



3) HMP Barlinnie and Theatre Nemo

In a Nutshell

Prisoners with mental health issues generally have few options for constructive activity, due to their limited ability to engage and cope with work or education in prison. Theatre Nemo, in conjunction with Barlinnie's skilled Day Care staff, offers these prisoners access to creative workshops, thus improving their communication skills, self-confidence and self esteem. The aim is that this will assist the prisoners to cope better with their sentences and feel empowered to make positive changes in their lives which, in the long run, may lead to a reduction in reoffending.

The PSP Partners

HMP Barlinnie receives prisoners from the courts in the West of Scotland. It retains male remand prisoners and prisoners serving less than four-year sentences. It allocates suitable prisoners from its convicted population to lower security prisons and manages prisoners serving more than four years or more in the initial phase of their sentence until places become available for them in the long term prison system.

Theatre Nemo is a charity registered in Scotland, which aims to promote good mental health and wellbeing, through the creative arts. Since 2004, Theatre Nemo has worked in joint partnership with HMP Barlinnie, providing creative, artistic programmes to mentally ill and vulnerable prisoners.

Background

According to research done for the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health in 2008, prisoners have much higher rates of mental ill health than the general population. Around 10% of remanded men and 14% of all female prisoners had experienced a psychotic illness in the previous 12 months. Other studies have shown even higher rates of mental illness. For example, the Mental Health Foundation reports that some 16% of all British prisoners have four or five co-existing mental health disorders. There are also high rates of self-harm and suicide - it has been estimated that the risk of a prisoner committing suicide is seven times higher than for the general population.

Despite several years of partnership working in Barlinnie and several other prisons, there had never been a formal basis for the service offered by Theatre Nemo, so the partners joined the PSP Project with the intention of formalising the partnership.

Home

Contents

Ministerial Foreword

Executive Summary

Introduction

Identify the Need

To PSP or not to PSP

Forming a Partnership

Analyse

Plan

Do

Review

APPENDICES

Case Studies

Tools & Methodologies

Glossary

Q&A

Links



Public Social Partnerships

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

PSP Case Studies

The pilot's eventual aim was for the Scottish Prison Service to tender for the services across the prison estate, so that prisoners would have access to similar programmes, irrespective of their changing locations. The ultimate objective was to lower the number of innocent victims by reducing the reoffending rates of prisoners who have participated in the programme, with additional outcomes such as employment, housing and improved self esteem being contributory factors. However, it was recognised that neither Theatre Nemo nor any other intervention can be held wholly accountable for reducing recidivism, which is attributed to a complex and wide range of factors.

Approach to the PSP Pilot

The pilot was set up to run and evaluate two 13-week programmes of workshops for prisoners with mental health issues, mainly from the prison's high dependency unit. The activities undertaken in Theatre Nemo's programmes vary according to the needs of the participants.

They encompass a wide range of creative arts, including clay animation, drama, visual art, circus skills and sound production.

The stated aim of the programme was: '... to provide participants with an opportunity to take charge of their lives, to determine new pathways, to recognise, consolidate, and move on from previous life experience, to nurture and develop interpersonal skills and embrace positive life activities, to recognise personal worth and enable the growth and development of self esteem and assertiveness, to develop communication skills, and finally to furnish each individual with the necessary skills to step up with confidence and meet the challenge of their unfolding lives.'

An average of 21 prisoners attended each workshop although, given the nature of a short term prison and the turnover of prisoners, the total number participating at some point in the programme was around twice this number.

In recognition of the limited scope for programmes within prisons and the need to continue support after liberation, the pilot set up an Advisory Group of external experts, as well as engaging positively with the Scottish Prison Service. This group met only a few times but provided useful input on the services available in the community, leading to the pilot making links with community-based mental health services. Participants in the programme were therefore provided with information on how to access such services in the future.

Home

Contents

Ministerial Foreword

Executive Summary

Introduction

Identify the Need

To PSP or not to PSP

Forming a Partnership

Analyse

Plan

Do

Review

APPENDICES

Case Studies

Tools & Methodologies

Glossary

Q&A

Links



Public Social Partnerships

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

PSP Case Studies

Successes

The prisoners, their families and Barlinnie's Day Care Officers and Mental Health Nurses all noted that the participants' confidence and self-esteem increased as a result of the programme. Some of the most common comments were connected with the prisoners' not realising what their own potential was and that they were able to do something artistic and creative. Another outcome of the workshop attendance was that the prisoners felt more empowered and, in a number of cases, declared that they realised they did not want to go back to prison:

"This is my first time in jail and I'm not coming back. This has helped me see that I can do things I haven't tried before."

Two former participants in the programme, who are now released and still in touch with Theatre Nemo, were interviewed for their views on how the programme had impacted on them:

'Andy' says he has stopped offending for good and has now been out of prison for three years, despite having had eight previous custodial sentences. Theatre Nemo had a dramatic effect on his life, as well as breaking the monotony of prison life. He was previously unable to speak to the medical staff so the programme was the equivalent of therapy for him. After release, he went into rehabilitation and still attends Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous. He is doing voluntary work and preparing himself for full-time employment.

'Robert' has remained out of prison for two years and has no intention of returning. Theatre Nemo brought out creative skills he did not know he had and enabled him to cope with his depression. The main benefit to him was increasing his confidence and communication skills, which he credits with enabling him to go through an interview and get a job upon his release. As a result of this increased confidence and having employment, he now also has a new home to focus on and is off anti-depressants.

Home

Contents

Ministerial Foreword

Executive Summary

Introduction

Identify the Need

To PSP or not to PSP

Forming a Partnership

Analyse

Plan

Do

Review

APPENDICES

Case Studies

Tools & Methodologies

Glossary

Q&A

Links



Public Social Partnerships

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Home

Contents

Ministerial Foreword

Executive Summary

Introduction

Identify the Need

To PSP or not to PSP

Forming a Partnership

Analyse

Plan

Do

Review

APPENDICES

Case Studies

Tools & Methodologies

Glossary

Q&A

Links

PSP Case Studies

The work of the pilot was also well received by prison staff, most of whom could see the benefits of prisoners attending the workshops in the way they behaved in the prison and coped with their sentences. They reported fewer incidents involving those prisoners and improved communication skills. Some of the comments received from Day Care Officers, Hall Managers and Mental Health Nurses included:

“It allows vulnerable prisoners out of cell time and helps to improve confidence.”

“Lines of communication are more open and relaxed.”

“These are guys who have never achieved anything in their lives and seeing people looking at their art work is making them hold their heads up for the first time. It definitely makes them easier to manage in the hall.”

“Even guys who were unwell and maybe only went once or twice got a lot out of it.”

Areas for Improvement

There were undoubtedly communication problems at some stages of the pilot but the partnership model enabled these to be confronted and resolved. The format of the first programme transpired to be very different from previous ones, in that there was more turnover of participants, causing difficulties for the facilitators and some friction between the partners. Prison staff felt that, despite the operational difficulties for Theatre Nemo, the programme had been more valuable than ever, in that it addressed the needs of a section of the prison population which rarely engages in constructive out of cell activity.

Another issue with communications was the lack of resources on both sides, as conflicting priorities made regular meetings and full co-design of the service difficult. However, the partners worked through these difficulties and eventually agreed on an amended design for the second programme which has run well and produced positive outcomes for the participants.

SROI Analysis

The SROI evaluation proved difficult as the ultimate aim - reduced recidivism - is attributable to many factors and is generally measured over a two year period after liberation. Although prisoners were encouraged to keep in touch with Theatre Nemo after they leave prison, it is not known at this stage how many will do so and tracking their progress is therefore not possible unless initiated by them. However, a small number of interviews were conducted with former inmates who were available to be contacted and they indicate that the positive outcomes last beyond the duration of the workshops.



Public Social Partnerships

A PRACTICAL GUIDE

PSP Case Studies

Much of the evaluation is therefore based on the qualitative data collected by way of questionnaires completed by both prisoners and prison staff, as well as desk-based research into the effects of similar programmes on prisoners with mental health issues.

The outcomes measured during the pilot for the key stakeholders are shown in the table below:

Stakeholders	Outcomes
Prisoners Taking Part	Improved confidence and self esteem
	Improved motivation to change their life
	Improved teamworking, social and communication skills
	Improved literacy and numeracy
	Increased Employability
	Improved mental and physical health
	Reduced self-harm
	Better relationships
Prisoners' Families	Less anxiety, knowing that their family members have the opportunity to improve their mental health
HMP Barlinnie Staff	Being able to meet their targets in terms of mental health in prisons
	Reduced number of mental health interventions
	Improved job satisfaction
The Scottish Government	Reduced re-offending

The Way Forward

The pilot's original long-term goal was for the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) to tender for the service across the prison estate, so that prisoners would have access to similar programmes, irrespective of their changing locations. However, as health services are being transferred to the NHS from October 2011, this will not be possible. The steering group for the transfer to NHS has been made aware of the programme and its benefits but at this stage its future is not known. In the meantime, the partners continue to work together constructively and Theatre Nemo is undertaking a range of related work with offenders and their families, both in the community and other prisons.

Home

Contents

Ministerial Foreword

Executive Summary

Introduction

Identify the Need

To PSP or not to PSP

Forming a Partnership

Analyse

Plan

Do

Review

APPENDICES

Case Studies

Tools & Methodologies

Glossary

Q&A

Links