the enjoyment of reading. The discussions generated from the chosen book lead to women learning about differences, exploring new ideas on varying subjects, educating women to be accepting of differences in opinion and explore new worlds through the medium of literature. The book club is a huge benefit for the establishment. Enabling women to learn, share experiences and unite in their enjoyment of books.”

The Head of Communications for the Arts and Humanities Research Council emailed his response to the facilitator after a visit to another of the project’s reading groups:

- “Just to say a very big thank you to you for allowing me to come into the prison yesterday and to take part in the reading group. I enjoyed the experience greatly and learnt a huge amount about the importance of the work the project and you and volunteers are doing. It was a real eye-opener and I’m so impressed with your dedication and skill in what must be a challenging but what is also a hugely important job.”

A facilitator summed up the impact of the project as follows:
“Books are alive in this project. Prison can be tedious and tiresome. Something which arrives, lights a flame and then is sustained, is rare. Six months in we are seeing so many positive things.”

Perhaps the most eloquent tribute came from a member:
- “Today we have not been in a prison, just a library.”

The reputation of the project has spread and we have provided advice and mentoring for facilitators throughout the UK prison estate and beyond, in Canada, the US and Denmark.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
We will continue to extend the number of prison reading groups in UK prisons and we hope to involve Young Offenders’ Institutions as well. We are developing an even wider range of reading group models and possibilities, especially for emergent and mixed-experience groups.

We work closely with the Prisoners’ Education Trust and we have developed links with a range of other organisations, including Action for Prisoners’ Families, the Prison Radio Association, Inside Time, the Reading Agency and English PEN. We are building on these links and exploring further ways to work together. We are also exploring possibilities for long-term funding for the project.

**How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?**
The money would enable us to offer small start-up sums for up to ten new groups. £100 would enable a group of 10 members to choose and buy their own books for their first two meetings. Choice is important to all reading groups and is part of the process of becoming a reader. For prisoners it can make all the difference. The lure of a new book of your own can help new groups to recruit members and become a presence in the prison.

The books often circulate widely. Some members keep and display their copies proudly in their cells; some pass them on to others on their landings. Members also send the books out to family. The shared reading forms a bond and can provide a helpful way into conversations during phone calls and visits.

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**Organisation:** Working Chance  
**Project Name:** Transitions for Women

**Describe your project in one sentence:**
Transitions for Women uses voluntary work placements as the first stepping stone to paid employment; offering practical training as well as the emotional support the women typically need to be motivated by and successful in finding employment after their experience of the prison system which undermines their confidence and self-esteem.
Specify the settings where your project is delivered (eg prison, Young Offenders’ Institution, supported housing, community etc):
Women’s prisons, at our office, at employers’ offices, probation offices

What are the project’s objectives:
Our aim at Working Chance is to help women offenders (and their children) move across the social divide from exclusion to inclusion by placing them in employment which enables them to become financially independent and autonomous. Our objectives are to:
- Reduce re-offending through placing women offenders into meaningful, lasting work;
- Enable women offenders to become autonomous and financially independent;
- Break the cycle of disadvantage and offending passed from mother to child;
- Empower women offenders to become role models for their children and communities;
- Change employers’ perceptions and deconstruct myths surrounding women offenders;
- Increase savings to public purse through reduction in re-offending;
- Make our communities safer, more pleasant places in which to live;
- To improve thinking and life skills of women offenders;
- To create an environment where change can happen;
- To improve employability of women offenders;
- To build women offenders’ self-confidence, self-esteem and feeling of self-worth.

What are the project’s activities?
Working Chance’s raison d’être is to support women offenders and their children to cross the social divide from exclusion to inclusion through employment. We are a specialist recruitment consultancy for women offenders, operating as a social enterprise since 2007 and registered charity since 2009, providing an environment where change can happen. Our approach is unique in that we offer each woman a personalized service, with the overall aim of helping each one to find a quality job that will lead to a career. This close follow-up, mentoring, advice and guidance has generated tangible, documented results, both in jobs found as well as in reducing the re-offending rate amongst the women we work with: our re-offending rate in 2010 was 5%, in Q1 and Q2 of 2011 it has dropped to 1% (against a national figure for women of 65%).

1. Place women into voluntary placements - Transitions for Women – listening and engaging with the women so we work in partnership with them.
2. Place women into paid work – Women@Work – listening and engaging with the woman so we work in partnership with them.
3. Run interactive employability programmes – Working Lunches – taking the women through the journey from unemployability to employability.
4. Run interactive employability programmes in prisons – Working Within – as above.
5. Run a peer support group after Working Lunches to enable the women to put into practice their learning from the morning – e.g. setting SMART goals as homework for the week.
6. Provide 1:1 personalized support for all our clients related to employment (volunteering and paid) addressing their needs with information, advice and guidance.
7. Engage with 20 new employers a year and deepen relations with current employers.
8. Provide the women with a social network and professional contacts that most of us take for granted when looking for a job, but that many women coming out of prison have either never had, or have lost whilst serving their sentence.

**What has been the impact/achievement of the project? (a) in terms of the people involved and (b) in terms of re-offending:**

**Our Impact**

**Client Profile:**
We help some of the most disadvantaged women in our community:
- 71% are parents, of which 72% are single parents.
- 65% are in social or supported or council housing and/or on housing benefit.
- 66% are drawn from the BAME communities.
- Chronic health/mental health issues, addiction(s) and abuse are a recurrent feature of many women’s backgrounds.

**Employer Profile:**
- We have 39 employers who have committed to hiring women ex-offenders – a year-on-year increase of 62%.
- At least 68% of vacancies offered to our women are white collar roles, which demonstrate the quality of jobs we are able to source.

**Employment Successes:**
- The number of successful voluntary and paid work placements (combined) achieved in 2010 has more than doubled, increasing from 34 in 2009 to 73 in 2010.
- Women successfully placed into paid employment increased almost four-fold from 9 positions in 2009 to 34 in 2010.
- Women successfully placed into voluntary employment increased 56%, from 25 to 39 over the same period.
- 93% of women placed in work in 2010 are still in the same job after 6 months.
- Only 5% of clients placed in work have re-offended, as compared to the national re-offending rate of 65%. (In Q1 and Q2 of 2011, our re-offending rate dropped to 1%).

NB: Year-on-year comparisons only available on certain statistics – some data was only collected as from the start of 2010.

**What are your plans for developing the project further?**
Our development plans are to:
- Continue to create through innovation an environment where change can happen;
- Open a second office for change in south London;
- Employ more recruitment consultants so that we can support more women ex-offenders in London into work;
- Employ a business development person to get more employers engaged who will offer work to our women clients.
• Keep the re-offending rate amongst our beneficiaries to 1% per year;
• Employ 6 ex-offenders as paid employees in 2 London offices;
• Employ 12 members of staff in north and south London offices;
• Create an audible and credible campaigning voice for women offenders;
• Develop a network of iconoclastic employers who want to have real social impact;
• Develop ‘through-the-gate’ schemes in partnership with employers, where sector-specific training in prison will turn into guaranteed work placements on release.

How would you spend the winner’s prize of £1,000?
We would spend the money on paying our clients’ travel costs to job interviews which in London costs £10 per interview.