

# Voluntary Action Leeds

## **Adult Giving Time Project Year 5 and Summative Evaluation**

**December 2019**



**Crellin Consulting**

Hollin House / New Mill / Holmfirth / HD9 7HH

0787 2429075

[www.crellinconsulting.co.uk](http://www.crellinconsulting.co.uk)

[debbie@crellinconsulting.co.uk](mailto:debbie@crellinconsulting.co.uk)

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In the interests of anonymity, all service user names have been changed.

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# Executive Summary

The Giving Time project provides a brokerage service linking adults with criminal convictions, to volunteer opportunities, either as ambassadors for the service if they are serving prisoners or as volunteers for other organisations if they are in the community.

## The projects aims are to:

- improve the mental health of service users
- reduce isolation for service users
- improve the social skills of service users
- improve the life chances of service users through work experience
- steer those at risk of committing crime away from crime
- and to aid reintegration of those with criminal convictions back into communities and prevent recidivism

The focus of the year 5 evaluation was to discover if the Giving Time project has made a difference to the lives of service users and the likely impact on reoffending rates and to identify any areas of learning for future projects. A summative review taking into account previous evaluations has also been undertaken.

## Year 5 Research and Findings

A robust primary evidence base has been collected for year 5, the final year of the project, consisting of 16 telephone surveys and 11 face to face interviews with service users. All had been placed in volunteer roles and 18 had successfully volunteered for sufficient time for there to have been a significant impact. 22 impact surveys, collected before and after volunteering, have also been analysed. These ask:

1. Do service users believe that volunteering can stop them reoffending and improve their lifestyles?
2. Do service users feel happy and positive about themselves and their future?
3. Can volunteering reduce social exclusion?
4. Do service users feel positive about gaining employment?
5. Do service users feel that they have the confidence skills and experience for the workplace?

Stakeholders were also asked what difference the project made to their organisation.

“It makes us feel comfortable, in saying that we are welcoming to everyone. As an organisation, we are proud to say that we have volunteers with criminal convictions.”

Hyde Park Source

"It means less work for the Offender Support Team because service users have not been reoffending and therefore do not keep coming back into the service - we don't see the same faces coming back through the door."  
New Wortley Community Centre

There were limitations to the research and evaluation, such as the difficulty in contacting service users in the community. There is no control group, ideally we would have used The Justice Data Lab, however, this requires more detailed background information (age, offence, offending history) and earlier information is not GDPR compliant. Also, given the numbers and the variation in the cohort it is unlikely that the result would be conclusive.

## What difference has been made

Feedback from the service users was very positive, particularly where the service user had been able to maintain the volunteering for longer than a few weeks. Many expressed their thanks to the team for the non judgemental approach and support.

18 (67%) of all service users surveyed, 100% of those who had volunteered for more than a few sessions, had a very positive impact, comments relating to the original predicted outcomes include:

### 1) Reduced reoffending

"I'm on the right track now, I feel really positive about my future"

### 2) A change in behaviour and lifestyle

"This is the best I've ever done in staying 'clean' from drugs after getting out of prison"

### 3) Employability

"I now have some work experience to put on my CV and references for future work"

### 4) Social inclusion

"Volunteering has introduced me to Growing Rooms, and a healthier support network, I have made new friends"

### 5) Improved wellbeing

"Volunteering is a really positive experience, thank you for your helpful support"

## Process and Service Quality

The quality and professionalism of the service are considered excellent by all stakeholders, example comments from Year 5, include:

"If I hadn't met the Giving Time staff, I don't think I'd have got anywhere"

"Appropriate volunteer roles are offered, with risk appropriately managed according to National Probation Service's standards - not too risk averse but also take things seriously when it's needed."

"The staff are very flexible and will try and support anyone, the service is very fast and they have a real understanding of the difficulties that people with criminal convictions face, especially disclosure issues. "

Organisations offering volunteering roles, valued the consistent flow of volunteers and the support with individual risk assessments and disclosure issues.

## Reflections from 5 years of delivery

The findings from Year 5's evaluation echo the findings from year 4. Previous evaluations were undertaken on a different basis but report broadly similar findings. A more open approach to interview questions in the year 4 and 5 evaluations, has revealed some somewhat unexpected outcomes.

### Unexpected Outcomes

- changes to attitudes, thinking and behaviour
- reduced use of drugs and alcohol,
- greater improvements in mental health
- volunteer project Ambassadors, who are serving prisoners, report as much impact from the project as community based service users.

Volunteering provides a focus and social interaction to help service users lead a crime free life. When they are ready to move on from volunteering they have a track record of 'working' and references to help them find paid work.

## Reducing reoffending

The clear links with Desistance Theory, the 7 Pathways to Reducing Reoffending and the Good Lives Model, indicate that the project is based on evidence and best practice and achieving the outcomes needed for service users to maintain their crime free lifestyle. Of the 18 spoken to in Year 5, either face to face or over the telephone, who had undertaken a volunteering role, 77% made comments related

specifically to developing or enhancing a non-criminal identity such as feeling hopeful and motivated about giving up crime. These findings echo the findings from year 4 and from previous years.

We estimate that over the 5 years of the project 243 people with criminal convictions have been placed into **successful** volunteering roles, that have made a difference to their lives. People with criminal convictions who are in employment are less likely to re-offend and assuming that service users gain as much from benefit supported, non paid employment as they do from paid employment, then we expect that, of those 243 people placed, that 37 fewer people will re-offend than if they had not been placed as a volunteer.

### **Cost benefit**

For year 5, the estimated cost saving to the public purse is £638,761 or, for every £1 invested £7.85 is saved in criminal justice costs. Taken as an average overall years the estimated cost saving to the public purse is £2,429,761 or, for every £1 invested £6.25 is saved in criminal justice costs.

*Over the lifetime of the project, the estimated cost saving to the public purse is £2,429,761 or, for every £1 invested £6.25 is saved in criminal justice costs.*

This excludes wider societal costs such as the effect on family life, particularly children, the potential for debt and homelessness upon release and the cost to the victims of crime and to property.

### **Learning for Future projects**

Public sector contracts / funding often depends on proof that projects reduce criminal activity and the bar for evidence is set high, ideally future projects need either a 'control group,' long term follow up and/ or sufficient data to be collected so that information can be sent to the Justice Data Lab.

Longitudinal data would be especially helpful in proving the difference made to people's lives but this is difficult to gather especially for this client group.

- Feedback from the Ambassadors is very positive with clear impacts on mental health and links to Desistance Theory and the 7 Pathways to Reducing Reoffending indicators. One Ambassador, in particular, interviewed in year 5, really valued being treated as an 'employee' and a valued member of the Giving Time team.
- Sex offenders - such is the public perception of those on the Sex Offenders Register that it is challenging to find them volunteering roles and therefore doesn't fit into the current pricing model. Referral partners report a real need for this service.

- Hostels report that current residents really value the presentation/s by those who have been successfully helped by the project, as these are much more meaningful to them.
- The collection of the impact data has been a positive process, the difference to people's lives has been highlighted and the team have been able make changes to increase the impact even more.

- The impact made to the lives of service users is very positive, especially for those who have sustained their volunteering for a few weeks or more.
- There is a clear link with desistance theory and this gives hope that service users will continue to live crime free lives.
- 'Keeping busy' through volunteering was seen by service users as a means to desist from previous criminal behaviour especially linked to reducing their intake of drugs and/or alcohol or relieving the symptoms of poor mental health.
- Several service users did not want to keep in contact with the network of friends they had before entering prison because this would make them more likely to return to their old lifestyle and therefore commit crime. Evidence gathered suggests they are successfully using volunteering to meet a wider range of people and provide positive social contact and support networks.
- Service quality is very high - the process and approach are evidence based, there is customer focus and a willingness to critically review and make changes to the service
- The non judgemental supportive approach from staff is valued by service users.
- Referral organisations particularly appreciate Giving Time's specialist skills and knowledge to place high risk offenders.
- Partner organisations need support to provide volunteering opportunities for those with criminal convictions but the evidence infers that once they have built their skills and confidence then they can take on those with criminal convictions in the same way they take all other volunteers.

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[debbie@crellinconsulting.co.uk](mailto:debbie@crellinconsulting.co.uk)



# Introduction

## 1.0 Context

The adult Giving Time project has been funded by the Lottery Community Fund's Reaching Communities Fund, with delivery between 1st November 2014 - 31st October 2019. This is therefore the final evaluation.

Between November 2014 and 31st October 2019, brokerage has been provided for 1373 people of whom 405 adults have been placed in volunteer positions. Of these approximately 60% have volunteered sufficiently to report a significant impact.

Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) has commissioned this evaluation to discover the difference that the project has made to those who have benefitted from it and the value to other stakeholders - those who refer service users into the project and those organisations that offer volunteer opportunities. The Giving Time Team also wish to support the evidence base for the impact of volunteering on the individual and to give an insight into the programme design for future projects to support those with criminal convictions to integrate successfully back into communities.

Previous evaluations have taken place, in August 2014 and 2015 an evaluation of the Giving Time Pilot was undertaken by Leeds Beckett University and in 2016 by Rachel J Webster. In 2018 the evaluation was undertaken by Crellin Consulting.

## 1.1 The Giving Time project

Giving Time delivers Volunteer Centre services to adults within the prison establishment and in the wider community, providing service users with access to volunteering opportunities. Serving prisoners can become Giving Time Ambassadors and the service offers volunteering opportunities, advice, support and training for individuals who are considering volunteering, once they are released from the prison environment.

The model is a brokerage model, placing people with criminal convictions in volunteer positions. It provides a delivery method that is safe and supportive of both the service users and the organisations that they volunteer for.

The project:

1. Supports people with criminal convictions to engage in volunteering.
2. Supports public and voluntary organisations by acting as a referral route for organisations that support people with criminal convictions
3. Supports volunteer involving organisations to confidently and appropriately involve volunteers with criminal convictions.

## 1.2 Project Outcomes

Stated outcomes for the Lottery Community Fund's funding:

- Crime, reoffending and re-admittance is reduced.



- Wellbeing is improved.
- Social exclusion is reduced, integration into communities increased.
- Employability is increased.

### 1.3 Volunteering and Crime Reduction

There is considerable evidence that many people with criminal convictions experience extreme social exclusion upon their release, finding employment can be challenging and positive reintegration into society, difficult. Volunteering can provide the opportunity for people to build confidence and self esteem, meet people without criminal convictions and build skills to gain employment.

The Giving Time model has been developed based on three key current and widely accepted underpinning theories including Pro-Social Modelling, Desistance Theory and The Good Lives Model. Each model is briefly described below:

#### Theories of Desistance

Maruna (2001) proposed the 'identity-based' theory of desistance. This argues individuals desist from crime due to the internal formulation of a 'redemption script', which involves the individuals viewing their criminal history as a product of their circumstances at the time that were beyond their control, such as social disadvantage and exclusion.

They also view their non-offending state as their 'true self'. (O'Sullivan, Hart & Healy, 2018, p.9). This is demonstrated by the Giving Time project in one of the interviews where Ben is volunteering as a way to prove his changed behaviour and 'true self.' "It was just a stupid mistake and I have moved on"

Similarly, Michael feels he is not a "career criminal" This is his first time in prison and he is in prison now due to a mistake he made and situational factors.

Also displaying the view that their non-offending state is their 'true self' Jason stated had never offended before this conviction and never known anyone who has been to prison. He feels that what he did has had a real moral impact on him and he feels remorse. Jason has also seen the impact his imprisonment has had on his family. He feels out of place and not "normal" in prison.

Individuals will also often make an effort to engage in pro-social activities in an attempt to balance out some of their previous wrongs. (O'Sullivan, Hart & Healy, 2018, p.9).

One of the Giving Time face to face interviewees, Sam, demonstrates this desire to give back. Sam is a 33-year-old man from Lancashire who has previously suffered from issues around substance misuse. He has also spent some time in prison for the offences of possession or use of a weapon and attempted murder. Currently volunteers at Life Experience where his role involves going to different schools and universities to give talks to students on knife crime. Sam hopes to continue giving talks around knife crime in schools and universities, and eventually wants to set up his own charity that conducts similar work to his current volunteering role in order to

educate others on the dangers and impact of knife crime, with the ultimate aim of deterring them from making the choices he did.

Negative labelling may cause the individual to feel marginalised and set apart from the rest of society, 'being an 'outsider' and may increase re offending as they live up to this label. (Becker, 1963).

Trusting these individuals and giving them the opportunity to enact a non-criminal version of themselves has been found to enhance their sense of personal agency and increase their motivation to change (O'Sullivan, Hart & Healy, 2018). Allowing them to engage in volunteering therefore, in a sense, provides a template for a 'redemption script' which in turn may become a 'desistance script' (O'Sullivan, Hart & Healy, 2018).

### **The Good Lives Model - delivering the service**

The basic ideas of the Good Lives Model are that services need to build strengths and capabilities in service users, which will reduce their risk of reoffending.

The Good Lives Model suggests that people offend because they are trying to secure some form of valued outcome, therefore offending is a desire for something human and normal. But the desire manifests itself in a way that is harmful or antisocial, because of deficits within the person, and his or her environment.

For Ashley - alcohol use was a large factor in her offending, but now alcohol isn't part of her life. Volunteering has helped her to stay away from alcohol as it gives her something to do and something to focus on that she cares about.

Ben really valued the help from the Giving Time Team. They listened to him and made sure he had the role that he wants to fit in with his career interests.

Vic feels volunteering is the best way – possibly even the only way – for him to show off his positive attributes and skills to potential employers.

The Good Lives Model states that interventions should help service users to achieve goals that are important to them, in a way that doesn't harm others, or lead to offending. Service users should feel in control, and their input valued with options tailored to their interests, skills, capabilities, and goals in such a way that service users retain their human agency. Once the service user's goals and needs are met, their wellbeing begins to improve and their journey to desistance should be on the right path. (Goodlivesmodel.com, 2018).

## Prosocial Modelling

Research found pro-social bonds are important in creating a routine for those with criminal convictions that leads to their detachment from their previous criminal environments, in addition to providing them with both social and emotional support. (Trotter 2009). Being included within a team of volunteers enables volunteers with criminal convictions to make new friends with whom a support structure can be established, in which the team can rely on the volunteer with criminal convictions but also the volunteer with criminal convictions can rely on their team (O’Sullivan, Hart & Healy, 2018).

Vic suffers from high anxiety and paranoia, and also has strong feelings of isolation. He states volunteering has helped hugely, as it allows him to engage with ‘good’ people with whom he can have ‘real conversations’ i.e. he can gain social and emotional support from fellow volunteers.

## The 7 Pathways to Reducing Reoffending

The seven pathways for reducing reoffending were developed by the Government’s Social Exclusion Unit’s, Reducing Reoffending by Ex-Prisoners (2002), which explored the reasons for reoffending after release from prison. These have been revised to 9 pathways since, but essentially these are the same themes:

1. Attitudes, thinking and behaviour (self control)
2. Children and family
3. Drugs and alcohol
4. Education, training and employment
5. Mental and Physical health
6. Finance, benefit and debt
7. Accommodation

Giving Time uses the pathways at interview stage to assess if a person is ‘Volunteer Ready’ and to get a feel for a person’s interests and lifestyle. Findings from this evaluation show that volunteering supports several pathways.

### Unexpected Outcomes

- attitudes, thinking and behaviour,
- drugs and alcohol,
- education training and employment and
- mental health.

Improvements in education, training and employment and mental health were expected outcomes but the changes in attitudes, thinking and behaviour and drugs and alcohol were not really anticipated.

Many (61%) quoted ‘keeping busy’ through volunteering as a means to desist from their previous criminal behaviour, this was often linked to reducing their intake of drugs and/or alcohol or relieving the symptoms of poor mental health.

Sam, had substance misuse issues in the past but feels that this will not be a problem in the future - volunteering gives him a different kind of buzz, it gives him a sense of self purpose and meaning to his daily routine.

# Year 5 Research

## 2.0 Methodology

The research has been designed to discover:

- the impact on the lives of those who have volunteered.
- whether the Lottery Community Fund's outcomes have been met.
- information for a cost benefit analysis.
- if the project aligns with theories for reducing recidivism.
- how organisations offering volunteering roles, benefit.
- how partner (referral) organisations benefit.
- customer satisfaction.
- areas for improvement, development or change, or learning for future projects.

**Table 1 VAL Giving Time Research Framework 2019**

Stakeholder	Method	Rationale	Sample size (%)	Sample size number
<b>Volunteers</b>	Semi structured face to face and telephone interviews.	Qualitative impact information Feedback on the service	30% of those brokered	7 interviews with community based volunteers 5 interviews with prison based ambassadors 16 contacted by phone
	Case file reviews - linked to interviews	Collect background information.	6% of those brokered	6
	Before and after impact questionnaires	Quantitative impact information	24% of those brokered	22
<b>Organisations offering volunteer opportunities</b>	Semi structured telephone interviews suggested contacts	Impact on organisations offering volunteer opportunities, feedback on the service	13%	2
<b>Referral organisations</b>	Semi structured telephone interviews suggested contacts	Impact on referral organisations, feedback on the service	22%	5
<b>Giving Time - process and approach</b>	Desistance theories	To look for connections and innovation in service delivery	n/a	n/a
<b>Funder</b>	information above and interrogation of data base	analysis of data collected to compare actual achieved to targets	n/a	n/a

## 2.1 Service Users

Telephone and face to face interviews with service users were based on a semistructured survey which covered the following topics:

- education, training and employment
- housing and accommodation
- health including mental health
- substance misuse/abuse including alcohol
- social inclusion /exclusion
- risk of re offending
- overall reflections including the main difference and its effect if this had not been expressed during the interview and plans for the future

The face to face in depth interviews were undertaken with either selected individuals or ambassadors as they became available after 3 months of volunteering. We systematically attempted to contact all community based service users until we had sufficient responses. Contact was made between November 2018 and August 2019.

Before and after volunteering surveys are designed to link to the Lottery Community Fund's outcomes:

1. Do service users believe that volunteering has made them less likely to re-offend and does volunteering reduce reoffending?
2. Do service users believe that volunteering has increased their wellbeing?
3. Does volunteering reduce social exclusion, if so in what ways?
4. Do service users feel an increased sense of employability?
5. Do volunteer involving organisations believe that support from Giving Time has increased their confidence and skills?

22 surveys have been undertaken by Giving Time, before volunteering and 3 months into volunteering. Those who agree least strongly with the statement score 1 and those who agree most strongly score 10. Not all service users responded to all questions.

## 2.2 Referral and Partner organisations

Semi structured telephone interviews were conducted with organisations suggested by the Giving Time Team.

## 2.3 Assumptions

Where researchers were able to contact adult service users the assumption has been made that they are living a crime free life, rather than, just not having been caught.

In terms of re offending, volunteering supported by benefits, is as valuable as P45 employment. It could be argued that it may be more valuable in providing a social network, self worth, job satisfaction and a sense of giving back.

Giving Time service users are typical of the prison population as a whole.

## 2.4 Limitations and bias

- Many service users couldn't be contacted. Phone numbers were either no longer in use or were switched off. Service users were contacted during office hours which could mean the phone was switched off because they were working, volunteering, at college or potentially recalled.
- Ideally, we would have liked to contact service users after 6 months when the impact of volunteering is likely to be greater, however the further back someone had been in touch with the service the more difficult they were to contact.
- Generally those with either a very positive or negative experience are more likely to respond. We expect that those who were in a positive place were more likely to respond to a request for feedback.
- Those with a positive outlook are more likely to volunteer and these people are most likely to desist from crime, hope being a component of desistance.
- Limitations to the time and budget always impact on research projects - there is always more to find out and budget was a factor.
- Some factors such as age, offending profile were not available for every service user. Lack of a control group makes it difficult to provide the level of evidence required for some potential funders such as the MoJ. The Justice Data lab could not be accessed due to the numbers of service users being insufficient and being a mixed group in terms of characteristics.

# Year 5 Findings

## 3.0 Service users

11 service users were interviewed face to face. Case studies were compiled for 7 community volunteers (see appendix 1) and 5 were prison based ambassadors. Interviews with community based volunteers were with selected individuals available during the research phase. The Ambassadors are serving prisoners and interviews were undertaken with all those who could be interviewed within the timeframe.

An attempt was made to systematically contact a further 30 people to undertake telephone interviews. We were able to contact 16 people, of whom:

- 7 had successfully volunteered for a period of time. (44%)
- 1 had not volunteered sufficiently for them to feel there had been an impact
- 2 had gone straight into further education or employment instead (12.5%)
- 3 had not volunteered due to health issues, of these 2 were waiting to start volunteering
- 1 had stopped volunteering due to issues at home.
- 2 were contacted but could not undertake an interview at that time so we only know that they have not been recalled.

## 3.1 Links to reoffending theories

### 7 Pathways to Reducing Reoffending

Not all pathways form a part of the Giving Time Project. Stable accommodation must be in place before a volunteer role is offered and signposting is given for services to support family relationships and benefits advice. Giving Time has been found to support:

- mental health and wellbeing,
- social inclusion (though in some cases this can be increased as people try to avoid old acquaintances who have been a bad influence)
- employment,
- a change in attitudes, thinking and behaviour,
- a reduction in drugs and alcohol use.

The change in attitudes, thinking and behaviour and the reduction in drugs and alcohol were not expected outcomes at the start of the project.

The table below illustrates the number of service users who expresses an 'indicator comment' during the interview. The total was 18 and comprised all face to face and telephone interviews where the person had volunteered for more than a few sessions. (i.e. they thought the volunteering had made a difference). The percentage represents the proportion of the 18 interviewed, who made a **specific** comment relating to the issue. Not all those interviewed were asked all questions - as the

telephone interviews may have been cut short. The table does not take into account the before and after impact surveys.

**Table 2 Seven Pathways to Reducing Reoffending comparison**

Factors	Indicators	No	%	Example
<b>Employability</b>	Hope of finding a job	7	39%	Gerald - "Volunteering will definitely lead to work"
	Improved confidence and skills	12	67%	Cassie - Volunteering has enabled her to become more confident
	Working	1	6%	Ben - "its like a ladder, you start with something small" (Ben started with volunteering which led to a job in that organisation)
	Work experience through volunteering	13	72%	Brian - Yes, of course, it will help him get a job, he can get a reference
<b>Mental health</b>	Positive and hopeful for the Future	7	39%	Eddie - "Being an Ambassador for Giving Time has helped me plan my future"
	Stated have changed lifestyle	7	39%	Rick - hopefully on a different path now, volunteering helps with not drinking.
	Giving back /self worth	6	33%	Zac - His mother is very proud that he is volunteering and giving something back to the community, it means he can demonstrate to his family that he has changed and is more responsible.
	Happy/enjoying themselves	3	17%	Aziz - Volunteering keep his mind occupied - he is happy now
<b>Social inclusion</b>	Volunteering as purposeful rewarding activity, focus, routine	11	61%	Andy - "Volunteering is therapeutic, it takes your mind off things and you can forget about things"
	Actively volunteering	16	89%	Ashley - Her biggest criticism is that St Georges Crypt is not open at the weekends so she can't volunteer there everyday which she would like to do. It helps her stay off alcohol which was a major factor in her criminal behaviour.
	Talking to people, talking to different sorts of people	11	61%	Andy - "it's a different environment, with different people, nice people."
<b>Reoffending</b>	Released and not back in prison - some are serving prisoners	13	72	Barry - No he won't reoffend, his criminal behaviour was linked to drinking and volunteering has helped him to stop.
	Positive about the future, Looking forward to things not crime related e.g. finding work, continuing volunteering	11	61%	Vic hopes to gain paid employment but wants to continue with volunteering because it is more fun than paid work.
	Do you think you will ever reoffend	10	56%	Jason - "Not a chance"

## Desistance

Table 3 illustrates the link with Desistance theories and table 4 below the relative importance of each of the factors based on comments made by community volunteers and ambassadors who are serving prisoners.

**Table 3 Factors linked to re offending and desistance from crime**

Reoffending Factors	Indicators	Desired Intermediate Outcome	Examples
<b>Drug misuse</b>	Drug addiction / dependency	Drug use reduced or stopped.	“Volunteering has helped because I took drugs to numb my feelings of isolation”
<b>Alcohol misuse</b>	Binge drinking long term alcohol misuse	Sobriety, reduced alcohol use.	“The main cause of drinking was boredom so keeping busy helps.”
<b>Impulsivity</b>	Lack of problem solving skills, lack of awareness of consequences of actions, poor perspective taking, difficulty managing emotions or impulses.	Skills in prosocial problem solving and perspective taking.  Emotion management Medication for mental health disorders Social skills	“A few years ago I would have taken offence and this would have taken me the wrong path, but now I can deal with it ok”
<b>Attitude that supports crime</b>	Identification with criminal culture, seeing crime/criminal lifestyle as a positive identity or necessary for survival. Believing that criminal behaviour is the only thing you are good at.	Developing or enhancing a non-criminal identity. Feeling hopeful and motivated about giving up crime.	“Volunteering has helped me turn my life around”
<b>Social network also engaged in crime</b>	Criminal friends, isolation from pro social others, manipulative or aggressive in close relationships.	Having a place within a non-criminal social community; strengthening ‘social capital’ – such as having the support of extended family members, mutual aid associations, clubs, cultural, religious or sporting groups.	“Volunteering means he can speak to good people and have real conversations. He has more friends now and these are different types of friendship”
<b>Lack of work/ unstable employment (volunteering counted as employment)</b>	Unable to find employment, poor performance, low satisfaction at work. lack of work related skills, poor attitude to employment, lack of qualifications.	Increased employability in the form of skills and motivation to work and confidence to relate constructively to others in the work setting. Steady employment particularly if it offers a sense of achievement, mastery or satisfaction.	“I am volunteering to keep active and for references”

Reoffending Factors	Indicators	Desired Intermediate Outcome	Examples
<b>Lack of positive recreation/ leisure activities</b>	Lack of involvement and satisfaction in pro-social recreational activities. Regular activities encourage criminal behaviour, and/or involve reckless and risk taking behaviours.	Engaged participation in pro-social recreational activities, sense of reward from pro-social recreation and sustained involvement in pro-social lifestyle.	“Ashley’s only complaint was that she would like to also volunteer at weekends so that she always has something she enjoys to engage with and keep her busy, as she believes being busy was a key factor in her ability to change her life and desist from criminal behaviour.”

### Relative importance of factors linked to desistance

The highest score (92%) in table 4 below is for volunteering. If volunteering is considered to have parity with employment in terms of non financial benefits (where welfare payments replace wages) then the project has achieved the desired outcome of increased employability in the form of skills and motivation to work, confidence to relate constructively to others in the work setting and steady employment, particularly if it offers a sense of achievement, mastery or satisfaction as described by the MoJ Summary of Evidence on Reducing Reoffending (2013).

Of the 18 spoken to, either face to face or over the telephone, who had undertaken a volunteering role, 77% made comments related specifically to developing or enhancing a non-criminal identity such as feeling hopeful and motivated about giving up crime. 66% mentioned that they had a social network that was not involved in crime.

Participation in pro-social recreational activities, gaining a sense of reward from pro-social recreation and sustained involvement in pro-social lifestyles was mentioned by 54%, as was the link with alcohol i.e. using volunteering as a positive distraction from drinking.

**Table 4 Relative importance of factors linked to reoffending and desistance**

Reoffending Factors form table 3	Related comments	% related comments in those released (13)	% comments for those still serving (5)
<b>Drug misuse</b>	2	15%	n/a
<b>Alcohol misuse</b>	7	54%	n/a
<b>Impulsivity</b>	6	46%	0
<b>Attitude that supports crime</b>	10	77%	14%
<b>Social network also engaged in crime</b>	8	62%	n/a
<b>Lack of work/unstable employment (volunteering counted as employment)</b>	12	92%	100%
<b>Lack of positive recreation/ leisure activities</b>	7	54%	n/a

## 3.2 Before and after volunteering surveys

Twenty two surveys, designed to link to the Lottery Community Fund’s outcomes, have been completed before volunteering and then 3 months after volunteering, to discover what difference volunteers feel their volunteering has made to them.

### 3.2.1 Crime and reoffending

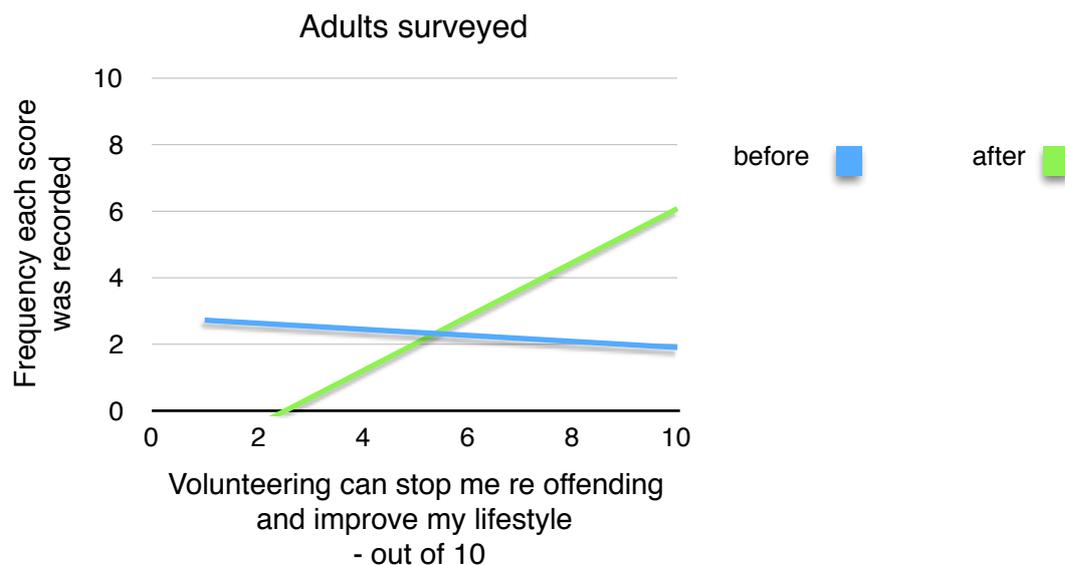
The survey question is ‘Volunteering can stop me re offending and improve my lifestyle’

22 individuals responded to this question before volunteering and after volunteering.

**Table 5 Crime and reoffending before and after surveys**

	mean before	mean after	change	improved score	no change	decreased score
Volunteering can stop me re offending and improve my lifestyle’	4.94	8.29	3.35	19	2	1

The straight lines in the graph below represent the trend in results. The rising green line (after volunteering) indicates a positive trend towards the higher scores, i.e. those who have volunteered feel more strongly that volunteering can help them desist from offending behaviour and improve their lifestyle. For one person the question is answered for lifestyle only and does not include offending behaviour so their scores have been omitted from the graph results.



## Case study

Eddie has volunteered as a Giving Time Ambassador whilst serving a sentence for domestic violence. When asked if he thought he was likely to reoffend after he had been released Eddie said, “No definitely not, 100%. I know now I’m worth more. It’s not worth it, I’m 26. I wouldn’t risk so much getting recalled.”

I want to have a normal life. I want to get married, have kids and a home and do the boring normal things, go on holidays. Want to hit the ground running when I get out in 2 weeks. I want to go to college, volunteer, meet new people and enjoy being out.

Post release Eddie said, “Being an Ambassador introduced me to all the different people who run the resettlement services - so that when I left prison I had a bundle of papers that meant something, not like the other guys, I had a plan. Two days after release Eddie enrolled on an accountancy course at Kirklees College.

## Other Comments

"Volunteering has improved my lifestyle",

"This is the best I've ever done in staying 'clean' from drugs after getting out of prison"

"I am positive I can have the courage to change for good",

"I believe volunteering can help stop me from reoffending, once my mental health is better"

"I'm on the right track now, I feel really positive about my future".

"Volunteering has improved my lifestyle"

### 3.2.2 Wellbeing and Social Exclusion

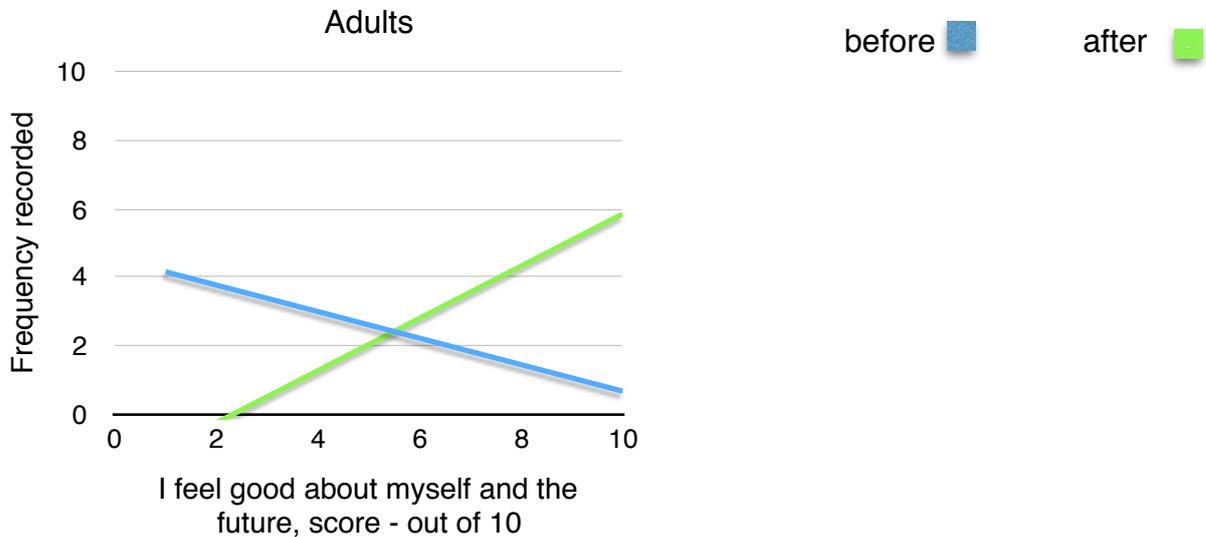
Two questions have been asked to assess health and wellbeing; “I feel happy and positive about myself and my future” and “Volunteering can reduce my social exclusion”

**Table 6 Wellbeing before and after surveys**

	mean before	mean after	change	improved score	no change	decreased score
I feel happy and positive about myself and my future.	4.13	8.13	4	22	0	0
Volunteering can reduce my social exclusion”	5.15	8.54	3.39	19	3	0

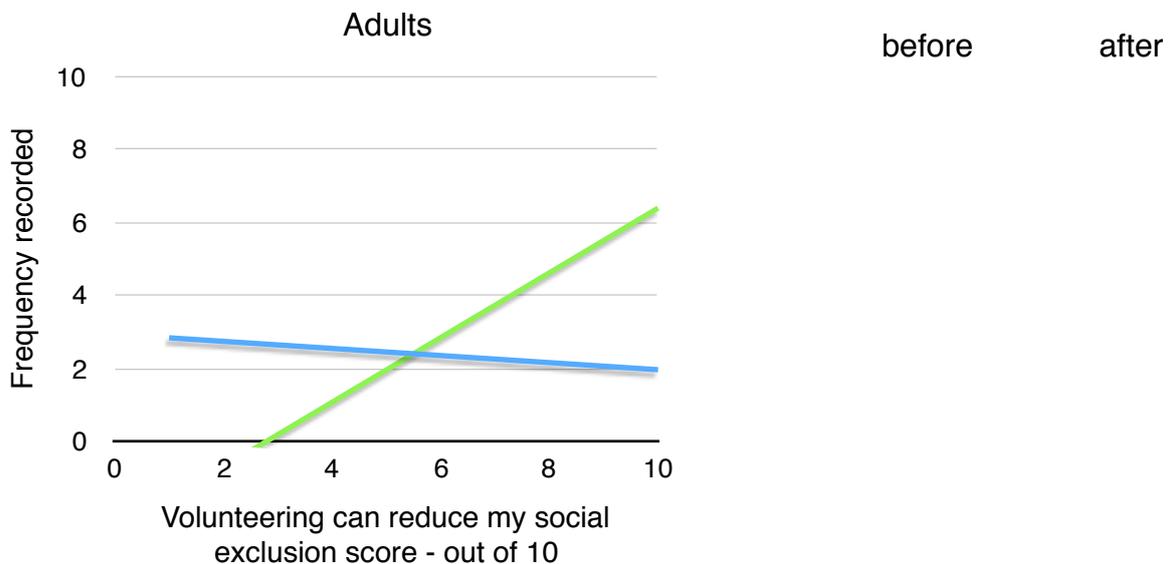
All 22 individuals responded to both questions before volunteering and after volunteering. Of the 3 people whose score did not improve after volunteering two had scored 10 before volunteering and therefore could not improve their score.

In the graph below, the straight lines represent the trend in results. The blue line



indicates that more people were giving low scores whereas the rising green line (after volunteering) indicates a positive trend towards the higher scores, i.e. those who have volunteered feel better about themselves and their future.

In the graph below, the straight lines represent the trend in results. The rising green line (after volunteering) indicates a positive trend towards the higher scores, i.e. those who have volunteered believe more strongly that volunteering can reduce



their social isolation.

## Case study

Rick has been volunteering at St Georges Crypt, at the gardens and charity shop and in the kitchen. He says it has helped with the loneliness because he is meeting new people and keeping busy.

The volunteering helps with socialising and not getting angry. "Some things are said and you have to deal with them in the right way. Hopefully, I'm on the right path now - getting cross with people leads you down the wrong path. A comment was made yesterday and a few years ago I would have taken offence but now I can deal with it Ok."

## Other comments

"I feel that I have paid my debt to society and should be considered for a second chance"

"Isolation is very disturbing and it's not healthy, these volunteering activities will help me massively with confidence"

"Volunteering is something good to do. I will look for more roles when I've settled back into Durham"

"I loved being at St. George's Crypt"

"Volunteering is a really positive experience, thank you for your helpful support", "If I hadn't met the Giving Time staff, I don't think I'd have got anywhere"

"I'm enjoying my volunteering - I feel valued"

"Volunteering has introduced me to Growing Rooms, and a healthier support network, I have made new friends

"I am looking at transferring to an Oxfam shop when I leave Ripon House"

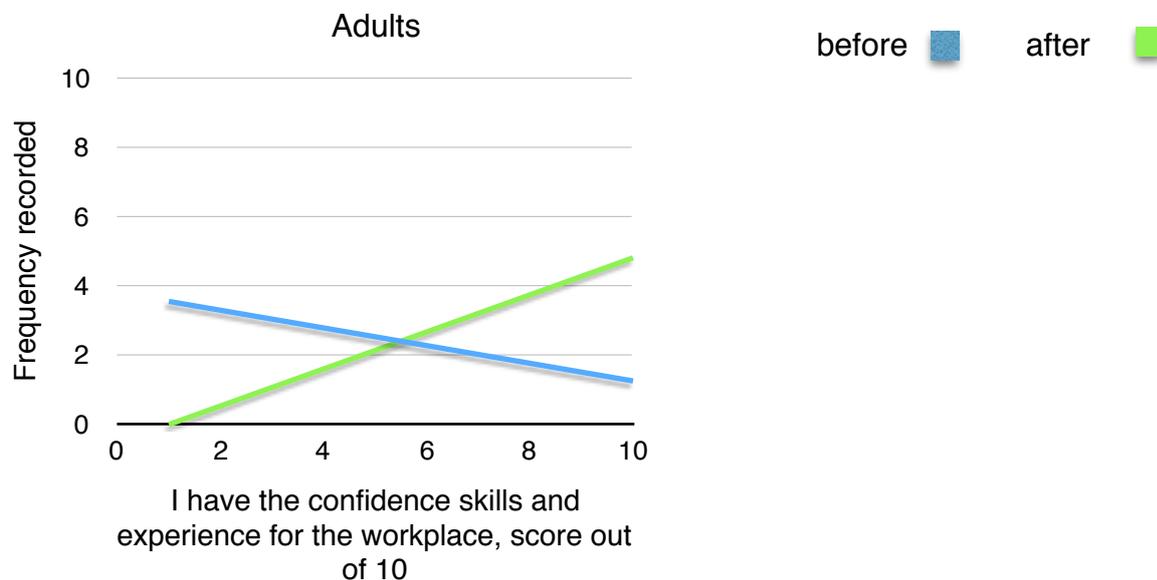
## 3.2.3 Confidence and skills

**Table 7 Confidence, skills & experience for the workplace before and after surveys**

	mean before	mean after	change	improved score	no change	decreased score
confidence, skills and experience for the workplace 2019	4.63	7.33	2.7	19	2	0

Surveys asked service users to assess their confidence, skills and experience for the workplace. For adults, all 21 individuals responded both before volunteering and after volunteering.

In the graph below, the rising green line (after volunteering) indicates a positive trend towards the higher scores, i.e. those who have volunteered feel more confident, have more skills and and more experience for the workplace.



## Case study

Zayn is 37, from Barnsley and has been in prison 3 times. As a high risk person with criminal convictions he is required to live in a bail hostel. His past involves alcohol and cocaine misuse and offences of assault and intent to supply Class A drugs and robbery.

Zayn currently volunteers at St George's Crypt, one day per week for approximately 6 hours. Zayn spoke particularly fondly of his superior at The Crypt, who has been very kind and welcoming to him and has offered to give him a reference for jobs and volunteer roles he applies to in the future.

Zayn is looking for a full-time job, however he hopes to continue this volunteer role even after securing paid employment, hopefully either the retail or hospitality sectors. He has recently applied to Tempus Novo and sent his CV out to several companies, including companies who specifically aid those with criminal convictions into employment and companies not specifically tailored to those with criminal convictions. Zayn is optimistic that the experience he has gained by engaging in volunteering will assist him in getting a job, in addition to the fact that he has previous work experience in washing and cleaning obtained from working in a restaurant prior to entering prison.

Zayn also believes they have improved his ability to receive constructive criticism and so feels he has matured; before entering prison, he would respond to negative feedback in a defensive manner, but now believes he is

able to receive such feedback in a mature way by using it to improve himself further.

### Other comments

"I know the difficulties in gaining employment, it's a game of patience and trust"

"Changing my life is a positive journey and I understand I have to build confidence, skills and trust

I feel I have the confidence to adapt to most workplace environments",

"I have confidence making applications",

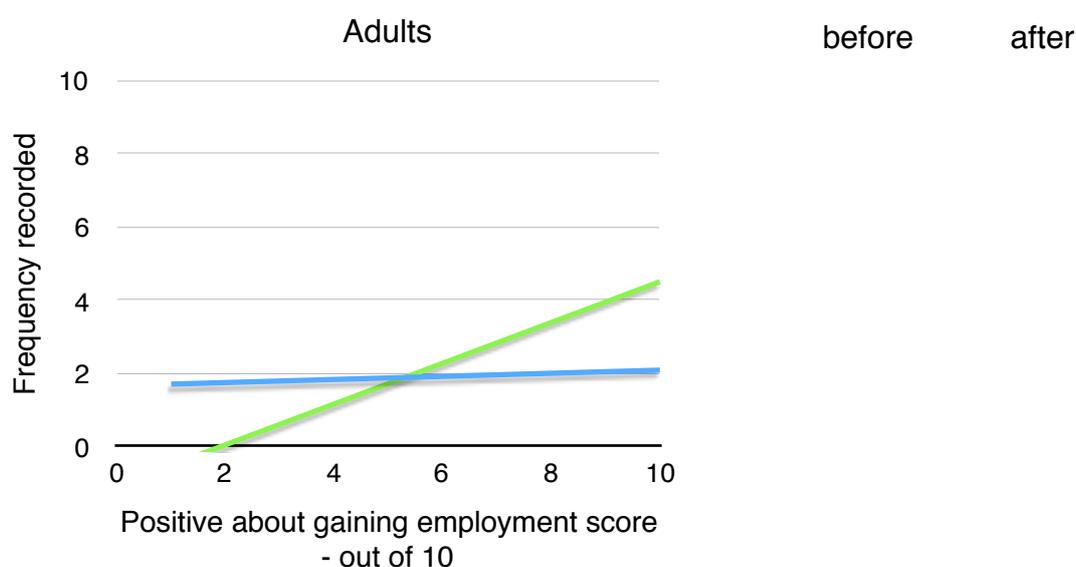
"I feel secure and confident in my IAG course and just need the practical experience"

### 3.2.4 Employment

**Table 8 Positive about gaining employment before and after surveys**

	mean before	mean after	change	improved score	no change	decreased score
positive about gaining employment 2019	4.23	7.33	3.1	20	2	0

The survey question asks service users how positive they are about gaining employment. For adults, all 22 individuals responded before and after volunteering.



The rising green line (after volunteering) indicates a positive trend towards the higher scores, i.e. those who have volunteered feel more positive about gaining employment.



## Case study

Ben had just completed his degree in Business Administration when he was convicted and jailed for posting a terrorist related video. Due to the nature of his conviction his university refused to award him his degree.

As part of his license Ben has a mentor who referred him to Giving Time. A part time voluntary receptionist role was found for Ben. Ben said “Volunteering has given me more confidence to get back into a working environment.” Ben got a part time supermarket job but carried on volunteering. “Its hard to find a job if you have a conviction, but talking about volunteering at my interview really helped. It’s like a ladder - you volunteer for a ‘small job’ and it leads to other things.”

Ben was taken on as a part time paid employee where he volunteered and has since changed job roles so that his level of responsibility and hours have increased.

## Other comments

"I feel secure and confident in my IAG course and just need the practical experience"

"I feel volunteering will be a good stepping stone for me to gain employment"

"I now have some work experience to put on my CV and references for future work",

## 3.2 Summary of changes recorded 3 months after volunteering

All areas show a positive improvement overall. The most positive change is related to mental health improvements: I feel happy and positive about myself and my future. Closely followed by:

- Volunteering can stop me re offending and improve my lifestyle'
- Volunteering can reduce my social exclusion”
- Positive about gaining employment

Overall the results are slightly more positive than in 2018, when between one and two volunteers scores decreased for each question. This year only person chose to score lower for one question after volunteering for 3 months and fewer people showed no change.

**Table 9 Summary of changes recorded 3 months after volunteering**

	mean before	mean after	change	improved score	no change	decreased score
Volunteering can stop me re offending and improve my lifestyle'	4.94	8.29	3.35	19	2	1
I feel happy and positive about myself and my future.	4.13	8.13	4	22	0	0
Volunteering can reduce my social exclusion"	5.15	8.54	3.39	19	3	0
confidence, skills and experience for the workplace	4.63	7.33	2.7	19	2	0
positive about gaining employment	4.23	7.33	3.1	20	2	0

# Findings from organisations offering volunteer opportunities

## 4.0 Introduction

The project works with partner organisations offering volunteering opportunities to those with criminal convictions, to provide advice, guidance and training to enable them to better engage and support those with criminal convictions to volunteer in their organisation.

Quarterly professional network meetings and training events have been held to educate, support and give confidence to organisations in taking volunteers with a criminal conviction.

Two organisations offering volunteer opportunities were interviewed:

Open Source Arts  
Hyde Park Source

Although more were targeted, discussions with Giving Time staff indicated that, often, the organisations offering volunteer opportunities are unaware of a person's criminal background. Many of those being put forward are high risk offenders and therefore under the supervision of a Probation Officer. The offending history and the potential volunteer role are discussed with the National Probation Service to discern the potential risks. Many organisations do not request that previous offending behaviour is disclosed (under the Ban the Box campaign) and so long as the volunteer role fits well and the risk level is low then this can go ahead without disclosure of previous criminal convictions.

### Open Source Arts

Open Source Arts offers a 'place for making', a space for practicing community creativity, sustainability and collaboration across art forms and crafts for all backgrounds and skill levels.

They have physical space for making, training and practising, filled with workshops, masterclasses and regular open training sessions. Alongside arts projects they have environmental stewardship projects, such as riverside and canal side cleanups either every week or every two weeks, where most Giving Time service users have volunteered.

### Hyde Park Source

Hyde Park source is an environmental charity delivering projects across Leeds. They work with local communities to improve their surroundings, designing and creating attractive, exciting, safe and useful places for people to live, work and play.

They work with the Giving Time project on a weekly basis.

## 4.1 Feedback from interviews

### What organisations offering volunteering roles, value about the service

**Open Source Arts** Open Source Arts are quite hidden away and the Giving Time Project has allowed them to reach volunteers who might not have otherwise known they were there.

They really value the service, it's very easy to use.  
It has been really great, having people come along and they have had a consistent flow of volunteers.

**Hyde Park Source** The Giving Time Network meetings as a place to share advice - they especially appreciate the practical disclosure advice. The service has helped them to create individual risk assessment and risk management plans and taught them how to manage the induction process so that those with criminal conviction are part of the risk assessment process.

Also, Giving Time has taught them how to speak to other services for instance, about licence terms.

The level of support the service gives - brokers check in with people to see if they have been to an induction and if they haven't they will offer support and reassurance that its ok they can go another time or can try somewhere else to volunteer.

### What difference does the service make

**Open Source Arts** It has made a huge difference, OSA get a greater volume of volunteers, they have achieved much more along the riverbanks, removing fly tipping, clearing invasive species and cleaning up after flood damage. "Its been amazing"

Lots of areas are looking so much better and becoming more of a destination so people are using the areas more just for dog walking and going with their family.

**Hyde Park Source** HPS take approximately 20 volunteers per year, some only stay for a short time but some stay for a few months and some for a very long time. It helps service users build up networks if they have been isolated.

The Giving Time team will often ring Hyde Park Source when they have a potential volunteer with them so that the person can speak to them direct - this overcomes some of the anxiety a person might have about going to a new place for the first time.

People disclose if they know you will accept them but otherwise they might not tell you about criminal convictions.

It makes HPS feel comfortable in saying that they are welcoming to everyone. As an organisation they are proud to say they have volunteers with criminal convictions.

The volunteers are really committed and want to give back - they bring skills and experience to HPS.

Small third sector organisations have less fear and more confidence to treat people fairly - organisations are encouraged to think about equality and diversity in relation to those with criminal convictions. Blocking people with criminal convictions from volunteering creates more offending because people are isolated.

### **What would happen if the service were no longer available**

**Open Source Arts** We would struggle to get new volunteers.

People who want to volunteer find it easy to engage with the Giving Time service and come along - often it is people with mental health issues or homeless people who come as it gives them something to do.

**Hyde Park Source** They would take some people with criminal convictions but not as many - Giving Time helps them with the risk assessment process. They have learnt a lot but still get good nonjudgemental support when they are unsure about something.

There would be lots of people with criminal convictions with nowhere to go. The Giving Time team speak at the Leeds' Volunteer Coordinators Network meetings' to open up opportunities in other organisations. There would be more small third sector organisation that would not take people with criminal convictions.

This service is really needed.

**Are there any Improvements or extensions to the service that you would like to see?**

**Open Source** It would be nice to work even closer - to give even more information on 'events' so volunteers could come along. They post on their own facebook.

**Hyde Park Source** No - they do a really good job.

## **4.2 Summary for organisations offering volunteering roles**

The organisations that offer volunteer opportunities, were interviewed and were full of praise for the Giving Time service, the process, the staff competencies and skills and the difference the project makes to their organisation and the volunteers themselves.

They particularly value the specialist nature of the service in relation to disclosure and risk, the ease of using the service and the level of support to volunteers.

It makes a difference to their organisations in terms of numbers of volunteers and the volume of hours donated to help their cause. Also in helping them to achieve their aims of being fair and open to all. It helps more widely because people with criminal convictions can volunteer and this helps with recidivism.

If the service users were not there they would lose out in terms of numbers and quality of volunteers and the support to achieve their own mission and people with criminal convictions would have fewer places to volunteer.

# Referral Organisation Findings

## 5.0 Introduction

The project works with partner 'referral organisations', 5 were interviewed:

New Wortley Community Centre  
National Probation Service  
St Giles Trust  
West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project  
Change Grow Live

### **New Wortley Community Centre**

New Wortley Community Centre is located very close to HMP Leeds. It has a specialist Offender Support Team led by those with lived experience of the Criminal Justice System. As part of their support they help service users (around 20 per year) to access volunteering opportunities via the Community Centre itself or via the Giving Time project.

In the last year of the project they referred between 10 and 20 people into the Giving Time Project.

### **National Probation Service**

The National Probation Service supervises high-risk offenders released into the community. Their priority is to protect the public by the effective rehabilitation of high risk offenders, by tackling the causes of criminal behaviour and enabling those with criminal convictions to turn their lives around. The probation officer interviewed had referred one service user who had expressed an interest in volunteering as an alternative to work, which they were not ready for. They needed routine and social interaction.

### **St Giles Trust**

St Giles is a large national charity that helps people facing severe disadvantage. They work with HMP Leeds, HMP New Hall, HMP Wealstun and HMP Askham Grange offering, or working with organisations that offer Through the Gate Services and work in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Companies.

Locally, they run an Information Advice and Guidance, Level 3 Course and they try to get volunteer roles for their students. The Giving Time team deliver presentations as part of the course induction and they have a good relationship with the team. They refer around 10 people per year.

## **West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project (WYCC)**

WYCCP is a 'Through the Gate' resettlement organisation which aims to reduce re offending and contribute to building a safer and stronger Leeds and West Yorkshire. They provide holistic practical support and encouragement to men, pre and post release, to help them make positive life choices and cope with life in the community without committing crime.

WYCCP refers service users to the Giving Time project and generally work alongside the team.

## **Change Grow Live (CGL)**

CGL offers alcohol and drug services, support to young people, those in the criminal justice system and anyone looking to live a healthier, happier life. They offer rehabilitation interventions and services across the country and enable people to stop offending and regain control of their lives.

Most of the people they see aren't yet ready for volunteering. The service has referred 2 people in the last 6 months.

## **5.1 Feedback from interviews**

### **What referral organisations value most about the service**

<b>New Wortley Community Centre</b>	The staff - we get on well with them The level of service provided
<b>Probation</b>	The specialist support to those with criminal convictions - people referred know that they will not be judged. The knowledge and understanding of the Criminal Justice System Appropriate roles are offered, with risk appropriately managed according to NPS standards - not too risk averse but also take things seriously when it's needed.
<b>St Giles</b>	The staff are very flexible and will try and support anyone, the service is very fast - people often want to start quickly and they have a real understanding of difficulties that people with criminal convictions face - especially disclosure issues.
<b>West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project</b>	The service is very person centred, the staff are very friendly and welcoming and make people feel comfortable about their past history. They have a good understanding of support needs.
<b>Change, Grow Live</b>	The service is tailored to each person needs. The offender specialism is important - people referred know that they won't be judged and they will not be rejected.

## What difference does the service make to your organisation?

### **New Wortley Community Centre**

It means less work for the Offender Support Team because service users have not been reoffending and therefore do not keep coming back into the service - we don't see the same faces coming back through the door.

When service users start to volunteer, then the team know that they are doing something with their time. People usually reoffend if they are bored; they have no money so they can't go and do things and they have no money to buy food. When people volunteer they have purpose and they often get their lunch given to them.

### **Probation**

The service helps people with criminal convictions into appropriate roles.

It helps social interaction for people with criminal convictions, which reduces the risk of harm to others.

It helps with sentence plans - creating a prosocial circle and network of support is often part of sentence planning and volunteering directly supports this.

### **St Giles**

The service has access and relationships with more organisations than St Giles so if someone doesn't fit with St Giles opportunities then they can refer them to the Giving Time service.

They have a good working relationship with the team and it is a good personal service - it means that people can go to them where they would not have the confidence to go straight to the volunteer centre.

### **West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project**

It provides the next step for their service users - it means they can refer people to a positive service for those with criminal convictions.

The organisations that have been supported have increased their confidence and skills in providing roles for those with criminal convictions.

The team fill in all the forms which makes a big difference for service users.

### **Change, Grow Live**

It gives hope to people with criminal convictions - people think that they can't volunteer, that they can't do things. It gives hope that it might lead to employment.

## What would happen if the service were no longer available

<b>New Wortley Community Centre</b>	The opportunities would be lost - when people volunteer it gives them a head start and an opportunity to show they are employable. There is a barrier for those with criminal convictions in getting skills for employment - the skills and resources that volunteer positions offer are good for people with criminal convictions.
<b>Probation</b>	Another source of support would be lost, it would be a shame.
<b>St Giles</b>	<p>The loss of the service would create more work for the St Giles team.</p> <p>They would be quite limited on how to support their service users in cases where they are not suitable for the IAG Course because they have limited English and Maths. At the moment the Giving Time service gives them somewhere positive to refer to.</p>
<b>West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project</b>	A few doors would be closed to our service users, people want to volunteer but don't know what reception they are going to get - the service takes away a level of anxiety. They don't have to disclose, they know they will be welcomed.
<b>Change Grow Live</b>	It is an extra resource, they would be stuck on where to go otherwise. It would be hard work to find someone for their service users to volunteer, they would need to know that their service users wouldn't be rejected.

## Are there any improvements or extensions to the service that you would like to see?

<b>New Wortley Community Centre</b>	The service is working well, I can't think of anything that needs to change.
<b>Probation</b>	<p>People with sex offences suffering from social isolation is a huge problem. They have long sentences and often their family have left them. For them to disclose is a huge problem because of the reaction they might get.</p> <p>A 'safe' referral place would be huge for them - not having to disclose, confidentiality (no one is going to tell everyone) and only being around people that it is safe to be around.</p>

<b>St Giles</b>	We would like to see the services extended to cover sex offenders. Having places that are safe to send them would help reduce the risk to society
<b>West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project</b>	Our service users have always felt very supported by giving Time whilst they were volunteering. They do a good job. It is a very welcoming service and really friendly. A greater variation in the roles and opportunities would be better.
<b>Change Grow Live</b>	The team is easy to contact and refer to and the service, good. It would be good to have hubs in different areas/ do outreach, so that the service was more accessible

## 5.2 Referral organisation summary

There was a greater response to the requests for an interview from referral organisations than from organisations offering volunteer roles and the Giving Time team indicate that this is because many of the service users are at high risk of committing crime and so they work closely with probation on the risk involved and the terms of a service users license. Therefore, they only broker appropriate roles where disclosure is not required and thus the organisations offering volunteer roles are unaware that they are taking people with criminal convictions.

As with the organisations that offer volunteer roles, referral organisations value the quality of the service, the skill, flexibility and friendliness of the staff and the person centred nature of delivery.

Referral partners value the difference it makes to their service users:

- people usually reoffend if they are bored
- creating a prosocial circle and network of support is often part of sentence planning and volunteering directly supports this.
- people can go to them when they would not have the confidence to go straight to the volunteer centre.
- people think that they can't volunteer, that they can't do things. It gives hope that it might lead to employment.

If the Giving Time service were not there, then another source of positive options would be lost to their service users.

# Process feedback

## 6.1 Service users

Service users value of the service and the difference it has made to them. An ambassador commented that it should be extended to help more people.

## 6.2 Organisations that offer volunteer roles

It would be nice to work even closer - to be able to give even more information on 'events' so volunteers could come along.

## 6.3 Referral organisations

Several recommendations and ideas have been put forward for improvements and extensions to the service: extending the service to sex offenders, more variation in the roles and opportunities and either hubs in different areas or outreach so that the service was more accessible

## Cost / benefit for year 5

### 7.0 Employment and Reoffending

Employment on release is a key component of a prisoner's rehabilitation. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Education and Employment Strategy 2018 states that: 'Work provides people with an income, but it reaps more benefit than just that. It also establishes a daily routine, boosts self-esteem, and gives people a stake in society. It is no surprise that those ex-prisoners who find work on release are less likely to reoffend than those who do not'.

Feedback from Giving Time stakeholders, those referral organisations at the front line in keeping those with criminal convictions, out of prison state:

"People usually reoffend if they are bored; they have no money so they can't go and do things and they have no money to buy food. When people volunteer they have purpose and they often get their lunch given to them." New Wortley Community Centre

"It helps with sentence plans - creating a prosocial circle and network of support is often part of sentence planning and volunteering directly supports this." NPS

What difference has the project made then, to reducing reoffending?

Locally, the latest statistics give the overall proven reoffending rate for West Yorkshire as 30.7%. (West Yorkshire Reducing Reoffending Strategy, launched 25 February 2019). This includes all ages and those who did not receive a prison sentence. A proven re-offence includes a court conviction, caution, reprimand or warning in the one-year follow-up or within a further six month waiting period. The number who have had work in 12 months is 17%.

The latest national statistics available, give the proven reoffending rate at 28.7% for the cohort July 2017 to September 2017. (Proven Reoffending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, published in July 2019). For those who had been released from custody or had started court orders, the reoffending rate was 32.2% for all ages and lengths of sentence or 62.2% for those who had served less than 12 months.

Employment is difficult to achieve and maintain for those with a criminal record. The 2017 (latest available) statistics for Leeds indicate that, of those who have spent less than 1yr in prison, 32% had a job *1 year after* release; if they had spent more than 1yr in prison, 18% had a job *1 year after* release.

The MoJ's Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction (SPCR) longitudinal cohort study of prisoners, (Brunton-Smith, I. and Hopkins, K., 2013) found that for those who were in paid employment at *some point shortly after release* (this equates to 28% of those released), that the one year reoffending rate was 39%. For those not in paid employment *at any point shortly after release*, (this equates to 72% of those released) then the one year reoffending rate was 59%.

Also, recent figures published in the Ministry of Justice's Education and Employment Strategy 2018, indicate that on average only 17% (compared to 18% in Leeds) of those with criminal convictions (of all types not necessarily custodial) were in employment 1 year on.

A more in depth analysis, using a matched comparison group was undertaken by the Ministry of Justice in 2013. They found that, those with criminal convictions who had been released from custodial sentences of less than one year, were 9.4 percentage points less likely to reoffend if they had had some P45 employment. For sentences lasting one year or more, the one year reoffending rate was 5.6 percentage points lower for those who found P45 employment. (MoJ 2013 Analysis of the impact of employment on reoffending following release from custody, using Propensity Score Matching)

Employment before custody, drug use, life history and accommodation are all factors associated with likelihood of re-conviction. Employment and accommodation before custody have a strong influence on employment and accommodation post release and thus re offending rates. The use of class A drugs has very direct relationship with reoffending.

All the Ambassadors reported clear positive impacts and at least half of the community based volunteers, based on those we were able to contact, reported clear positive impacts. These were not just employment based but were also particularly linked to mental health.

The analysis of comments made by those interviewed either face to face or via telephone, illustrate how much service users benefit from their volunteer roles and the links with Desistance Theory. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate that 92% of service users comment on having increased their employability in the form of skills and motivation to work and confidence to relate constructively to others in the work setting and/or having steady employment, in this case a volunteering role supported by welfare, particularly if it offers a sense of achievement, mastery or satisfaction as described by the MoJ Summary of Evidence on Reducing Reoffending (2013).

77% also made comments related specifically to developing or enhancing a non-criminal identity, such as feeling hopeful and motivated about giving up crime. 66% mentioned that they had a social network that was not involved in crime.

## **7.1 Rationale for cost benefit calculation**

The assumption has been made that if a person is volunteering, enjoying their role and is supported by benefits, then they have an equivalent to a P45 job in terms of stability, self esteem and job satisfaction. For the purposes of the calculation the assumption has also been made that all service users have been incarcerated for more than 1 year - this provides a more cautious estimate for a cost benefit calculation and best reflects those placed.

Discounting the serving prisoners volunteering as Ambassadors, evidence suggests that there is substantial positive impact for 50% of those brokered into voluntary

roles, i.e. they have maintained volunteering for sufficient time for them to feel there has been an impact.

In year 5, 47 people have received substantial positive impact.

### **Deadweight**

Without the Giving Time project, then 18% (8 people) would have found employment anyway (i.e. the deadweight).

Those service users who have gone straight into employment or further education prior to starting their volunteering role, have already been discounted from the group considered to have successfully volunteered.

## **7.2 Cost/Benefit**

47 service users with criminal convictions have engaged in volunteering and reported a positive impact.

For those in paid employment at some point shortly after release (17% in West Yorkshire) then the one year reoffending rate is 39%. For those not in paid employment at any point shortly after release (72%) then the one year reoffending rate is 59%.

So, if 47 people have found volunteer positions then for these volunteers, 39%, (18) are expected to reoffend compared to 59% (28). Therefore we expect that 10 (a) fewer people will reoffend.

The Ministry of Justice has several different methods of estimating the average cost per prisoner. The 2017/18 figures show that in England and Wales, the average direct cost per prisoner in was £24,151 but taking into account all resource expenditure the overall cost per prisoner was £37,543. (b)

Re-incarceration costs are estimated at £86,614 per person (Scottish Government figs 2018). (c)

Cost savings are therefore  $ab+ac$  which totals £1,241,570, assuming that each person goes to prison for 1 year.

**Attribution** - The average attribution to Giving Time is 58% (e)

### **Cost Saving Year 5**

If the cost of the project is £81,350 (d) then the cost saving is  $e((ab+ac))/100$ -d. Therefore the estimated cost saving to the public purse **£638,761** or for every

**£1 spent £7.85 is saved in criminal justice costs.**

### 7.3 Sensitivity Analysis

Based on regression modelling, Propensity Scores have been developed by the MoJ to predict the **probability** that an individual will gain employment after their release i.e. the propensity score is the expected probability of gaining P45 employment after release given the individuals observed characteristics.

The MoJ found that those with criminal convictions with a P45 employment spell within one year following their release from custody were significantly less likely to re-offend than those with criminal convictions who did not get P45 employment. For custodial sentences of less than one year, those with criminal convictions with a P45 employment spell had a proven reoffending rate 9.4 percentage points lower than the matched comparison group. For custodial sentences of one year or more, those with criminal convictions entering P45 employment after release had a proven reoffending rate 5.6 percentage points lower than the matched comparison group.

Giving Time service users could be said therefore, to be 5.6 percentage points less likely to reoffend than those without 'employment'. The average reoffending rate for West Yorkshire is 30.7% so the figure would be 25.1% proven reoffending rate for the Giving Time cohort.

Therefore 11 people would re offend compared to 13 without 'volunteering' which represents a potential cost saving of £62,672. However, this is not considered to be a robust estimate because the overall proven reoffending rate for West Yorkshire is a broad based figure that already includes a proportion (17%) who have successfully found employment.

## 5 Year Summary

## 8.1 Project Outcomes

Stated outcomes for the Lottery Community Fund's funding:

- Crime, reoffending and re-admittance is reduced.
- Wellbeing is improved.
- Social exclusion is reduced, integration into communities increased.
- Employability is increased.

The project targets for 2019 are shown in Table 1, below with the actual achieved based on the accumulative total over 5 years and assuming that all those placed have had a successful volunteering experience.

**Table 10 Giving Time outcomes and indicators**

	Outcome	Indicator	Target	Achieved	Evidence
1	More prisoners and those with criminal convictions have access to volunteering as a means to rehabilitation	Each year, one new Volunteer Centre is opened in a new prison.	5 new prison volunteer centres	5	Centres opened
	Increased desistance from criminal activity	People will report that volunteering has made them less likely to reoffend and be readmitted	75 per year, 375 total	88 in yr 5 385 estimated total across all years	No. who increased score on impact surveys
	Reoffending is reduced	Reoffending rates after 12 months release for volunteers is reduced	10% lower than the West Yorkshire average	5.6 - 9.4%	Based on MoJ propensity score matching
2	Increased sense of wellbeing in volunteers registered with the project	People will report an increased sense of wellbeing as a result of volunteering	80 per year, 400 total	93 in yr 5 312 estimated total across all years	No. who increased score on impact surveys
3	Decreased sense of social exclusion in prisoners and those with criminal convictions registered with the project	People will report an increased sense of social inclusion as a result of volunteering.	60 per year. 300 total	88 in yr 5 385 estimated total across all years	No. who increased score on impact surveys
	Organisations supported by the project have increased their confidence and skills to provide volunteer opportunities for those with criminal convictions.	Organisations report increased skills and confidence in working with those with criminal convictions	20 per year, 100 total	18 in yr 5 90 estimated total across all years	Interviews - estimated at 50% of supported organisations

	Outcome	Indicator	Target	Achieved	Evidence
4	Increased sense of employability in prisoners and those with criminal convictions registered with the project	Increased sense of employability as a result of volunteering	65 per year, 325 total	85 369 estimated total across all years	No. who increased score on impact surveys
	Prisoners and those with criminal convictions go onto education training or employment	People move into education training and employment	20 per year, 100 total	12 in yr 5 51 in total based on 3-6 month follow up.	Interviews - estimated at 12.5% of successful volunteer roles
	Skills gained by prisoners and those with criminal convictions	People will report improved skills around volunteering and employability	70 per year, 350 total	88 in yr 5 369 estimated total across all years	No. who increased score on impact surveys for this question

Achieved figures are the actual figures for year 5 which has also been used to estimate the figure across all years based upon either the impact survey questions or the interviews with community based volunteers.

'Reoffending is reduced' is based upon MoJ Propensity score matching and the 'Centres Open' - HMP Wetherby, HMP New Hall, HMP Leeds, HMP Askham Bryan and HMP Wealstun.

## 8.2 Numbers Placed

Table 11 gives the outcome figures. Excluding year 1 due to set up costs, the average cost per person placed in a volunteering role is between £715 and £950.

The cost per successful outcome is based on an average of a 60% success rate across year 4 and 5 based on evidence from face to face and telephone interviews. This gives an estimated cost per person for each person for whom the project has made a significant difference of between £1433 and £1570.

**Table 11 Giving Time outcomes and indicators**

	Year	Brokered	Placed	% of those brokered, placed	Cost £	Cost per person placed	Estimated successful outcomes	Cost per successful outcome
1	Nov 14 - Oct 15	142	34	23.94	76,626	£2254	20	3831
2	Nov 15 - Oct 16	328	88	26.83	75,955	£863	53	1433

	Year	Brokered	Placed	% of those brokered, placed	Cost £	Cost per person placed	Estimated successful outcomes	Cost per successful outcome
3	Nov 16 - Oct 17	267	81	30.34	76,908	£950	49	1570
4	Nov 17 - Oct 18	403	109	27.05	77,910	£715	65	1199
5	Nov 18 - Oct 19	233	93	39.91	81,350	£875	56	1453
	Total	1373	405		388,749		243	

**Notes to table 11** - the introduction of a new Customer Relationship Management System means that the total brokered in year 5 may be more.

### 8.3 Full project cost/benefit

Total service users placed in volunteer roles 312

Average success rate 60% (based on yr 4 and 5 combined) 187

Successful volunteer opportunities multiplied by one year reoffending rate, for those in paid employment, of 39% 73

Successful volunteer opportunities multiplied by the one year reoffending rate for those *without* employment (59%) 110

Thirty seven fewer people are likely to have reoffended, so the cost saving in criminal justice and prison costs totals £1,389,091 if we assume that each person goes to prison for 1 year.

#### Attribution

The average attribution to Giving Time from surveys is 58%

#### Input

The cost of project for 5 years was

year 1 £76,626  
year 2 £75,955

year 3 £76,908  
year 4 £77,910  
year 5 £81,350

## **Return on investment**

***The cost saving across all years is £2,429,761 or for every £1 spent £6.25 is saved***

These are broad brush estimates that vary between years and are affected by the multi-variant nature of reoffending, the limited information on the characteristics of each person, such as age and offending history, the assumptions made and the attribution.

The figures exclude the wider societal costs such as the effect on family life, particularly children, the potential for debt and homelessness upon release and the cost to the victims of crime and to property.

## **Considerations and recommendations**

### **9.1 Service Users**

The outcomes for serving prisoners who are voluntary Giving Time Ambassadors are very similar to those for volunteers in the community and link well to Desistance Theory.

One Ambassador who was interviewed before release and then a few days after release was particularly positive, he went straight onto an accounting course within a few days. When interviewed it was clear from his responses that he considered himself very much an extension of the staff team - an employee who just happened not to be paid and this had a very positive effect for him.

### ***Common themes articulated by service users***

- Volunteering as a routine, a purposeful activity to give structure and meaning to their daily lives.
- Volunteering as a distraction - from mental health issues and past trauma, from drugs and alcohol.
- Volunteering as a way of changing lifestyle and behaviour and moving away from old social networks that may lead then to commit crime.
- Enjoyment and leisure particularly volunteering for projects like gardening.
- Work experience and references.
- Giving back - particularly where it relates to specific causes e.g. giving talks to schools on knife crime. (case study - Sam)
- Anecdotally, there seems to be a link with length of time volunteering - not necessarily how many days per week. One day per week could be as beneficial as more days per week as long as this is sustained for a few weeks or months.
- Ambassadors found that meeting lots of different people, connecting with other agencies and engaging with them from a slightly different perspective, very valuable.

## **9.2 Stakeholders**

- The most impact seems to be for the referral organisations rather than organisations offering volunteer opportunities. The responses infer a great deal of value from those organisations who need to refer service users especially those who are difficult to place. The service, as it is currently delivered finished, at the end of October 2019, but the staff skills and contacts are very valued and perhaps this knowledge and skills be incorporated into the Volunteer Centre.
- As a organisations offering volunteer opportunities become accustomed to working with people with criminal convictions the volunteers are taken in almost the same way as any other volunteer. The picture has also slightly changed in that a number of organisations that offer volunteer opportunities are unaware that they are taking people with criminal convictions.

- The organisations offering volunteer opportunities really value the supply of volunteers to help them meet their objectives and rely on a continuing supply of helping hands.

### **9.3 Pinch points - what can be done to improve these or should some be accepted?**

- There is significant drop off between those who are brokered into positions and those who actually volunteer in the community, often this is due to health issues.
- Giving Time can only help people remaining in Leeds or the immediate areas - the project can't really help adults returning to other areas who have to be signposted on to other volunteer centres.

### **9.4 Research**

Suggestions to incorporate into future research:

- Contacting people by telephone was very time consuming but gives a better overall picture of what happens to people after they have volunteered than case studies, which are inevitably with successful individuals. The lead broker could potentially undertake semi structured follow up calls at set intervals, a 1 year follow up, for example, would be useful to link to reoffending rates, although contact rates may be low.
- Define as much as possible the characteristics of the target group.
- Request consent to use personal information to submit to the Justice Data Lab and/or similar comparison study where only aggregate data is public.
- Investigate creating a control group in partnership with a partner organisation/s.
- Slightly change impact survey question on offending

### **9.5 Service delivery**

- There is demand from referral organisations for a service that can assist those on the Sex Offenders Register find suitable volunteering roles.
- Critical thresholds - considering the before and after impact surveys, are there some critical thresholds that everyone needs to reach? There was a positive change across almost all the indicators but is this indication of progress sufficient to achieve the outcome/s of reintegration and non recidivism? For example if someone scores 4 for 'I feel happy and positive about myself and my future' should this flag that more support is required?
- Advice to Businesses - The MoJ's Education and Employment Strategy 2018 states "Businesses say that advice from other businesses is vital in helping them

understand both the challenges and opportunities that come with employing ex-offenders.”

- Could the expertise of the team continue to be used to help other third sector organisations and /or private sector businesses on the employment of those with criminal convictions?

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## Appendix 1: Community Volunteer Case studies

### Ashley

Ashley is a 50-year-old woman who has been in and out of prison for 33 years, previously suffering from mental health issues such as emotional instability, PTSD, and alcohol misuse. Whilst suffering from these disorders she committed several criminal offences, which included arson endangering her own life, racially-aggravated harassment, and possession of an offensive weapon.

Ashley is now a volunteer at St Georges Crypt, which she has been involved in for the past 3 weeks. She is part of the general kitchen staff, engaging in tasks such as washing up and serving food. From this volunteering she has managed to obtain an NVQ qualification, and so feels positive that her engagement in this volunteering work will help her gain employment in the future. Crypt has also offered to give her a reference at the end of her volunteering, which she feels will boost her CV. Overall, Ashley spoke positively about her experience volunteering with The Crypt, stating she enjoys it as it gives her purpose and something to do; her biggest criticism was that they were not open over weekends meaning she was not able to volunteer there everyday, which she said she would do if given the opportunity.

Ashley is currently residing at a Bail Hostel but will be moving to another hostel in Leicester at the end of March, which is where she is originally from. She hopes to start volunteering again soon after her move to Leicester, and once she has secured a volunteering role she enjoys, she will start to look for employment. Ashley now has no mental or physical health issues, and whilst she suffered from alcohol misuse prior to entering prison, she has decided to give up alcohol and feels that this has had a significant positive impact on her life. She also believes that her alcohol use was a large factor in her criminal behaviour, and so believes she is not at risk of committing crime due to alcohol use no longer being part of her life. Furthermore, she believes her involvement in volunteering has helped her to stay away from alcohol as it gives her something to do and something to focus on that she cares about. She also stated she is tired of the routine of repeatedly entering and leaving prison, and so feels it is time for a change.

Being in the hostel has given her a new supportive network of friends with whom she feels she can talk to about any concerns. Ashley also stated she has no interest in keeping in contact with the network of friends she had prior to entering prison as she feels as though this would make her more likely to return to her old lifestyle, which is not what she wants. Furthermore, Ashley believes she has met a wider range of people because of her volunteering role at The Crypt. She is therefore looking forward to continuing to volunteer upon her move to Durham as she knows this will lead to her having a supportive network there as well.

Regarding improvements to the Giving Time project, Ashley did not have any. She felt the support had been great, and that the project had managed to find the right role for her and her specific interests and needs. Her only complaint was that she would like to also volunteer at weekends so that she always has something she enjoys to engage with and keep her busy, as she believes being

busy was a key factor in her ability to change her life and desist from committing crime.

This case is just one example of an individual with a criminal record making massive changes to many aspects of their life through engaging with something as simple as volunteer work. Ashley's volunteering has boosted her CV, has kept her busy which in turn has helped her to stay away from alcohol and committing crime, and has provided her with a new support network. In addition to this, the work Ashley has done at St Georges Crypt has also improved the lives of those who rely on the charity, and thus her volunteering has had a positive impact on the community as well as her own life.

## **Cassie**

Cassie is a woman from Harrogate who struggles with psychosis, whom in the past has spent time in prison for the offence of arson. Since October, she has been volunteering once per week at a bail hostel where her role consists of co-leading a music group for the residents there. Cassie enjoys this as she likes music and enjoys playing the piano, in which she has achieved Grade 7. In addition to this achievement, she has also obtained a Diploma in Popular Music, English Level 2 and Customer Service Level 2. Prior to volunteering at the bail hostel, Cassie has also volunteered at Revive where she acquired experience in retail, in a charity shop run by MIND, at Touchstone and at Oxfam, highlighting the vast amount of time she has voluntarily dedicated to giving back to the community. She is hopeful that she will get into paid employment in the future, but wants to spend some time building up a good CV before she starts looking for job opportunities. She lives alone in a house in Harrogate, which she is able to do due to having received support from Foundation Housing. Cassie is very happy living in Harrogate, as she has moved back to the same area she is from and so feels settled in the area.

Cassie has different friends now to those she had before entering prison, and she has stayed in contact with the friends she made whilst in prison. She believes volunteering has enabled her to become more confident, which will help her to build more new, positive relationships in the future. She is close with her family; particularly her mother, whom she sees often as they live close to one another. Cassie therefore has a supportive network of friends and family around her, and so states she does not feel as though she is on her own.

With the help of medication, Cassie's mental health is in the process of improving. She also has a physical injury to her leg which was acquired in prison, for which she is receiving treatment as well. As long as she continues to take medication for her mental health, Cassie believes she is not at risk of committing crime as she views her poor mental health at the time of her offence as the main cause of her past behaviour. In addition to this, Cassie states keeping busy through volunteering is very helpful in aiding her desistance as it gives her something to look forward to each week. Overall, she believes that a combination of her medication, keeping busy and her supportive family are the main reasons she is able to continue to lead a crime-free life. She states she does this by taking every day as it comes, and so

whilst she has not got any long-term plans for the future, Foundation Housing have recently asked her to lead a music group in a bail hostel in Harrogate which she is due to begin next month.

This individual's case demonstrates how encouraging those with criminal convictions, to volunteer, and allowing them to do so, has enabled Cassie to not only acquire skills she can apply to her personal and professional life such as leadership and using her initiative, but the music group she co-leads is facilitating the rehabilitation of the those with criminal convictions residing in the hostel by improving their communication and creativity. This therefore highlights how enabling those with criminal convictions to volunteer can have direct benefits for other people with criminal convictions, as is the case here, but also indirect benefits for society as successful rehabilitation of those with criminal convictions will reduce the likelihood of recidivism, which will have a positive impact on the community as a whole.

## **Sam**

Sam is a 33-year-old man from Lancashire who has previously suffered from issues around substance misuse. He has also spent some time in prison for the offences of possession or use of a weapon and attempted murder. Sam has previously engaged in several different volunteering roles for various organisations, and currently volunteers at Life Experience where his role involves going to different schools and universities to give talks to students on knife crime. He does this alongside victims of knife crime and families of victims. Sam engages in this work as frequently as the schools and universities require him to, which is approximately twice per week. Whilst Sam is not currently employed, he is optimistic about the job opportunities his volunteering experiences will open up for him, and so hopes to engage in paid work after his volunteering.

Sam currently resides at Holbeck House. He hopes to move back to Lancashire in the near future due to not feeling settled in Leeds, and so believes moving home will aid his ability to get back into a healthy routine which he hopes will include work. He also believes this will be helped by the supportive network of family he has there; something he does not currently have in Leeds due to only knowing the other individuals who also reside in the hostel.

Although Sam has had substance misuse issues in the past he believes these will not be a problem in the future, stating volunteering has helped him through giving him a different kind of 'buzz', meaning he no longer feels as though he needs drugs to acquire this. He also stated volunteering gives him a sense of self-purpose and meaning to his daily routine.

Due to his change in lifestyle, Sam has fewer friends now and speaks to fewer people than he did before entering prison. He believes his volunteering in schools has played an important role in teaching him how to communicate in a new way with different people of differing ages. Although he has fewer friends now, he sees his supportive network of family members on a regular basis when he visits home.

In Sam's view, he is not at risk of committing crime. He believes he has grown up a lot since leaving prison and in a sense has grown out of prison, and so is motivated to do what he can to remain out of it. Overall, he believes the main factor in helping him to change his lifestyle was his family's support, however believes it was also a combination of his age, being in a new place and having a new routine, which he believes the Giving Time project has helped to create. In the future, Sam hopes to continue giving talks around knife crime in schools and universities, and eventually wants to set up his own charity that conducts similar work to his current volunteering role in order to educate others on the dangers and impact of knife crime, with the ultimate aim of deterring them from making the choices he did.

Sam's situation highlights how engagement in volunteer work by those with criminal convictions can have immense positive effects on their lives. Sam's volunteering has allowed him to boost his CV, discover new interests, and develop life skills such as effective and clear communication. In addition to these, his role has positive effects on the community as his work aims to educate and deter others from knife crime, demonstrating how getting those with criminal convictions involved in volunteering can have many positive effects for both that individual but also for those they work with and for the community as a whole.

### **Vic**

Vic is a 50-year-old man who has been in and out of prison for approximately 13 years. In the past, he has committed the offences of criminal damage endangering life, shoplifting, possession of and intention to supply drugs, burglary, theft and domestic violence. Having been out of prison for 3 months, Vic is currently involved in two volunteering roles; gardening with Bedford Fields twice per week and building bikes at Pedlers Arms 1-2 days per week. Vic states he loves volunteering because it keeps him busy, and so he wants to volunteer as much as possible. In the near future he will be taking up an additional volunteer role, in which he will be helping to clean canals with the organisation Sea Gulls. Vic is not currently in paid employment, but believes volunteering is critical to him being able to eventually secure paid work as currently his only references are criminal ones, and so he feels volunteering is the best way – possibly even the only way – for him to show off his positive attributes and skills to potential employers.

Vic suffers from high anxiety and paranoia, which he believes is due to violence and trauma experienced whilst in prison, and also has strong feelings of isolation. He states volunteering has helped hugely in reducing his anxiety and feelings of isolation, as it allows him to engage with 'good' people with whom he can have 'real conversations'. Vic holds the belief that surrounding yourself with good people will lead to good things happening, and so believes involvement in volunteering, where he is surrounded by kind people, will help him to mirror their good attributes, thus resulting in positive changes happening in his life.

Since leaving prison in December, Vic has not been able to find permanent accommodation and so has been staying in a homeless hostel. He does not

like the people in the hostel or the fact that there is no privacy. In addition to this, residents are not allowed to have friends to visit which has led to an increase in his feelings of isolation, therefore he feels his life will improve once he finds permanent accommodation elsewhere. This is also due to his belief that feeling more settled through being in a proper home will allow him to focus on finishing his treatment for Hepatitis, after which he can fully focus on obtaining paid work. He feels optimistic about being able to gain employment in the future due to the references he will gain from his volunteering roles and the fact he has a teaching qualification, which he acquired during his 2½ years of voluntary work with the drug recovery service. He has therefore acquired skills which demonstrate his willingness to learn and commit, which he will be able to apply to other roles in the future.

Since he was 20 years old, Vic has had issues around crack cocaine and heroin misuse. He has been clean since leaving prison, which has been helped by his methadone prescription. He hopes to come off this eventually however states he is not ready yet, due to the methadone helping to combat some of the unpleasant side effects of his Hepatitis medication. Vic emphasised that volunteering has also massively helped him to desist from drug use due to it decreasing feelings of isolation, which was a big factor in his drug use as using drugs was his way of numbing these feelings.

Now that he is involved in regular voluntary work, Vic feels he has more friends than he did before entering prison. In addition to this, he feels as though he has different types of friendships with these individuals compared to those he had with previous friends regarding the way in which they communicate and behave around each other; he views this as a positive change. Regarding family relationships, Vic feels abandoned by his family and blamed by them for certain family issues, and so whilst he would like to have them in his life he feels as though this is not possible. This was a big factor in him feeling isolated, which has made it more difficult for him to stay away from drugs.

Vic states he cannot say he will never reoffend, but that he wants to remain positive and would like to think prison will stay in his past as he doesn't have the strength to continue going back there anymore. He believes volunteering is the only way forward regarding making positive changes to his life. In the future, Vic hopes to gain training and paid employment but states he would also like to continue to volunteer alongside this, as he believes volunteering is more fun than paid work. In addition to this, he enjoys being in the company of the other volunteers.

This demonstrates how getting people with criminal convictions into volunteering can help to reduce social exclusion, which in turn can have a significant positive effect on other factors such as substance misuse and mental health issues. Furthermore, by volunteering in a number of different roles, this individual has acquired a range of new skills, such as improved communication and confidence, which will be applicable to any future volunteering or employment opportunities that arise. On top of this, by engaging in voluntary activities such as canal clean-ups and gardening Vic is helping both the environment and the community, which is a perfect example

of how getting people with criminal convictions involved in volunteering has many positive effects beyond just those that apply specifically to people with criminal convictions.

## **Zayn**

Zayn is 37-years-old man from Barnsley, who has been in prison 3 times. He is required to live in a bail hostel due to being classed as being at a high risk of committing crime because of his past alcohol and cocaine misuse. In the past he has committed the offences of assault, intent to supply Class A drugs and robbery.

Zayn currently volunteers at St George's Crypt, where he works in the kitchen carrying out a wide range of task including food prep, storing, cleaning, and assisting with the cooking. This is a temporary role until he is able to find a full-time job, however he hopes to continue his volunteering even after securing paid employment. Zayn has been involved in this particular role for 6 weeks, however he expresses that he may have to leave once he has been there for 3 months due to this being the amount of time for which he is required to stay in the bail hostel, and so once this time is up he will be moving back to Barnsley.

His current income is from Universal Credit, however he is actively seeking employment which he hopes will be in either the retail or hospitality sectors. He has recently applied to Tempus Novo and sent his CV out to several companies, including both companies who specifically aid those with criminal convictions into employment and companies not specifically tailored to those with criminal convictions. Zayn is optimistic that the experience he has gained by engaging in volunteering will assist him in getting a job, in addition to the fact that he has previous work experience in washing and cleaning obtained from working in his family's restaurant prior to entering prison. Currently, he volunteers at The Crypt one day per week for approximately 6 hours. Zayn spoke particularly fondly of his superior at The Crypt, whom he stated has been very kind and welcoming to him and has offered to give him a reference for jobs and volunteer roles he applies to in the future. Further to this, his case worker and probation worker have expressed they are very happy with the progress he has made so far. Zayn also believes they have improved his ability to receive constructive criticism and so feels he has matured; before entering prison, he would respond to negative feedback in a defensive manner, but now believes he is able to receive such feedback in a mature way by using it to improve himself further. He also stated that he is happy he has been given the opportunity to give something back to the community.

Zayn has been living in the bail hostel he currently resides since he was released from prison in February. He has a case worker whom he speaks highly of, and feels as though they are key in enabling him to stay motivated to mature and continue to make positive changes in his life. Within 2 weeks of being released from prison, Zayn had a relapse and began drinking again. However, he has currently been sober for 5 weeks. He believes the main reason he has been able to stay sober has been the support of his mentor, and whilst he believes he does not volunteer at The Crypt frequently enough

for this to be a major factor in his ability to desist from alcohol and drug use, he stated that the main cause of his drinking was boredom and so feels keeping busy through volunteering would be very beneficial in assisting him in remaining sober.

Zayn also states he is very happy living at the hostel, as he has a nice bedroom and there is good food – he was especially happy the hostel catered to his religious requirements and provided Halal meat. He is a very outgoing person and feels he is able to talk to anybody, and so has made many friends in the hostel including both staff and other residents. He states there are many people in the local area and so doesn't ever view making friends as an issue; he is more worried about sorting out his future housing and employment. Although he has always been close with his family, even whilst in prison, he has unfortunately lost contact with several members due to his relapse in drinking upon leaving prison. He is now only in contact with his mother, but hopes to make amends by inviting them to his new home when he has one in order to show that he has become better and matured, and most importantly that he is once again sober.

He states his criminal record is the main obstacle to him gaining employment, as often he finds this alone means many employers decline his application without taking into account any other factors; such as work experience. Zayn sees himself as being at a low risk of committing crime, and whilst he admits he cannot say for sure he will never reoffend, he is trying his best to remain out of prison due to his belief prison is "a waste of life." He also states he is no longer in contact with the same individuals as he was before entering prison as they are unable to contact him whilst he is living in Leeds. However, Zayn is aware he may run into them when moving back to Barnsley, but plans to try and avoid this by moving to a slightly different area than he had lived in previously. He also states they were not there for him whilst he was in prison and so he believes they are not true friends, which is therefore a further motivation in his view to remain out of contact with them.

On the whole, Zayn believes the biggest factor in his ability to be better and turn his life around has been his case worker, followed by his volunteering. He believes he will soon request to have more shifts at The Crypt if he remains unemployed as this will keep him busy and prevent him from becoming bored, thus helping to prevent him from drinking. In addition to this, Zayn states his mother is particularly proud of the fact he is volunteering and giving something back to the community, and so his involvement in volunteering has helped to demonstrate to his family his ability to change and become more responsible. In the future, he believes he will have to move back to Barnsley where he hopes to secure paid employment, but Zayn also expresses a desire to continue volunteering in Leeds at The Crypt. This is predominantly because he enjoys it, but also because he believes volunteering in Bradford may lead to him coming into contact with a lot of the people he knew before entering prison, who may ask him for 'favours'; a situation he has foreseen he would not feel comfortable with and so has planned his actions in order to avoid it.

Zayn further stated he would be very likely to recommend the Giving Time project to friends and family if they required similar support and would relay

the advice someone had once given him, which is that “it can help if you want help.”

This individual’s case is a good example of how volunteering can provide new opportunities for those with criminal convictions to utilise skills they already have and to socialise. Additionally, this case demonstrates how volunteering can help to facilitate those with criminal convictions in becoming more responsible and creating a routine for themselves in order to aid their desistance; as seen in this case, Zayn states he will engage in more frequent volunteering if he does not obtain employment in order to decrease his chances of relapse to alcoholism. Allowing these individuals to have a stable routine through enabling them to volunteer can therefore be critical in their ability to desist from crime and the risk factors that lead to it.

## **Ben**

Ben is a young man who in 2014 at the age of 19 was convicted for the publication and contribution of terrorist literature which could endanger life. Ben pleaded guilty on the grounds of recklessness, not intent and says he is deeply ashamed of his actions.

Aged 18, Ben had been introduced to an online forum with live conversation and he soon became their website administrator. It was his actions in this role that led to his conviction. Ben says that it was the instability in his childhood that led to his criminal behaviour.

Ben was sentenced to 20 months in prison, he served 10 months and was released in January 2017. Whilst he was in prison Ben engaged in Desistance and Disengagement and Healthy Identity’s programmes.

Before committing the offence, Ben had been studying for a degree in Business Administration but his University did not award him a degree due to his criminal behaviour. Ben says that he didn’t realise that what he had done was illegal at the time, he now realises his naivety and says he has learnt from his mistakes, been to prison and paid the price and now wants a second chance to prove his real identity.

Due to the nature of the offence, Ben was classed as high risk, posing a threat to young vulnerable people, people of no faith and people who have abandoned their Muslim faith. Therefore his parole conditions were strict - he could not volunteer anywhere he would come into contact with vulnerable people nor have access to the internet which made it challenging to broker him into a role that suited his career ambitions.

As part of his license Ben has a mentor who referred him to the Giving Time team. A part time voluntary receptionist role was found for Ben. Ben said “Volunteering has given me more confidence to get back into a working environment.” Ben also found a part time supermarket job but carried on volunteering. “Its hard to find a job if you have a conviction, but talking about volunteering at my interview really helped. It’s like a ladder - you volunteer for a ‘small job’ and it leads to other things.”

Ben was taken on as a part time paid employee where he volunteered and has since changed job roles so that his level of responsibility and hours have increased.

## Appendix 2

Table 12 Available statistics on reoffending and employment

Category	Cohort	1 yr proven reoffending rate %	Employment rate %	Source
West Yorks - all ages custodial/non custodial	2017	30.7		(West Yorkshire Reducing Reoffending Strategy, launched 25 Feb 2019).
All ages custodial/non custodial	2017	28.7		(Proven Reoffending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, published in July 2019).
In P45 employment 1 yr on (all ages, custodial /non custodial)	2017		17	Ministry of Justice's Education and Employment Strategy 2018,
All ages, released from custody or started crt orders	2017	32.2		(Proven Reoffending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, published in July 2019).
Custodial sentence <1 yr	2017	62.2		(Proven Reoffending Statistics Quarterly Bulletin, published in July 2019).
Some employment shortly after release (all sentence lengths)	2006	39		(Brunton-Smith, I. and Hopkins, K., 2013)
No employment shortly after release (all sentence lengths)	2006	59		(Brunton-Smith, I. and Hopkins, K., 2013)
Some employment following release custodial sentence <1 yr	2008	32		Justice Statistics Analytical Services (2013). <i>Analysis of the impact of employment on reoffending following release from custody, using Propensity Score Matching.</i>
No employment following release custodial sentence <1 yr <i>comparison group</i>	2008	41.7		Justice Statistics Analytical Services (2013). <i>Analysis of the impact of employment on reoffending following release from custody, using Propensity Score Matching.</i>
Some employment following release - custodial sentence > 1yr	2008	18.8		Justice Statistics Analytical Services (2013). <i>Analysis of the impact of employment on reoffending following release from custody, using Propensity Score Matching.</i>
No employment following release - custodial sentence > 1yr <i>comparison group</i>	2008	24.4		Justice Statistics Analytical Services (2013). <i>Analysis of the impact of employment on reoffending following release from custody, using Propensity Score Matching.</i>

Category	Cohort	1 yr proven reoffending rate %	Employment rate %	Source
No employment following release custodial sentence <1 yr No matched group	2008	69		Justice Statistics Analytical Services (2013). <i>Analysis of the impact of employment on reoffending following release from custody, using Propensity Score Matching.</i>
No employment following release custodial sentence >1 yr not matched group	2008	43		Justice Statistics Analytical Services (2013). <i>Analysis of the impact of employment on reoffending following release from custody, using Propensity Score Matching.</i>
In employment 1 year on custodial sentence <1 yr	2017		32	(West Yorkshire Reducing Reoffending Strategy, launched 25 February 2019).
In employment 1 year on - custodial sentence >1 yr	2017		18	(West Yorkshire Reducing Reoffending Strategy, launched 25 February 2019).