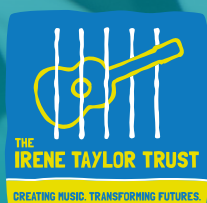


AN EVALUATION OF THE IRENE TAYLOR TRUST'S **SOUNDING OUT** PROGRAMME 2016–2018 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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BACKGROUND

The Irene Taylor Trust runs a music traineeship (Sounding Out) providing ex-prisoners with longer-term rehabilitative opportunities upon their release to bridge the gap between life inside and outside of prison. Through music creation, performance, training and work placements, the programme aims to develop transferable team working and communication skills, instil discipline, increase self-confidence, self-esteem and self-motivation, improve social skills and develop mentoring skills.

The Institute for Community Research and Development was commissioned to undertake an independent evaluation of the programme. The evaluation took a qualitative approach to explore the views and experiences of participants, staff and family members to understand if and how Sounding Out is successful, identifying any barriers to success and making evidence-based recommendations for improvements.



KEY FINDINGS



Involvement in a carefully designed programme of music creation, skills development and work placements can have a significant impact on the rehabilitation and re-integration of people seeking resettlement from prison. Consistent with a, now extensive, body of authoritative research, Sounding Out demonstrated benefits in:

1

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF
PERSONAL AND SOCIAL
SKILLS ASSOCIATED
WITH DESISTANCE
FROM CRIME**

2

**IDENTIFYING FOCUS
AND DIRECTION
TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT
AND AWAY FROM
REOFFENDING**

3

**BUILDING PRACTICAL
SKILLS, IMPROVED
MUSICAL ABILITY,
PATIENCE TO WORK
WITH OTHERS, AND
EMPATHY THROUGH
TEAM WORKING**

Sounding Out has benefits for an individual's readiness for continued involvement in music. There are also benefits for the professional musicians involved and for prison and probation staff. Findings from detailed qualitative analysis identify the following as key to making Sounding Out successful:

1

**PARTICIPANT
ENGAGEMENT IN
SOUNDING OUT IMPARTS
A PASSION FOR MUSIC
DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED
WITH THE QUALITY AND
PROFESSIONALISM
OF DELIVERY OF
THE PROGRAMME,
THE SALIENCE OF
TIMING IN LINE WITH
AN INDIVIDUAL'S
MOTIVATION TO CHANGE
AND PAID PLACEMENTS**

2

**THE NEED TO MANAGE
EXPECTATIONS,
ENABLING INDIVIDUALS
TO SET PERSONAL
GOALS FOR ATTAINMENT
OF MUSICAL SKILLS,
INCLUDING FOR
PERFORMANCE,
WITHIN A REALISTIC
FRAMEWORK,
PARTICULARLY
FOR THE END OF
THE PROGRAMME**

3

**THE UNEQUIVOCAL
VALUE FOR
PARTICIPANTS
IN DEVELOPING
MEANINGFUL AND
RESPECTFUL
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
STAFF, MUSICIANS
AND PEERS**

4

**THE DEVELOPMENT
OF PARTNERSHIPS
WITH AND BETWEEN
PRISON AND PROBATION
STAFF, ORGANISATIONS
AND INDIVIDUALS
DELIVERING THE
PROGRAMME, FAMILIES
AND PARTICIPANTS,
VENUES HOSTING
THE PROGRAMME AND
PERFORMANCES,
AND THE PUBLIC**

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE IRENE TAYLOR TRUST

- Ensure that the aims and expectations about Sounding Out are clear to potential participants
- Consider working towards a rolling participant recruitment cycle, whereby participants can commence the programme upon release without waiting for a full cohort to be released and start at the same time
- Build on those attributes of the programme shown to be most effective, especially the Personal Development Coordinator role and function
- Further develop the referral procedure to increase referrals and promote advocates in prison staff teams
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is available for project staff and musicians to manage boundaries with participants
- Explore opportunities for ongoing roles for former Sounding Out participants
- That follow up interviews with participants be undertaken after one year to assess long lasting impact
- Continued evaluation through audit and feedback will improve the precision of the logic model and theory of change, in order to enhance the benefits of the programme
- In future funding bids consider seeking investment in new technology, which may be of particular interest to younger participants
- Disseminate findings from Sounding Out via the networks of trustees and advocates of the Irene Taylor Trust to increase access to the programme and funding for it
- Use all means possible, including press and media, to share these findings and recommendations
- Cost-benefit analysis to demonstrate the benefits to criminal justice system and funders.

FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:

- That criminal justice policy makers note the benefits, for re-integration and rehabilitation of people leaving prison, of Sounding Out and related programmes. That criminal justice policy makers facilitate access by:
 - » Identifying funding streams through existing mechanisms such as education commissioning
 - » Identifying new funding streams for bespoke programmes
 - » Disseminating the findings through leadership programmes with prison governors and other change agents to encourage wide scale adoption of Sounding Out and related programmes
 - » Secure delivery of Sounding Out and related programmes by including metrics monitoring equity of access for people likely to benefit from the programme (metrics in line with those in use for activities such as education and employment).

- Include findings from Sounding Out and related programmes in new governor/senior leader induction packs to enable continuity of delivery and awareness of the benefits for new recruits to the service
- Provide guidance to prison officers and senior probation staff about the security and support needed for musicians and other staff running programmes such as Sounding Out; particularly the importance of identifying a named member of staff, to work with the Irene Taylor Trust, to identify participants for Sounding Out.

FOR FUNDERS

- Recognise the value of Sounding Out in delivering outcomes for individuals and the potential for cutting the costs of crime to families and communities
- Appreciate the importance of investment in relationship building for programmes like Sounding Out
- Be receptive to requests for longer-term support, in programmes such as Sounding Out where timeframes for realising benefits exceed annual funding rounds
- Encourage organisations working in the criminal justice system to seek funding for capacity building
- Provide a level of flexibility in funding arrangements to enable organisations to be responsive to discontinuities and other problems that frequently arise when working in the criminal justice system.

Dr Rachel Massie, Andrew Jolly, and Professor Laura Caulfield

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The full report is available on our website:

www.irenetaylortrust.com

For more information about this work, please get in touch:

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