



Evidencing Change

West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project

Final Evaluation Report

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Executive Summary

From August to December 2011 *Evidencing Change* was commissioned by the West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project (WYCCP) to undertake an independent evaluation of their work.

WYCCP

West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project is a resettlement organisation which supports the populations of Her Majesty's Prisons at Leeds and Wealstun¹ to lead crime free lives on release. It is one of 18 community chaplaincy projects in the UK, working with a multi-faith ethos that seeks to reduce re-offending for the men with whom it works and thus contribute to building safer communities in West Yorkshire. Their approach is to work with offenders 'through the gate', providing support both inside the prison and post release, and the organisation works with anyone who approaches them, except two excluded categories of sex offenders and foreign nationals. The project's approach fits with the seven pathways to reducing reoffending, established by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

Recent performance data shows WYCCP has been successful in achieving their key target of reducing reoffending with the men they have supported.

Summary of the methodology

WYCCP commissioned this evaluation at a time of transition in the criminal justice sector, in order to both inform current funding providers and also to evidence their achievements for potential future commissioners. The aims and objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Undertake a financial and statistical analysis of WYCCP's work in order to gain a picture of the cost of supporting WYCCP service users, in order to compare this with the costs of a man remaining in the criminal justice system.
- Carry out an assessment of the cost and financial value of WYCCP's volunteering programme.
- Gain an independent view of the qualitative value of the WYCCP service to key stakeholders.
- Externally validate the numerical outcomes of WYCCP including the outcomes reported to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme which has provided funding for WYCCP's Routes to Release Project from 2009 – 2012.
- Independently provide an external summary indicating how the Routes to Release Project has contributed to the overarching Big Lottery outcomes of people having better life chances, and stronger communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle problems.

¹ HM Prison Leeds is a male local prison, and HM Prison Wealstun is a Category C men's prison.

- Provide recommendations of any potential service improvements.

The evaluation used a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches, undertaking interviews with key stakeholders, staff and service users. The following provides an overview of the key findings of the study.

Key findings

WYCCP has worked hard over the last few years at extending their reach through volunteers and developing an effective reporting system to validate their achievements. Their ability to reduce the re-offending rate of the people they work with is evidenced and their relevance to the rehabilitation revolution has been recognised.

The evaluation has highlighted key **strengths** of the WYCCP model integral to its success:

- The service is independent of the criminal justice system.
- It responds to offenders who self-refer.
- It is person-centred, flexible, open-ended focused on building supportive relationships.
- The value of the volunteers is central to delivery.

WYCCP recognises it is often one of several agencies working with an ex-offender and values that partnership approach. The service users are often fairly chaotic with multiple issues. So how far can success in terms of reducing re-offending be attributable to WYCCP? Perhaps too much emphasis can be given to attributing credit across a shared arena when the real issue is one of making sure that a person's needs are met in partnership rather than in competition. WYCCP's **flexible and person-centred approach** may provide the 'glue' that allows the other agencies to maximise their potential.

The **quality** of the service was recognised by internal staff, external stakeholders, service users and volunteer link workers. The latter spoke positively of the training, support and supervision they received.

Clear **impact** of the service is evidenced on several levels. The headline outcome is that WYCCP reduces the re-offending rate of many of the men they work with. The service users benefit from better life chances and increased resilience as the WYCCP team help to make valuable improvements to their lives, and the community benefits from reduced re-offending, families reunited and ex-offenders re-engaging in a positive way in their local area.

In addition, WYCCP achieves important hard and soft outcomes for service users such as accessing accommodation and employment opportunities, building self-esteem and being better able to manage life in the community. Volunteer link workers spoke of personal satisfaction, increased confidence and skills resulting from the range of experiences offered by WYCCP.

The quantitative assessment of the project explored the costs related to delivering the service in contrast to the costs of a man remaining in prison. Through comparing findings from WYCCP's monitoring data with reoffending rates for HMP Leeds, it is arguable that in 2010/11 the service prevented 44 men returning to prison within a year of release, **saving the public purse** between £727,760 and £1,455,520. This is based on the assumption that each of these men returned to serve sentences of six months or 12 months for the larger figure. If the sentences were longer, the related savings would be higher still.

Key **learning** for the organisation in the last few years has mainly focused on two strands - developing the link worker programme and improving data collection and evidencing outcomes.

The Routes to Release Project

The Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme is funding the Routes to Release Project which funds the Volunteer Coordinator post and the Education, Training and Employment worker post. The work of these two roles has allowed the development of a large volunteer programme and a focus on supporting service users with any education, training and employment needs.

This evaluation has highlighted the impact of the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme Routes to Release Project as the work of these two roles is central to WYCCP delivery and key elements in achieving overall outcomes. Key findings relating specifically to Routes to Release include:

- The difference the project funding is making to the WYCCP service with benefits for service users, volunteer link workers, the wider community and external stakeholders.
- The project contributes directly to the outcomes one and two of the Reaching Communities Programme.
- There is a potentially significant quantitative impact of the volunteer programme with wider savings to the public purse.

The reduced level of reconviction rates of ex-offenders working with WYCCP compared to those who have not accessed the service demonstrates a continuing need for the service. WYCCP are the only organisation in the area offering a 'through the gate' service with volunteer mentors.

There has been key learning from the Routes to Release Programme and particularly the volunteer link worker programme. The most significant learning was the need for a time gap before service users could become volunteer link workers.

Future Challenges

The arrival of the payments by results agenda for HMP Leeds heralds a new dawn for WYCCP as they are perfectly positioned to effectively work with the prison to reduce re-offending. The Prison Governor recognises the direct impact the WYCCP service provides in relation to achieving the prisons seven key outcomes. At the time of writing, WYCCP has not been commissioned to deliver services as part of the pilot and, therefore, the service needs to remain alert and responsive to all relevant funding opportunities. In addition, WYCCP continues to receive funding from charitable sources and needs to ensure compliance with grant conditions.

Evidencing Change envisage the challenges ahead for WYCCP include:

- Being visibly commissioning-ready to position for a payments by results contract from HMP Leeds through evidenced outcomes, reporting and monitoring systems.
- Sharpening their evidence base to provide a hierarchy of outcomes relevant to the payments by results agenda, the wider funding opportunities, and WYCCP's strategic plan.
- Ensuring the consistency of internal collection and recording of data.
- The development of a reporting system which allows easy access to relevant data.
- Maintaining independence and distinctiveness as they deepen links with the prison and become more integral to the outcomes of the prison.

Recommendations

- **Maximising commissioning opportunities**

In order to maximise commissioning opportunities, WYCCP needs to be commissioning-ready which necessitates developing and embedding outcomes focused reporting.

- **Positioning the service for payment by results commissions from HMP Leeds**

It is recommended that WYCCP work closely with HMP Leeds Prison Governor to evidence why WYCCP is so important to the prison outcomes that they need to invest in the service.

- **Change reporting to be outcome-focused rather than in-depth / light touch.**

It is suggested that WYCCP consider changing their reporting basis to focus on outcomes / results as the key indicator rather than the time spent or the number of interventions with a service user.

- **Develop a hierarchy of outcomes**

To show a picture of WYCCP's effectiveness and provide a comprehensive picture of their impact, it is recommended WYCCP consider developing a hierarchy of data² with the headline

² Hierarchy of outcomes based on suggestions in *Impact Measurement in the Youth Justice Sector, New Philanthropy Capital, May 2011*

outcome the reduction in the re-offending rate. The system should include collection of data relevant to the 5 short-term targets in WYCCP's Strategic Plan.

A suggested hierarchy of data could include:

- **Headline outcome** – aim to reduce re-offending rate
- **Interim outcomes** – hard and soft outcomes both valid in terms of contributing to resettling into the community and reducing re-offending
 - Offending history and risk profile of those involved to show the project is not just 'cherry picking' and also to provide data to allow analysis of the type of offenders the project is having most impact with.
 - Case studies as illustrations of how WYCCP has helped individuals and the difference it has made.

- **Devising more robust approaches to reporting**

Tracking service users over a period of time presents some challenges. However, with some amendments the existing approach could be made even more robust and this would provide WYCCP and their stakeholders a greater level of confidence in their achievements.

- **Improving recording of soft outcomes**

We recommend that the project develop a protocol for staff working with service users to define how often soft outcomes data should be gathered, particularly by means of repeated completion of the spider tool. This should help to ensure consistency and allow WYCCP to better evidence the strong results achieved by service users

- **Develop a payment by results focused reporting system**

It is likely that payment by results funding will require identification of individuals supported under the scheme and the results claimed against each individual. It is suggested that WYCCP develop their reporting system to track individuals against outcomes, both hard and soft and outcomes and whether ultimately not being reconvicted. We would recommend that WYCCP invest further in their database and monitoring systems to ensure these reporting functions are available.

- **Marketing and raising WYCCP profile**

The evaluation highlighted the need for WYCCP to raise its profile and broadcast its service. Both external and internal stakeholders felt WYCCP needed to increase its visibility and promote the positive outcomes it achieves.

- **Accreditation for existing areas of work**

It is recommended WYCCP consider accreditation for existing areas of work with the volunteers. For example, WYCCP could be well positioned to apply for the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard, or could seek formal accreditation of the volunteer training programme.

- **Service user development**

Some service users have maintained contact with WYCCP over a number of years. Although no longer considered 'service users', they bring valuable experience to the project. It was suggested during the evaluation that the project may want to consider developing the role of service users within WYCCP to encourage greater participation, for example through involvement in the WYCCP Management Board or with the development of a subgroup. Participants would need to be supported and facilitated.

- **Routes *from* Release Project?**

The last few years have witnessed increasing challenges in the role of the ETE worker to access education, training and employment opportunities for ex-offenders yet one of the issues for service users once their initial priorities have been resolved, is how to fill their time. There appears to be an emerging appetite for volunteering opportunities / work placements for some ex-offenders who, influenced by the positive example given by the link workers, recognise the value of meaningful activity bringing satisfaction, improved skills and possibilities for the future. It is suggested that WYCCP consider a sister project to Routes to Release which focuses on volunteering opportunities for ex-offenders post release.

1.0 Introduction

Evidencing Change was commissioned by West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project (WYCCP) to undertake an independent evaluation of their work, in order to provide a qualitative assessment of the value of the service with a range of key stakeholders; a quantitative analysis of the financial value of their work; and an independent verification of outcomes for funders and stakeholders. In addition, WYCCP were keen to benefit from any potential service improvements observed during the evaluation.

This is the Final Report providing information on the overall findings from the evaluation.

1.1 WYCCP

West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project is a resettlement organisation which supports the populations of Her Majesty's Prisons at Leeds and Wealstun³ to lead crime free lives on release. It seeks to reduce re-offending for the men with whom it works and thus contribute to building safer communities in West Yorkshire. It is a 'through the gate' project working with offenders both inside the prison and post release. WYCCP works with anyone who approaches them, except two excluded categories of sex offenders and foreign nationals.

When prisoners self-refer to the project, an initial assessment and action planning process take place prior to their release. The small core staff team of 7 paid staff – of whom 3 work directly with ex-offenders - is supplemented by volunteers who meet men prior to release and then support them in the community. Men are regularly met at the gate, on release, and the staff and volunteer link workers, trained by WYCCP, offer advice, support and signposting. The support provided includes accompanying service users to appointments; for example for psychiatric assessments or interviews with housing providers; assistance in completing benefit forms; liaising with statutory agencies; for example West Yorkshire Probation or the NHS on behalf of service users; and giving advice and support in accessing training and employment. Progress is measured through regular assessments.

1.2 Background to the evaluation, aims and objectives

WYCCP's overarching aim is to reduce the re-offending rates of their service users and recent evidence shows they have been successful in achieving this key target. Breaking the cycle of re-offending is a key driver in national, regional and local policy with radical changes taking place in the resettlement agenda. WYCCP has commissioned this evaluation at this time of transition in order to both inform current funding providers and also to evidence change to potential future commissioners, particularly in relation to the payment by results agenda.

³ HM Prison Leeds is a male local prison, and HM Prison Wealstun is a Category C men's prison.

The aims and objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Undertake a statistical analysis of WYCCP work in order to gain a picture of the cost of supporting WYCCP service users and to compare this with the costs of a man remaining in the criminal justice system; including putting a cost against the use of volunteers.
- Gain an independent view of the value of the WYCCP service to key stakeholders.
- Externally validate the numerical outcomes of WYCCP including the outcomes reported to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme which has provided funding for WYCCP's Routes to Release Project from 2009 – 2012. The project has developed the volunteering programme and funded an ETE worker to support service users.
- Independently provide an external summary indicating how the Routes to Release Project has contributed to the overarching Big Lottery outcomes of people having better life chances, and stronger communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle problems.
- Provide recommendations of any potential service improvements and potential commissioning opportunities with suggestion for optimizing the likelihood of success.

1.3 Summary of the methodology

Our methodology was designed to provide an evaluation of WYCCP and the Routes to Release Project. The evaluation approach was both formative and summative. The design provided a formative element in that it brought learning for the final stages of the current funding cycle of the Routes to Release Project as well as recommendations for on-going service delivery of WYCCP and sustainability. At the same time it provided a summative element with a retrospective summary of the impact of the project to date in relation to the key evaluation questions.

The evaluation methodology included a mix of quantitative and qualitative elements summarised in the table below.

Table 1: An overview of the evaluation methodology
<p>Stage 1: Project inception and research tools</p> <p>The initial inception meeting, to clarify and confirm the purpose and context of the evaluation, was followed by the development of an over-arching evaluation framework. This served to break down the original evaluation aims into a series of more detailed research questions, and to show how the evidence would be gathered.</p> <p>In parallel and informed by the evaluation framework, research tools for the qualitative fieldwork were designed including topic guides and interactive research tools.</p>
<p>Stage 2: Desk based research</p> <p>This stage involved in-depth background research through examination of a wide range of</p>

Table 1: An overview of the evaluation methodology

internal and external documents looking at grant agreements, performance data, strategic aims and policy context. Informal meetings with WYCCP staff took place and provided a deepened understanding of the project, its background and current aims.

The validation of the Routes to Release Project outcomes and WYCCP's over-arching outcome of reducing re-offending took place on site with assistance from project staff to inform the process of data collection, monitoring and evidencing outcomes.

Stage 3: Qualitative research

The qualitative research stage of the evaluation was designed as the primary data collection phase to collect evidence from key stakeholders on the impact of WYCCP. This stage was split into the following strands:

- In-depth face-to-face interviews with a sample of 5 service users spread across geographic location.
- Focus group with 3 volunteer link workers, using a topic guide and interactive 'dartboard' prioritisation research tool
- 3 in-depth telephone interviews with key external partners and stakeholders covering the Prison Governor HMP Leeds, the Head of West Yorkshire Probation Service, and the Volunteer Co-ordinator at St George's Crypt
- 3 in-depth face-to-face interviews with internal staff – the Project Director, the Volunteer Co-ordinator and the ETE worker.

Stage 4: Analysis and reporting

The fieldwork interviews and focus group were digitally recorded and later transcribed allowing for the development of a thematic framework to highlight key issues and cross cutting themes emerging from the data. The second stage of the analysis involved interpretation of these findings in conjunction with contextual understanding from the background research in order to position the relative importance of different issues emerging for the report writing.

The quantitative value of the volunteers has been calculated using The Volunteer Investment and Value Added Toolkit. Reference was also made to the wider value of the volunteer programme. The value for money assessment also includes a calculation of the money saved to the public purse from reduced levels of reconviction arising from WYCCP's intervention.

1.4 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 looks at WYCCP in context
- Chapter 3 provides validation of outcomes with a discussion of process and findings
- Chapter 4 considers the WYCCP model

- Chapter 5 focuses on the benefits for key stakeholders
- Chapter 6 considers the value for money of WYCCP including the value of volunteers
- Chapter 7 looks at lessons learned and future developments
- Chapter 8 concludes and provides final recommendations.

2.0 WYCCP in context

WYCCP is one of 18 community chaplaincy projects in the UK, the first of which formed around ten years ago (2001) in Swansea. Recent research⁴ notes that although chaplains have been present in prisons for years, the community chaplaincy approach of supporting prisoners on release is a relatively new one in the UK. The report describes them as “person-centred, theologically-informed, value-driven, and voluntary-charitable organisations which operate within a multi-faith ethos.” The findings from the research are clear; within those community chaplaincy projects studied, there was consensus that their aims are to build supportive, encouraging relationships with service users on a personal and tailored basis.

WYCCP, as one of the largest community chaplaincy projects in terms of the number of referrals received, has consistently reported high levels of engagement and performance (an issue explored in greater detail elsewhere in the report). In the financial year 2010 /11, more than 300 men engaged with the project for a total expenditure in the region of £200,000. With an effective working relationship with other agencies (statutory and otherwise), WYCCP is able to provide joined-up support to service users on almost any area of need, signposting and assisting users to access more specialist organisations where necessary.

To that end, the project fits with the seven pathways to reducing reoffending, established by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). These pathways focus on the key areas of support needed to help offenders find better life chances, and include:

1. Accommodation
2. Education, training and employment
3. Health
4. Drugs and alcohol
5. Finance, benefits and debt
6. Children and families
7. Attitudes, thinking and behaviour

The pathways are reflected in the use of the ‘spider tool’ to track service user progress and achievements, along with an eighth leg of community chaplaincy, and reflect the project’s fit with key national priorities. The tool was developed specifically for use in a community chaplaincy setting, and provides a mechanism for service users to self-assess across the key issue areas for persons leaving prison. Ideally the assessment takes place at three stages with a service user - prior to release, on release, and post release.

⁴ Evaluation Report of Research at Six Community Chaplaincy Projects in England and Wales, Dr Philip Whitehead, Teesside University, 2011

Along with their fit with NOMS priorities, WYCCP is well-placed for a shift towards greater voluntary and community sector engagement in delivering services in the criminal justice system. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has established the Reducing Re-offending Third Sector Advisory Group, providing a platform for voluntary and community organisations to share learning and views with the Department. There is a clear message from central government that in the current times of economic crisis, the voluntary sector has much to offer in delivering statutory services, or at least those services supporting them. This is reflected in a number of key documents; a recent MoJ report, 'Working with the Third Sector', includes underpinning principles of improving commissioner skills, aligning departmental and other commissioning frameworks and supporting and driving forward the Compact⁵ principles. The report also argues for greater third sector engagement in the design and shaping of services and improving joint planning between policymakers, commissioners and the third sector, and more effective commissioning.

2.1 The payment by results agenda

The Government's policy drivers on dealing with deep-rooted social issues include a concentration on 'payment by results' models as announced in the 'Breaking the Cycle' Green Paper (December 2010). Fitting with the move to broader commissioning platforms outlined above, this new landscape for the criminal justice system places a core focus on private and voluntary sector providers with detailed models for funding currently being developed. It is a period of transition to outcomes-based commissioning of voluntary and community sector organisations delivering services that work and that can be demonstrated to bring about positive change. The payment by results pilot that was recently launched at HMP Doncaster features a voluntary and community organisation as a key delivery partner which is an encouraging sign of commitment to the sector.

The recent announcement that HMP Leeds has been chosen as one of the pilot prisons to test out payment by results creates a significant commissioning opportunity for WYCCP who are arguably well placed to assist in the payment by results agenda.

At this stage, the importance of this context for WYCCP is that it underlines the strategic significance of evidencing outcomes and proving the impact of their work not only for the service user but for the wider community and national re-offending rates. Increasingly the funding climate requires organisations to validate the intrinsic value for money of their service. Providing an externally assessed value for money element of WYCCP within this evaluation provides clear baseline evidence from which WYCCP can develop, and supports current payment by results opportunities.

⁵ The Compact is an agreement between government and the voluntary and community sector on how to work together better.

3.0 Validation of project outcomes

The ability to track outcomes and achievements has become increasingly important to the third sector, particularly in light of pressures to provide better accountability and evidence of value to funders. As noted in chapter two, the shift to payment by results for the criminal justice system places even greater importance on robust evidence of project performance.

3.1 Validating the project's achievements

As part of the evaluation process, *Evidencing Change* was asked to provide validation of WYCCP's key outcomes. This section of the report outlines the steps taken to do this and describes the key findings. Initial recommendations and lessons learned from this process are set out in chapter seven of this report.

Approach

As a result of having multiple funders, WYCCP reports against a range of outputs and outcomes. It was decided that for the purposes of the evaluation, validation would be undertaken on the figures provided to the Big Lottery under their Reaching Communities funding, and on the project's own headline figure of the number of ex-offenders living crime free lives one year from release.

To undertake the validation, *Evidencing Change* met with key staff who explained how the performance figures had been collated. A sample of supporting evidence was checked for each outcome to confirm the approach and that figures supplied had been correct. Data was assessed for the reporting year of July 2010 – June 2011: the second year of Reaching Communities funding.

3.2 Routes to Release project

Routes to Release is the name given to WYCCP's project funded by the Big Lottery through the Reaching Communities programme, contributing to the programme's overarching principles of providing people with better life chances and to build stronger communities. Funding was secured in 2009 for a period of three years. Specifically, the funding provides for the Education, Training and Employment (ETE) worker, the Volunteer Coordinator, some management costs and related overheads. Although the project has become integrated in to WYCCP's core delivery, it has provided service users with the opportunity to access specialist and focused ETE support, and the organisation has increased capacity through hands-on support from skilled and committed volunteers.

WYCCP has consistently reported strong progress to the Big Lottery, exceeding set targets. For example, in the first two years of delivery, 215 service users had accessed one to one support

against a target of 100, while 100 service users have accessed and completed training against a target of 50.

The four outcomes monitored for Reaching Communities are shown in Table 2. Each outcome comprises a subset of milestones each with their own numerical target (including those outlined above); the achievement of these milestones helps to define whether the outcome has been met. The milestones have not been listed here due to their number, but will be referred to throughout this chapter.

Table 2: WYCCP Reaching Communities outcomes

Outcome	Definition
Outcome 1 (5 milestones)	25 individual ex-offenders per year will report improved skills leading to employment
Outcome 2 (4 milestones)	25 ex-offenders per year report lives as crime-free leading to improvements in life chances
Outcome 3 (4 milestones)	20 volunteers per year will report increased job opportunities and increased confidence
Outcome 4 (5 milestones)	70 community members, relevant organisations, staff and potential employers per year will have increased awareness of issues facing ex-offenders

3.2.1 Results of the validation process

As noted, WYCCP has reported strong performance on the Routes to Release project across the previous two years, with high levels of service user engagement. However, like many third sector organisations of their size, there are challenges in tracking service user progress. WYCCP have developed a comprehensive database that records engagement in a thorough manner, and although some adjustments could be made to functionality, there is confidence that figures are accurate. Some recommendations are made in chapter seven in order to aid WYCCP in strengthening their processes further, but the findings for each outcome are explored first.

Outcome one

There are five milestones that contribute to the achievement of outcome one. These include an assessment of the number of service users accessing one-to-one support, accessing training, and reporting increased confidence. To validate the achievement of the over-arching outcome (25 ex-offenders per year will report improved skills leading to employment), *Evidencing Change* inspected supporting documents and information from the project database to assess whether 25 service users had accessed training or one to one support. WYCCP reported that 96 service users had accessed one to one support on employment, training and education in the year, and that 38 had accessed training. The spider assessment tools were also examined. From the records inspected, *Evidencing Change* found that the outcome of 25 individual ex-offenders per year reporting improved skills leading to employment had been achieved through these milestones.

Outcome two

There are notable difficulties in tracking the service user cohort that WYCCP work with, and currently this is done through accessing the C-NOMIS database to establish whether service users remain in the community or otherwise. Work has recently commenced on collating this information, although there is an obvious time lag between release and recovering the data. However, there are a number of milestones contributing to the achievement of this outcome including the provision of training sessions and life skills support, plus the development of action plans for improved life chances – a process which is led by the service users themselves. In the process of validating this outcome, the data collected from C-NOMIS to date was examined along with a sample of action plans developed by service users. Details of training courses and life skills support were also noted. There is confidence that this outcome of 25 ex-offenders per year reporting lives as crime-free leading to improvements in life chances has been achieved.

Outcome three

This outcome requires 20 volunteers per year to report increased job opportunities and increased confidence. The milestones that contribute to this target focus on the recruitment of volunteers and access to training for those volunteers. The organisation has comprehensive records to show volunteer recruitment, supervision and progression; evidence was shown to demonstrate how many volunteers had undertaken induction training and a sample of supervision records were examined to demonstrate increased confidence amongst the cohort. It was also noted that a number of volunteers had undertaken training in counselling. There is satisfactory evidence in place to show this outcome of 20 volunteers per year reporting increased job opportunities and increased confidence has been met.

Outcome four

Outcome four focuses on work with relevant communities to increase awareness; more specifically, that 70 community members, relevant organisations, staff and potential employers per year will have increased awareness of issues facing ex-offenders on release. It was noted that WYCCP staff actively work with relevant organisations to promote their work and as much as possible seek to raise awareness with new groups and organisations.

In the year examined, WYCCP promoted their work at the 6th Hub conference in March 2011, which had 140 attendees from within the third sector including other faith-based organisations along with relevant statutory agencies. Another event had been held in October 2010 with around 50 attendees, and it was noted in staff interviews that work had been done on a one to one basis with a number of organisations in order to promote the service and its benefits. These provide clear evidence that this outcome has been met.

Assessing WYCCP's headline figures

WYCCP's key indicator of success is a figure relating to the number of ex-offenders previously supported who remain crime-free one year from the date of release. As the Home Office has noted:

*"Measuring true reoffending is difficult. Official records are taken from either the police or courts, but they will underestimate the true level of reoffending because only a proportion of crime is detected and sanctioned and not all crimes and sanctions are recorded on one central system. Other methods of measuring reoffending, such as self-report studies, rely on offenders being honest about their offending behaviour and are therefore likely to be unreliable."*⁶

This sentiment is certainly true for WYCCP, as access to data has proven difficult. In recent months, the director has been given extended access to a different part of C-NOMIS where it is possible to track the pathways of previously engaged service users. However, information available is basic and only shows whether a service user remains in the community or is back in custody. This means that any convictions that did not result in custody are not noted.

Since gaining access to this additional section of C-NOMIS, work has begun on tracking service users supported in previous years. In order to validate these findings, discussions were held with WYCCP staff about the method and approach taken. Although the process is in its infancy, initial results are very positive suggesting that a high number of former service users remain in the community. While the method is the best one available to the project at this time for tracking service users, some adjustments to the process would make it more robust and give project stakeholders even greater confidence in their success. This is discussed further in chapter seven.

⁶ Home Office Compendium of reoffending statistics and analysis, 2010

4.0 The WYCCP model

This chapter looks at the West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project model to evaluate what works and why. The chapter is shaped by first exploring the distinctive nature of the organisation, including its status, ethos, positioning, and size, followed by consideration of the approach WYCCP takes with its service users.

The Routes to Release Project funded by the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme for three years from 2009 has become embedded within WYCCP and is intrinsic to the project. The grant provides funding for the Volunteer Coordinator and the Education, Training and Employment worker. Both these roles are identified as core provision and defining elements of the WYCCP model of delivery.

4.1 WYCCP – what works and why

There are several key aspects of the WYCCP organisation which service users, external stakeholders and the WYCCP team identified as fundamental to its ability to engage with offenders both within and outside the prison.

The **independent**, non-statutory status of WYCCP workers is identified as a vital success factor as it means they are not identified with either the prison or probation, and this allows a different type of relationship to develop. The dress code at WYCCP is important in that the team do not wear uniforms. Whether or not an offender attends a meeting and talks to a WYCCP worker will not result in any punitive repercussions for the service user.

“If someone tells us something that we are not comfortable with, we can park that and decide what we do with it, but we are not obliged to do something about it. We don’t want to be in the game of revoking peoples’ licences if they don’t work with us as it creates a different relationship” WYCCP worker

“I think that is one of their strengths is that their approach is user led and they are not tainted by being an arm of the state.” Head of Leeds Probation Service

The principle that service users **self refer** is seen as a critical aspect by the WYCCP team and service users as the men who engage with the organisation want to engage. It is not a requirement of their probation or their resettlement agenda but instead it is a voluntary decision made by each individual that they are ready for a change.

“The men self refer to us, they say in the prison that men do get to a point in their lives and they think enough is enough and they look round and they see the young kids and they have

been in and out all through their 20s. They want to make a new start. It is very difficult to resettle for some, much easier to go back into their old lives...They need a lot of willpower and we can support them with that but we can't give them that, there has to be something inside them that wants to change." WYCCP worker

"I wasn't ready last time [I came out]. This time I was ready" Service user

This characteristic also demonstrates that WYCCP is working not necessarily with the easiest clients, but rather the ones who come to them.

WYCCP works across **all the 7 NOMS reducing re-offending pathways**. These have been designed into a Spider Tool for the Community Chaplaincy Association. The principle of providing a holistic service allows service users to talk openly about their situation and underlines WYCCP's concern for the well-being of the whole person.

"The people WYCCP work with are at the more chaotic end with multiple issues - often with a lack of social links, or the wrong sort of social link. So providing that support mechanism and giving them more reasons to stay out of crime can shift peoples' involvement in the city of Leeds when they get back". Head of Leeds Probation Service

It is a **faith-based** organisation. This is not an explicit faith based element but one which quietly sits underpinning the work of the organisation. *"It is not an overt thing, but for some members of staff, the work is a practical application of faith"* (WYCCP worker). Time in prison may be an occasion to think about 'the bigger picture' and for some individuals the multi-faith links offered by WYCCP will be valued. Multi-faith projects can be seen as a safe place of acceptance, forgiveness and humanity. For others, there is no relevance and the organisation works with the service user on pathways relevant to him.

"When I first heard the name I thought oh, I bet they're a religious bunch of nutters but, you know, I'm glad I came over because they never mention religion or anything which is a good thing. I don't mind religious people but I just don't like them when they try and force it down your throat." Service user

Working with offenders **through the gate** is identified by external stakeholders, service users and the WYCCP team as a key success factor as it allows time for the process of building relationships to develop prior to release and for the WYCCP workers to start to make progress on priority issues, for example making appointments for them. This approach is currently being replicated in HMP Doncaster's payment by results pilot, although administered by prison staff rather than a voluntary sector organisation.

The **location** of the WYCCP offices, on the doorstep but not inside the prison, are recognised as two important factors by the WYCCP team. Physically the office is outside the prison and this is

seen to provide separation and a different space, yet at the same time it is immediately there when someone is released.

The evaluation highlighted the **inclusive culture of WYCCP** where the contribution of staff, volunteers and even service users is highly valued. The organisation recognises the enormous value contributed by the volunteers, and volunteers themselves feel valued. Comments from participants suggest this feeling of being appreciated generates a positive energy where workers are encouraged, and feel able, to make suggestions and develop ideas, which in turn feeds through to the service users.

“Everybody has the one common thing – they all want the guys to do well so everybody does what they can”. Volunteer link worker

The WYCCP office provides a designated **area for service users** to come in and utilise, for example, use of a PC and a telephone to contact other services to make appointments or to chase up queries. WYCCP workers felt this was important as it is *“their patch”* and creates a positive link with the project as well as encouraging service users to take the first steps in trying to resolve issues for themselves.

The **size** of the project was noted as significant for many participants. As a small project with core staffing and a larger number of volunteers, participants felt the service user remained at the centre. The size of the project allowed flexibility, new ideas to emerge and develop, and space for a voice for all to contribute. In addition if the project was much larger, WYCCP staff felt there would be greater concerns about sustainable funding sources.

WYCCP works as part of **multi-agency** provision for offenders including formal and informal links with the prison service, probation, drugs agency, and numerous other organisations relevant to, and in contact with, service users. The evaluation highlighted how well embedded WYCCP is seen to be by external stakeholders (see section 5.3). This enables WYCCP to work effectively on behalf of service users.

4.2 WYCCP’s approach to work with service users – what works and why

The WYCCP model offers a distinctive approach when working with service users. The evaluation sought to tease out what it is that is unique, special or different about WYCCP which helps to bring about a change in behaviour on the part of some of the ex-offenders. The following key features of WYCCP’s way of working appear significant.

WYCCP’s **person-centred approach** is identified by team members, external stakeholders and service users as undoubtedly one of the key factors in the effectiveness of the organisation. The aim of WYCCP involvement is to support the individual. It is responsive to particular needs and contexts and is not time limited.

“These guys must have loads of assessments. We are genuinely interested in order to help them”. WYCCP worker

The support is **non-judgemental, focused on the future, and open ended**. It covers a wide range of applications including practical, emotional and pastoral support from major to minor events. What distinguishes this personal support from other organisations offering support is that it is not time limited.

‘Because their lives are so chaotic, it is about you being a constant for them. Even when things go wrong, you are still there.’ Volunteer link worker

“Research indicates that the single most important factor for an ex-offender making the decision not to reoffend is to have another person with whom they can develop a significant relationship who can take a close interest in their lives both in custody and, more importantly, in the community. It’s invaluable on a practical level to have somebody alongside them to support them as they apply for work, go to the benefits office, apply for housing, and have contact with probation.” Prison Governor, HMP Leeds

This view was echoed in the service user interviews. Going to new places is a daunting experience and one that WYCCP has helped them to overcome.

“If there is anything where I have to go and I might be scared of, he says do you want one of us to come with you, which is a big, big, big thing because sometimes I can make the appointments but it’s that over the door threshold, and I get... but now it’s alright”. Service user

Service users are involved in **setting their own priorities** giving them ownership and responsibility. From the initial visit, the service user is involved in assessing where they are now and where they want to be in terms of the NOMS reducing re-offending pathways illustrated across the spider diagram. Repeat discussions shaped around the same spider tool at later stages of WYCCP involvement help to demonstrate change for the service user and achievements made. This process of working with the service user to define priorities and map change is recognised as a key feature in more successful interventions⁷.

Service users appreciated and responded to the **less formal approach** of the WYCCP model.

“It’s not like all red tape and that, it’s sit down with a coffee and have a chat, I prefer that approach. Rather than it’s all pen and paper and writing down everything you say, it’s more relaxed and I prefer that.” Service user

The work of the **volunteers** is highly valued by the organisation and the service users, not just for their professionalism and dedication but also because they offer something different.

⁷ Nacro response to Breaking the Cycle, 2010

“The difference it makes is that people think you are not being paid to work with me. You are here because you want to, because you believe in us, you believe we can make changes. It is a different model, a different approach to what they have had before”. WYCCP worker

The provision of a specialist **ETE worker** within WYCCP, who is also able to respond to the resettlement agenda, is beneficial in ensuring a continuing focus on potential opportunities and their suitability for service users. The role ranges from motivational work to practical assistance in accessing courses / employment. It recognises Maslow’s hierarchy of needs⁸ in its approach to working with a service user in that fundamental needs of housing, food to eat and security need to be met before an individual is able to focus on higher levels of need, such as employment.

The WYCCP approach is based on a foundation of establishing a **transparent and trusting relationship** with the service user which recognises the need to manage expectations from the outset. The evaluation illustrated a core principle for WYCCP workers that they can promise continuing support, but they clearly inform service users that they are unable to guarantee anything beyond that. Establishing these boundaries is an important element in the development of an on-going supportive relationship.

A recent evaluation looking at the work of Community Chaplaincy Projects⁹ explored the literature on the salience of relationships within the therapeutic, rehabilitative and desistance process.

“Some of the key elements distilled from this literature draw attention to: relationships characterised by genuineness, warmth, approval, acceptance, encouragement, empathy, sensitivity, and facilitating hope... Additionally desistance is facilitated by relationships based on trust; the quality of the worker and ability to form relationships can be more important in shaping outcomes than the methods employed in supervision (Smith 2006); ... Accordingly community chaplaincy is well placed to make a positive contribution to the desistance paradigm through supportive relationships within the context of mutuality and ethics of personalism. In fact this may be its major strength and definitive contribution when working with ex-prisoners.”

The interviews with service users confirmed the importance of this dynamic with repeated echoes of the central significance of a trusted relationship.

“Because they listen. He listens to me and when he says he’s going to do something, he does it. And he tells me how it is, the truth, I want to know where I stand” Service user

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs

⁹ Evaluation Report of Research at Six Community Chaplaincy Projects in England and Wales, Dr Philip Whitehead, Teesside University, 2011

“He’s laid back and chilled out like, and you can talk to him. It does make a difference”

Service user

“It’s like, I’ve known them for quite a while now and I can talk to him, it’s not like he’s doing a job now, it’s like talking to a friend.” Service user

The evaluation identified WYCCP’s ability to provide **intervention at critical moments** for the service user as a key factor in their success. The day of release is seen as a pivotal time for ex-offenders and when they are likely to be feeling at their most vulnerable. WYCCP is available to meet service users at the gate if they wish and to spend the day accompanying them to wherever they need to go. If they have friends and/or family greeting them, WYCCP suggests meeting within the first few days as after this time, service users are less likely to engage. Support offered and accepted at this key time is likely to be effective and lead to on-going engagement with the project.

“Don’t necessarily have to meet them as they step out and say here we are; they don’t want to feel railroaded into something, because often the family will want to meet them straight outside. But you often see offenders stood at the gate and there is nobody there for them. They stand with a black bag on their shoulder and they say ‘so where is the bus stop gov,’ and you think, ‘actually that can’t be right’. WYCCP are there when they need to be there, and then I think they keep a very respectful distance to allow the offender to re-engage, and then be there to help them go a bit further with what they need”. Prison Governor, HMP Leeds

Comments from the service user interviews highlighted this period of transition from the prison to the community as a vulnerable time. In those first few days after release, it can be hard to think clearly and find your way around as an individual needs time to adjust to life outside prison.

“At that point I’d only just got out and my head was a bit, well, to be honest when you’ve been in a while you’re a bit, well. You sort of miss it in there, you’re glad you’re out but it’s all you’ve known for however many years, you get used to it don’t you?” Service user

The WYCCP approach is centred on a **changing dynamic with the service user** moving from a more hands-on and proactive role in the early stages, through encouragement and mentor support, towards empowering the individual to take actions and ownership themselves. Reflecting on their role with service users starting from the initial meeting, one volunteer link worker commented:

“Because that is the most vulnerable time, you do do a bit more for them and as the weeks progress you start to encourage them to do things on their own and empower them. Things do change. The dynamic changes. It is important that it changes, because it is their life and they are going to have to do things on their own.”

A key element in the effectiveness of the WYCCP approach is the contribution of the volunteer link worker spending time in the community with the service user helping him to become more organised, through a process of guiding, showing, and talking through the needs of the individual. This role of **helping the service user to better understand and manage their own situation** was highly valued by the service users.

“She bought me the best 2 things anyone ever has – a folder to keep all your bills in and a diary. Everything’s been alright since then.” Service user

The approach is also centred on **encouragement**, helping the service user to take small steps initially, from which their confidence will hopefully grow and enable bigger steps in the future.

“It might be something really simple. If you have been inside for a while, it might be like between now and when I see you in a few days time, can you get yourself out and get a pint of milk, or go for a walk in the park. Or it could be something really much bigger like get yourself to the bank and get an account opened.” Volunteer link worker

“When you do get them to do something for themselves and they come off the phone from chasing up a housing application and they’ll look, they look... well, they feel quite good about themselves for having done that and that builds their confidence and then next time you see them, say maybe today you could... and they start to build confidence and think that they could do things.” Volunteer link worker

This process of nudging and encouragement is then **reinforced** each meeting helping to build self esteem within the service user and opening the possibility of changes in behaviour. It is dependent on a trusting relationship.

“I’m sure that the guys we work with some of them do wish they had different circumstances, and it is hard for them to change it, humans are creatures of habit...It’s a very big decision if they feel that their family and friends are a bad influence on them and they make the decision to go back into a different area where they then won’t have that support...If they suggest it, that is when you have to go in there with the big guns to proper reinforce how big that decision is and that they have made that decision, reinforce the idea that they have done so well to even come up with that thought and idea.”

Volunteer link worker

A further key aspect of WYCCP’s approach which is different to most services is the **willingness of all workers to go into the community** and meet the service user at a location convenient for him. This could be in his home, a café, or for example at the job centre, or housing office. It is an action highly valued by the service users.

“They will go to appointments with me. If I am like shy and that, they will sit there with me. They’re good that way. Said to me if you ever need anything, any appointment or any interview.” Service user

Accompanying a service user to appointments is a significant factor in supporting the ex-offender to resettle into the community. Organising a range of issues such as probation, housing, benefit entitlement, and drug dependency often requires a level of persistence and determination. The support of the WYCCP link workers at this critical time is likely to ensure a service user persists in re-engaging in a positive way in the community leading to increased resilience, rather than returning to a chaotic lifestyle and potential downward spiral.

5.0 Benefits achieved by key stakeholders

One of the aims of the evaluation was to find out the value of the WYCCP service to its key stakeholders both in order to understand its impact and also to explore any opportunities for improvement. This chapter looks at the emerging findings. Key stakeholders for WYCCP are identified as:

- The service users;
- The volunteer link workers;
- External local stakeholders, including the local prison service, probation, and a local housing provider;
- The wider community; and
- The Big Lottery, in terms of how WYCCP has contributed to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Grant Programme Outcomes 1 and 2.

5.1 Benefits for service users

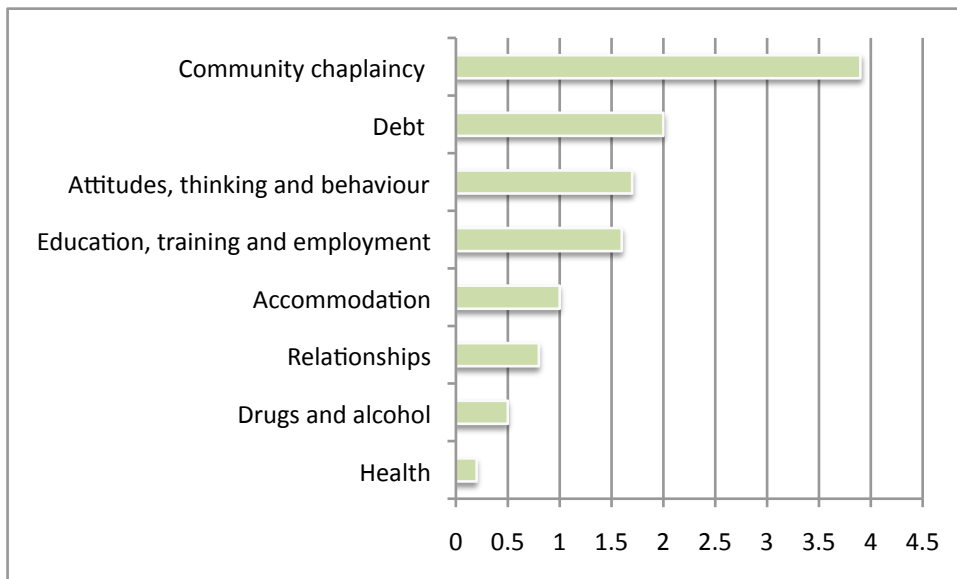
As noted earlier, WYCCP works with anyone who approaches them, except the two excluded categories of sex offenders and foreign nationals, which means they are not cherry picking the individuals most likely to desist from re-offending. The evaluation looked at both quantitative data, from WYCCP's internal reporting system, and evidence from qualitative face-to-face interviews with a range of service users to provide an independent view of the value of the support to those receiving it.

WYCCP uses an assessment methodology with service users referred to as a 'Spider Tool', as described in chapter two. Changes in scores represent distance travelled and this may be either positive or negative. The spider leg provides scores from 0 up to 8 as the maximum. The spider tool provides a clear mechanism for monitoring soft outcomes for the service user.

The evaluation looked at a sample of 12 service users who had completed all three assessments. The self assessment scores for each of the spider leg pathways was measured initially when the service user was in prison, at release and some months after they were back in the community. The results are shown in Figure 1 providing the average progress across all three assessment points.

Positive movement along all pathways is evidenced with the greatest shift in terms of service user's attitude to community chaplaincy. This may reflect a change in their attitude to faith or may simply be a reflection of their positive feelings and appreciation towards the West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy. The figures also show meaningful improvements in the financial situation; attitude, thinking and behaviour; and in education, training and employment averaged out across the sample.

Figure 1: Average progress made on the Spider Tool



* representing the distance travelled in scores from assessment pre-release to assessment post-release.

The face-to-face interviews with service users provided evidence of a range of positive outcomes and benefits resulting from a combination of actions by WYCCP staff and volunteer link workers to assist with their personal situation. These are listed in the box below and illustrate how improvements across different NOMS pathways can lead to genuine life changing outcomes for service users.

Benefits for service users

- Service users routinely spoke of **increased confidence** in their personal skills and abilities from their involvement with WYCCP. This was seen as a benefit in itself but also as an enabler to help them deal with other issues in their lives.

“They have given me more confidence. I used to be right shy and just drink to block stuff out. Now I will face it rather than face the bottle.”
- For some service users, the encouragement and support of WYCCP workers provided a catalyst for change as the project provided them with the **“motivation to get going”**.
- Linked to increased confidence and motivation, service users spoke of **changes in attitude** and feeling more positive.

“It’s made a massive difference to my life, I couldn’t see myself going back into prison”
- A clear benefit for some service users was the way the relationship with their key worker had helped them to **develop strategies for dealing with different situations**, and so prevent difficult and potentially damaging situations arising in the first place.
- WYCCP workers have helped service users to **better organise themselves** and manage their life by providing direct aids (for example, a folder for bills, a diary) or suggesting techniques to help them keep on top of routine tasks and remember appointments.

“Before I would just ignore things. And they would just build up and up...I’ve stuck a note there on the mantelpiece about you coming today to remember because my memory is so bad. And that is on top of the letter for my probation appointment later this month, so when I get up, I see it and I can’t forget.”

- Service users spoke of **improvements in their well-being** as a result of being better able to manage different aspects of their life.
“I was spending all my money on beer, I was, every penny. But now I can get myself new clothes and buy the baby new clothes. Something to show. Feel better for it.”
- The act of being able to talk through different ideas with WYCCP workers in a relationship built on trust has helped open up **new ways of thinking** for some service users
“By talking to me and getting me to open up a bit and making me realise oh well, I wouldn’t mind doing that – but I wouldn’t have realised if it hadn’t been for him. He was like well there’s this, and this – sort of gets you thinking about what other things there is out there. Like training and that.”
- In addition, service users benefited from **hard outcomes** linked to the NOMS reducing re-offending pathways. For example, achieving vocational or employment opportunities; settling into more appropriate accommodation; reducing debt and maximising income; improvements in family relationships; and taking steps to manage/stop drug and alcohol intake.
- For some service users, being present as WYCCP workers contact statutory services and agencies to query issues or chase up decisions, and watching and listening how those conversations unfold, has helped them to **feel more empowered** and able to try to resolve things for themselves.
“I think over time that I have been with him, it has rubbed off on me. I try now to do it myself”
- A very significant and repeated outcome mentioned by service users in the interviews, was their gratitude for the **positive life changes** their involvement with WYCCP had brought about.
“They have probably helped me change my life round for the first time, if it had been 2 years ago, phew, wouldn’t have been positive at all, wouldn’t even probably talk, I was that bad at drinking. I needed beer to talk.”

“My life would have spiralled out of control badly without their support. So I am so grateful.”

The benefits of daily structure to ex-offenders lives after prison are evidenced in the evaluation of St. Giles Trust’ Peer Advice Project at Peterborough Prison. *“Peer advisors welcomed the ‘second chance’ the project gave them. They commended the project for helping to widen their horizons and enabling them to see themselves as something other than an offender. They also felt their association with St. Giles Trust had helped their families see them in a different light. This kind of approval from others is an important factor for sustaining a life away from crime”.*

5.2 Benefits for volunteer link workers

The evaluation identified several benefits for the volunteer link workers from their involvement in the project. The participants in the focus group for the evaluation were asked to consider what difference their volunteering with WYCCP had made to them. They spoke positively of the in-depth training programme, the shadowing of WYCCP staff followed by being linked to

individual service users and working with them in the community. The box below illustrates the benefits identified by the link workers themselves.

Benefits for volunteer link workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The link workers unanimously spoke of increased confidence as a result of their volunteering <i>“Just in myself, I feel like my confidence is getting better, the more you do it, the more you know”</i>• They valued the range of practical experiences the volunteering provided including experience of working with ex-offenders, working within a prison, being part of a team and liaising with a multi-agency network of services. These were seen as beneficial in themselves, but also as relevant work experiences for a CV.• The volunteers spoke of their increased skill set since working with WYCCP. They provided a number of examples including improved IT skills, people skills, and training skills from their involvement in the training programme for subsequent volunteers.• All the link workers in the focus group found the work brought satisfaction and enjoyment. <i>“It started off as something I had to do for my studies and ended up as something I enjoy doing.”</i>• For some the experience of volunteering at WYCCP had helped to confirm their intended career path. This was particularly prevalent for students.• Involvement in WYCCP as a link worker had expanded geographical horizons for some as they travelled to new places across West Yorkshire to visit, or accompany, service users.• The overall experience was seen as a solid platform offering a wealth of opportunities. <i>“It opens up so many doors for you, so many opportunities”</i>• Learning the difficulties faced by ex-offenders trying to resettlement in the community was an awareness raising experience for the link workers which in turn led to changed perceptions about their own life. <i>“Personally it makes you appreciate everything that you have got... Prior to doing this I expected someone coming out of prison would have somewhere to live, but actually the council don't have to provide it depending on circumstances, and I think lots of people don't appreciate just how tough that is. I think it has restored some of my faith in humanity.”</i>• The volunteers recognised their work would enable WYCCP to provide an employment reference in the future.

In addition, ex-offenders have become volunteers working within the WYCCP office or as link workers in the community. This group of volunteers are a particularly valuable resource for WYCCP, as the life experience they bring can resonate strongly with service users. WYCCP encourages applications with ex-offenders however has learnt that extra support may be needed. Ex-offenders must have finished their sentence at least 6 months before becoming a link worker, although they are welcomed as volunteers in the office before then. WYCCP assesses them carefully to ensure that their personal situation is sufficiently stable to enable

them to work effectively and objectively with service users. The Volunteer Coordinator pointed out that experience in an office environment, as part of a team carrying out meaningful activity can bring particular benefits to this group of volunteers. It can help develop trust with other people, improve communication skills and may be the first time that an ex-offender feels people believe in him, and he is not just defined by his criminal record.

5.3 Benefits for local external stakeholders

The evaluation looked at the benefits for local external stakeholders from the WYCCP service. The following findings relate to telephone interviews with the prison service, probation and a local housing service.

Benefits for local external stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most important external stakeholder for the WYCCP service is the local prison, HMP Leeds. WYCCP is highly valued by the prison service and recognised as a first-class service providing evidence-based practice. WYCCP is clearly hugely beneficial for the prison as the WYCCP data evidences a significant impact on reducing re-offending rates for their service users compared to the prison’s own re-offending statistics. <i>“I have seen some of the data Jane has got on trying to track whether ex-offenders are in the community and measuring whether they have come back into custody. The figures which she has talked me through, which are credible, show that of all the offenders they have worked with in a given quarter, only 30% come back in the following 12 month period. That compares to my published figures of 74¹⁰% coming back. I think that is a demonstrable impact which shows that actually what they do works.”</i> Prison Governor HMP Leeds • WYCCP are the only through the gate service based at HMP Leeds • WYCCP’s service directly feeds into the achievement of three of the prison’s seven outcomes <i>“In our 7 outcomes¹¹ that we try and deliver, the first one is to try and reduce re-offending by 10% in less than 12 months, and the second one is to be a prison for the local community with effective community partnerships. WYCCP fits straight under that umbrella for me...Again one of our outcomes is that we are a prison that improves and maintains family ties. What you can’t quantify is an offender going back and actually being a responsible partner and parent.”</i> Prison Governor HMP Leeds • WYCCP’s provides an opportunity for effective partnership work with probation. A good working relationship between the teams allows for information sharing and WYCCP to respond to the needs of individual ex-offenders, for example, accompanying a service user to appointments. • WYCCP is identified as a valued complementary service to other agencies and providers in the local area as part of a holistic multi-agency framework. For a housing provider, WYCCP’s breadth of local knowledge and contacts across West Yorkshire is recognised:

¹⁰ Figures correct at time of telephone interview, October 2011

¹¹ H. M. Prison Service Leeds, Breaking the Cycle: The 7 Outcomes, 2011

“WYCCP are really good when it comes to signposting...They seem to know everybody.”
For Volunteer Visitors to the prison, WYCCP provides a referral agency for offenders to access.

5.4 Benefits for the wider community

The following box highlights some significant benefits for the wider community from WYCCP’s work. Section 5.5 below provides further evidence of these considerable outcomes.

Benefits for the wider community
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The reduction in the re-offending rate of service users accessing WYCCP benefits the wider community through less crime leading to safer communities.• The reduction in re-offending also means less cost to the criminal justice system, through reduced police costs, court costs and prison costs.• The benefits of improved family relationships impact on the wider community <i>“There is no doubt that the benefits are huge when an offender is motivated and supported not to reoffend. We know they get back into employment and working, but more importantly, the family benefit, and the children benefit from having a dad who is actually there.”</i> Prison Governor, HMP Leeds

5.5 Benefits for the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme

A further key stakeholder for WYCCP’s service is the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme which funded the Routes to Release Project. The funding pays for the Volunteer Coordinator post and the Education, Training and Employment post.

These roles have become integral to the success of the WYCCP service and enabled the project to achieve significant outcomes for its service users. These outcomes directly relate to the Reaching Communities Programme outcomes 1 and 2 as evidenced in the box below.

Benefits for the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme

Outcome 1: People having better life chances

WYCCP and the Routes to Release Project directly contributes to this overall Big Lottery outcome as the service is achieving reduced levels of re-offending and, therefore, helping ex-offenders lead crime free lives. The project is providing a service to one of the most disadvantaged communities, people in prison, and is working with them to improve their life chances on release.

The project also supports ex-offenders to achieve softer outcomes which are likely to help build a brighter future in the community. Softer outcomes include:

- Increased self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Being better able to manage life in the community through improved organisational skills.
- Improved communication and social skills.
- Improved general health and well-being.
- Regaining a sense of independence and empowerment leading to personal development.

In addition, service users achieve hard outcomes linked to the NOMS reducing re-offending pathways as evidenced through the spider assessment tool. For example, achieving education, employment or training opportunities and vocational skills; being offered accommodation when homeless; reducing debt and maximising income; improvements in family relationships; and taking steps to manage/stop drug and alcohol intake. Advances in any of these areas will improve an individual's life chances.

Outcome 2: Stronger communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle problems

The volunteer link worker programme funded through the Routes to Release Project epitomises this outcome as it provides volunteers who work with ex-offenders in the community. The volunteers work with ex-offenders helping them to resettle into the community. Some of the volunteer link workers are ex-offenders themselves. A clear impact of their work is the reduction in re-offending in the local community.

At the same time, at a micro level, the work of WYCCP through the Routes to Release funding supports ex-offenders to re-integrate into communities and enables them to re-engage. The volunteer link workers help to tackle and minimise the problems faced by individual ex-offenders. Without this support, and if they are unable to re-engage with their local community, then the ex-offender is more likely to return to criminal activity.

6.0 Value for money

The evaluation specification required an assessment of the costs of delivering WYCCP's services against the cost of a man remaining in prison with a further assessment of the value added to the project by the engagement of the volunteer link workers. The findings from this process are explored in this chapter, giving a broader financial context to WYCCP's work.

6.1 The quantitative value of WYCCP's volunteers

As noted elsewhere in this report, WYCCP employs a full time volunteer coordinator and runs an extensive volunteer programme, providing comprehensive training and on-going support for those volunteers engaged. The volunteers are known as link workers in the organisation, and their roles includes undertaking needs assessments with service users and providing face to face and on-going support for those engaged with the project.

For the purposes of calculating the 'value' generated by the volunteers, the evaluation made use of the Volunteer Investment and Value Added toolkit (VIVA), developed by the Institute for Volunteering Research. The toolkit provides an approach to calculating the return generated by volunteers through their work for the organisation, by assessing the cost of supporting volunteers and comparing this to the level of work generated by the volunteers. This is done by assigning a market rate to their tasks, in terms of a paid role equivalent. WYCCP has created two assistant key worker posts whose duties reflect those of the volunteer link workers. The salary attributed to these posts is £17,161 per annum pro rata. For the purposes of the VIVA assessment, this figures was used as the market value of the link worker's tasks.

In the financial year 2010 / 2011, WYCCP's total expenditure for staff costs related to the volunteer programme was £40,755.60. Volunteer expenses for the year amounted to £3,439. No other costs were incurred, bringing the total expenditure on volunteers to **£44,194.60**. This includes a high level of training and support for volunteers; the nature of the link-worker role means that the selection of the right volunteers is key, and ensuring they are well-trained is vital. The recruitment and induction process comprises:

- An assessment morning
- Three full days of initial training
- An interview
- Further mandatory training
- Participation in a mandatory shadowing process with paid staff to learn the role.

Following this, active volunteers receive on-going supervision and support to undertake their roles, which includes:

- Monthly peer support meetings facilitated by the volunteer coordinator
- Formal, one to one supervision meetings with the volunteer coordinator on a quarterly basis

- Operational support on a day-to-day basis from the key workers.

The initial selection and training process is the most resource-intensive period for the volunteer programme. All volunteers who engage with WYCCP go through this process, and since the Routes to Release project began, 64 volunteers have participated. Over the 28 months of funding¹², this means an average of 28 volunteers per year have been trained. Although not all go on to be regular volunteers with the organisation, using the costs for 2010/11 the cost per trainee for the volunteer programme stands at £1,578. This represents good value for both the organisation and the volunteers themselves.

In order to calculate the financial value generated by the volunteer link workers, it is important to understand how many hours have been committed over the year. Unfortunately, WYCCP's volunteers do not complete timesheets and there is no comprehensive record of the amount of time 'worked' by each volunteer. As a result, the picture we have of the volunteer contribution across the year has been calculated using best estimates including a snapshot of the amount of time committed in the two-week period spanning 31st Oct – 12th Nov 2011. In this period, 99.15 hours were delivered *in the office* by volunteers, with 13 active in the first week and 18 active in the second week. This equates to an average time commitment of 3.15 hours per link worker per week. However, according to staff interviews it is fair to assume that for every hour a volunteer spends in the office it is likely they spend another hour with service users in the community. Thus, it would be reasonable to suggest that each link worker commits an average of **6.3 hours per week**.

For a number of reasons, there are currently more volunteers actively engaged than during the financial year of 2010/11¹³, and in the week of 1st November 2010, there were 9 active link workers. Because no further detail is available, the calculations have been based on the average number of hours committed over the two-week snapshot period, and the number of link workers active in the snapshot week in 2010. This does not provide a comprehensive picture of the hours committed by link workers by any means, and only provides a best estimate with the information available.

To arrive at the number of hours given by the volunteers, the full calculation is as follows:

$$9 \text{ link workers} \times 6.3 \text{ hours each} \times 46.4 \text{ weeks}^{14} = 2631 \text{ hours committed per annum}$$

This equates to two members of staff delivering a 28-hour (or four-day) working week. Utilising the salary which would be attributed to the role (£17,164), pro rata this would cost WYCCP £27,456 per annum. This means that for every £1 spent by WYCCP on the recruitment, training and ongoing support of volunteers, the equivalent of £0.62 of labour is generated.

¹² From July 2009 when funding was secured to November 2011, the time of writing of this report.

¹³ This includes the economic climate – more volunteers have come forward recently to gain work experience for example.

¹⁴ This figure was arrived at as the statutory minimum number of holidays which should be assigned to a full time worker in the UK is 5.6. This was deducted from the 52 weeks of the year. See http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/Timeoffandholidays/DG_10029788

Although the level of return is below the amount expended by the organisation, the figure changes substantially as more volunteer time is committed. For example, 18 volunteers provided 122.3 hours in the in the week commencing 7th November 2011. Multiplying this up (122.3 hours x 46.4 weeks), this level of volunteer commitment every week would generate 5,675 hours worked across the year. One full-time member of staff would work 1624 hours¹⁵, meaning the volunteer time given equates to 3.5 FTE staff. When multiplied by the allocated wage, this means the cost to WYCCP would be £59,976, a return of £1.35 for every £1 spent on supporting the volunteers¹⁶. It was noted in staff interviews that WYCCP regularly have more volunteers active than the average figures used above; at one stage in 2010/11 there were 28 volunteers engaged. If more concrete figures were available for time committed by volunteers, then it is likely that the quantitative return would be higher still.

Although the VIVA approach is useful in attributing a quantitative value to the volunteer input, it does not demonstrate the qualitative benefits brought about by volunteering and the full value associated with this.

As we have seen in chapter five of this report, the volunteer programme has immeasurable benefits for WYCCP in other ways, not least by providing the organisation access to a committed, diverse and skilled ‘workforce’ without the related employer costs. The volunteers themselves benefit from increased confidence and a breadth of work experience, which brings wider economic benefits in terms of providing routes into the labour market. Service users value the fact that support is being given by people who are working with them because they want to and genuinely care, not because they are being paid to do so. They also benefit from a more substantial level of support than WYCCP could offer were the volunteers not in place; if the knock-on effect of this is to prevent reoffending and to improve service user’s routes back to work, then the potential savings to the public purse are vast. The impacts are also felt more widely than those direct audiences; other beneficiaries include families of both volunteers and service users having improved life chances, and reduced crime levels for members of the community.

In line with Social Return of Investment principles of assigning proxy values to qualitative outcomes, it is feasible to suggest that cost benefits from WYCCP’s volunteers work are extensive. The table below provides some examples of potential financial impacts and therefore the wider value of the volunteering programme.

Table 3: the wider financial impact of WYCCP’s volunteer programme

Beneficiary group and positive impact	Potential wider financial impact
Volunteers	
Improved self confidence	Less reliance on public health services Reduced unemployment levels Savings for the welfare state
Better access to employment opportunities through increased	Reduced unemployment levels Savings for the welfare state

¹⁵ Based on a 35 hour week, with the statutory minimum level of holidays (as at note 2)

¹⁶ Assuming that the costs related to supporting the volunteers are the same in November 2011 as they were for the previous year.

skills	
Service users	
Reduced offending	Less crime committed Savings to the criminal justice system Savings for victims of crime Reduced unemployment levels Savings for the welfare state
Improved family relationships	Improved achievement in education for young people Reduced need for family court intervention
Reduced reliance on drugs and alcohol	Less crime committed Savings to the criminal justice system Less reliance on public health services
Reduced levels of personal debt and better financial management	Less crime committed Savings to the criminal justice system Savings for emergency welfare provision (eg crisis loans) Reduced homelessness
Better access to employment opportunities	Reduced unemployment levels Savings for the welfare state
Wider community	
Reduced crime in the local area	Less crime committed Savings to the criminal justice system Savings for victims of crime
Improved community well-being	Less reliance on public health services Less police intervention

6.2 Cost savings generated by WYCCP's work

To give context to the value of WYCCP's work, it is useful to review the potential costs which would be incurred if they did not provide the support they do to their service users, not least because currently there is little in terms of statutory resettlement support for offenders serving short term sentences of less than 12 months¹⁷.

In the financial year 2010/11, WYCCP's total expenditure was £280,473, of which £195,315 were restricted funds related to direct project delivery. In the same time period, 316 men were referred to the organisation. At the most simplistic level, this would mean the cost to WYCCP per man referred is £618¹⁸. However, it is perhaps more useful to examine WYCCP's success at preventing reoffending and the cost savings related to this.

As noted in chapter three of this report, it is very difficult to measure reoffending rates, particularly for a small organisation such as WYCCP with limited access to data. However, initial data gathered by the project in a six-month period (from April – September 2010) shows that WYCCP carried out work in the community with 57 men to an extent that they could claim

¹⁷ West Yorkshire Probation Service recently launched the Positive Futures Programme which aims to help prisoners on short term sentences with resettlement. However, WYCCP are the only organisation providing such a service with volunteer mentors, which are highly valued by service users.

¹⁸ £195,315 / 316 = £618.

some impact on their resettlement.¹⁹ When following them up a year after their engagement, 37 of these men remained in the community meaning only 35% had been reconvicted.

Although gathered using a different methodology, it is useful to compare this success with published reconviction rates locally. Table 4 shows that the most recent reconviction rate for offenders discharged from HMP Leeds (having served a sentence of less than 12 months) is 74%. The majority of men engaged with WYCCP had served short-term sentences at this prison, and as such this is the most useful comparative figure.

Table 4: Reconviction rates and offender characteristics for prisons – less than 12 month sentences using the discharging method²⁰

	Prison size	No of offenders (<12 month sentence)	Reconviction rate	Average no of previous offences	Average no of previous custodial sentences	Average age
HMP Leeds	1107	810	74%	56.1	7.5	32.2

Source: HMP Service Compendium of reoffending statistics and analysis, 2010

When considering the cost savings generated by WYCCP's work, to attain a notional figure for the number of men reconvicted in a year we multiplied the 6-month results to project the outcomes for the full financial year 2010/11. Thus, 114 men would have participated in depth work in the year, with 74 remaining in the community and 40 having returned to custody.

The National Offender Management Service has published figures showing the costs relating to a man remaining in custody, as set out in table 5 below. There are two types of unit cost measurements reported. The 'direct resource expenditure' figures only include costs met locally by the establishments, while the 'overall cost' includes prison-related overheads met centrally by NOMS, for example, property costs (including depreciation) major maintenance, prisoner escort & custody service (relates to transporting prisoners) and central HQ overheads. For the purposes of this exercise, the overall cost per prisoner will be used, as this provides the most comprehensive and realistic picture.

Table 5: The cost of prison per annum

	Certified normal accommodation	Average population	Direct resource expenditure	Cost per place	Cost per prisoner	Overall resource expenditure	Cost per place ²¹	Cost per prisoner ²²
HMP Leeds	829	1141	£24,321,857	£29,339	£21,324	£37,730,512	£45,513	£33,080

Source: NOMS annual report 2009/10, management information addendum

¹⁹ WYCCP staff are keen to note that they are only one part of a jigsaw of support for most men engaged with the project, although it is felt by the organisation's director that WYCCP's intervention is likely to be the influencing factor in a given service-user's outcome.

²⁰ The discharging method is a simple method that associates the reconviction rate of an individual to the prison from which they were discharged and ignores time spent at other institutions during that sentence.

²¹ Cost per place is Direct resource expenditure or Overall resource / Baseline certified normal accommodation

²² Cost per prisoner is Direct resource expenditure or Overall resource / Average population

Using the current reconviction rates for short-term sentences at HMP Leeds, if these 114 men had received no intervention 74% would be reconvicted in a year. This means 84 men would return to prison at a cost of £33,080 per year per person. If those men were to all serve 6 months, the total cost would stand at £1,389,360²³, and if all served 12 months the cost would be £2,778,720.

Using the same parameters, assuming the 40 WYCCP service users who returned to custody served sentences of 6 months, the cost would be £661,600 meaning a saving to the public purse of **£727,760**. If all 44 men served 12-month sentences, the saving would be as much as **£1,455,520**. This calculation is explained below.

To ascertain the costs of 40 service users returning to prison for 6 months, the calculation can be shown as:

$$40 \text{ service users} \times \text{£}33,080 \text{ (the cost of a 12 month sentence)} = \text{£}1,323,200$$

$$[40 \text{ service users} \times \text{£}33,080 \text{ (the cost of a 12 month sentence)}] / 2 \text{ (to establish costs of a 6 month sentence)} = \text{£}661,600$$

If 84 men would have been sentenced without WYCCP intervention and 40 were sentenced despite WYCCP intervention, then arguably **WYCCP has prevented 44 men returning to prison**. Using the same calculation, savings to the public purse are calculated as:

$$44 \times \text{£}33,080 = \text{£}1,455,520$$

$$[44 \times \text{£}33,080] / 2 \text{ (to establish the cost of a 6 month sentence)} = \text{£}727,760$$

Taking into account the wider cost benefits of the volunteer programme, plus the concrete savings generated by preventing reconviction, the service provided by WYCCP not only represents excellent value for money for any funder but also facilitates considerable savings to the public purse.

²³ 84 men x £33,080 per annum / 2 (to ascertain cost of serving 6 months) = £1,389,360

7.0 Lessons learned and future developments

The last few years have seen changes in the delivery model offered by WYCCP with the development of the Routes to Release Project. In addition, WYCCP has responded to various pilot projects including working at Wealstun Prison one day a week. HMP Wealstun sourced funding to enable WYCCP staff and a volunteer to work there one day a week from March 2011 until December 2011.

The Routes to Release Project has undoubtedly been a successful initiative for WYCCP and for the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme. Sustainability of a project is a central aim of the funding and the key features of the Routes to Release project have become embedded into WYCCP's mainstream delivery. The outputs generated through the creation of the Volunteer Co-ordinator Post and the ETE Post are core provision and recognised as achieving key outcomes.

WYCCP are, however, keen to continue to develop the organisation and its model of delivery. This section looks at the key learning identified from the evaluation of its current initiatives and areas of future developments for the project. Priorities and recommendations for the organisation as a whole are presented in the next section.

7.1 Volunteer link worker programme

- **High value of volunteer contribution for WYCCP**

A key finding for WYCCP from the development of the Routes to Release Project and the volunteer programme is the enormous value the volunteers have added to the service. WYCCP benefitted from a few volunteers prior to the Routes to Release Project but having an effective and highly trained body of volunteers has enabled WYCCP to increase service capacity and provide the delivery of activities which would not have been possible without them. The profile of the volunteers illustrates a wide range of ages, and backgrounds bringing a diversity of experiences to the project. WYCCP staff recognise the benefits of the volunteers' contribution bringing knowledge and awareness from previous life experiences, making suggestions and adding useful fresh ideas.

- **Volunteers appreciate, and respond to, being valued**

The evaluation highlighted the positive impact for the volunteers of feeling valued and appreciated in their role. They welcomed the autonomy and independence of working directly with service users following the in-depth training and shadowing programme, and spoke highly of the support, debriefings and supervision with WYCCP staff and other link workers. However, they particularly appreciated feeling valued. The recent addition to the Volunteer Training Programme of a visit from the Prison Governor HMP Leeds, stating his gratitude too for the

work of the volunteers in the community helping to reduce re-offending rates, was well received by the trainees and a key highlight in the programme.

“One good thing about this organisation is that they say thanks, you feel really valued and appreciated” Volunteer link worker

- **Time gap needed for service users to become link workers**

A key learning from the Routes to Release Project was the unrealistic ambition for service users to directly move on to become volunteer link workers. This approach faced many practical challenges. Many service users would be released from prison yet still serving part of their sentence in the community. They were therefore not in a position to return into the prison to provide support to others and indeed may not have been emotionally ready to offer appropriate support to service users. The timing was recognised as inappropriate and WYCCP has instead focused on recruiting ex-offenders by approaching other voluntary organisations that work with ex-offenders. A six-month period of involvement in other activities is encouraged before service users consider training to be a volunteer link worker.

- **Requires dedicated volunteer co-ordinator role**

A further key finding from the Routes to Release Project is that the bi-annual volunteer recruitment process and training programme, alongside supporting and supervising existing volunteers, requires a full time volunteer co-ordinator. This was anticipated in the Routes to Release original funding application and project delivery has confirmed the need for a dedicated full time post. The success of the link worker working with an ex-offender in the community depends upon many factors including the reliability, commitment, mental health, and skills of the volunteer. Recruitment objectives also include geographic matching where possible as the organisation works across the whole of west Yorkshire. The role of the volunteer co-ordinator is to oversee all these different aspects to ensure a quality service.

- **Project development - Assistant key worker roles**

WYCCP recognises the enormous contribution and commitment of the volunteer link workers whose enthusiasm and ambition for the project has resulted in skilled and experienced workers. Thus two part-time (10 hours per week) paid assistant key worker posts have been created and recruited specifically targeted at experienced link workers. These roles provide a route to paid employment for the volunteers as well as validation of the value of their contribution.

- **Possible project development - Accredited training of volunteers**

WYCCP also recognises that the comprehensive training programme offered to volunteer link workers as part of the recruitment process is likely to constitute the requirements for an accredited training course. Providing an accredited training course to volunteers would ensure all participants gain a recognised qualification regardless of whether they carry on to become a link worker. WYCCP intends to develop this as part of their longer-term business plan.

7.2 WYCCP model of service delivery

- **Importance of location and sufficient resources**

WYCCP workers have been involved in a small pilot project extending their service to Wealstun Prison for one day a week. There was a huge need for resettlement support in HMP Wealstun as a number of resettlement agencies have been withdrawing, for funding reasons. The result of this was that WYCCP were inundated with requests for support and found it difficult in the early stages to manage this. Key learning from this initiative is that the existing staff and volunteers based at Leeds Prison did not have the capacity to deliver as effective a service to a prison based ten miles away. Each man referred generated a significant amount of work, because of the lack of other agencies, and it would have been difficult to deal with this without the use of volunteers who were able to come back to the WYCCP office and undertake the follow on work. WYCCP found however that they were able to resolve a number of issues for men prior to release and that less men needed support in the community, however 25% of men went on to be supported in the community. The amount and intensity of work at Wealstun would have justified having a full time member of staff working there, however WYCCP do not have the resources to support this and their main allegiance is to HMP Leeds.

- **Project development - Developing the faith based element**

Internal discussion within WYCCP highlighted the view that the faith-based element of their work was underdeveloped and a faith subgroup, involving members of WYCCP's Management Board, staff and link workers, emerged in January 2011. The purpose of the subgroup is to look at how a multi-faith ethos fits into resettlement. Future work is focused on preparing an awareness- raising package to promote key areas of WYCCP services for multi-faith communities. WYCCP are currently making funding applications to recruit a part time Faith Communities Development Worker. The post holder will work with the main faith communities in Leeds; whilst maintaining very close contact with the multi faith chaplaincy and the Muslim Resettlement worker within HMP Leeds. Through making key links and recruiting volunteer 'Faith Links' people from within the different faith communities it is intended that the worker will develop faith support networks which can help both the ex-offenders and their families.

- **Possible project development - Directory of information**

A suggestion for future development emerging from the evaluation was the compilation of a directory of information as a resource for both volunteers and WYCCP staff. The project works with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory agencies gaining a great deal of local knowledge. It is suggested that this could be resourced through volunteers and updated regularly.

- **Possible project development - Evening opportunities**

A further suggestion raised by the focus group of volunteer link workers was the possibility of the project expanding into evening delivery through a telephone service, run by volunteers with support from WYCCP staff. The link workers felt that daytime volunteering opportunities excluded many potential volunteers who were at work during the day. For service users, access

to a telephone support service up to 9pm, for example, would be beneficial as other agencies would all be closed and it is often a vulnerable time. It is interesting to note the Doncaster Prison payment by results pilot includes a dedicated help line 24 hours a day.

- **Possible project development - Housing project**

WYCCP is involved in exploring the possibility of a housing project for ex-offenders as a potential social enterprise arm to the organisation. WYCCP have taken part in discussions with the Catholic Church looking at converting one of their properties in North-West Leeds. The vision is to develop a housing option for men leaving HMP Leeds providing supported short-term accommodation as part of a holistic support package. This would be done by creating seven self-contained furnished units, and it is proposed that the large kitchen and dining room would be used to provide a space for training in basic cookery/domestic skills and also a common area for the tenants in the evening and weekends.

7.3 Data collection and reporting

- **Importance of evidencing outcomes**

WYCCP appreciates the importance of achieving and evidencing positive outcomes which arguably positions this community chaplaincy as a realistic player in the current rehabilitation revolution. This acknowledgement and understanding of the importance of outcomes arguably extends WYCCP's role as a community chaplaincy **beyond** that envisioned in the recent evaluation²⁴ of community chaplaincy which stated:

“The substantive point for emphasis, supported by this research, is that empathy, understanding, building supportive relationships, and setting a good behavioural example to ex-prisoners are not solely undertaken as a means-to-an-end, but rather an end-in-itself...Community chaplaincy is enjoined to serve others, to translate faith into practical action, and to do this unconditionally in its work with ex-prisoners regardless of who they are, what they have done, and what the outcome might be.”

- **Project development – Investing in the database**

WYCCP has made good progress on data collection, from a starting point of having no database in place two years ago. Now a comprehensive database exists and it is clear that staff are keen to develop this further still. Throughout the course of the evaluation, discussions have been held with WYCCP staff over the practicalities of the tool, particularly around the reporting functions.

²⁴ Evaluation Report of Research at Six Community Chaplaincy Projects in England and Wales, Dr Philip Whitehead, Teesside University, 2011

8.0 Conclusion and recommendations

The evaluation of the West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project concludes at a time of transition for the project as the payment by results agenda begins to reshape the local rehabilitation landscape. This final chapter draws together the key findings from the report, outlines the challenges ahead and recommendations for the future.

8.1 Key findings

West Yorkshire Community Chaplaincy Project have worked hard over the last few years at extending their reach through volunteers and developing an effective reporting system to validate their achievements. Their ability to reduce the re-offending rate of the people they work with is evidenced and their relevance to the rehabilitation revolution has been recognised.

The evaluation has highlighted key **strengths** of the WYCCP model integral to its success:

- The service is independent of the criminal justice system.
- It responds to offenders who self-refer.
- It is person-centred, flexible, open-ended focused on building supportive relationships.
- The value of the volunteers is central to delivery.

WYCCP recognises it is often one of several agencies working with an ex-offender and values that partnership approach. The service users are often fairly chaotic with multiple issues. So how far can success in terms of reducing re-offending be attributable to WYCCP? As one staff member commented, *"I like to say they kept themselves out of jail."* Perhaps too much emphasis can be given to attributing credit across a shared arena when the real issue is one of making sure that a person's needs are met in partnership rather than in competition. WYCCP's flexible and person-centred approach may provide the 'glue' that allows the other agencies to maximise their potential.

The **quality** of the service was recognised by internal staff, external stakeholders, service users and volunteer link workers. The latter spoke positively of the training, support and supervision they received.

Clear **impact** of the service is evidenced on several levels. The headline outcome is that WYCCP reduces the re-offending rate of many of the men they work with. The service users benefit from better life chances and increased resilience as the WYCCP team help to make valuable improvements to their lives, and the community benefits from reduced re-offending, families reunited and ex-offenders re-engaging in a positive way in their local area.

In addition, WYCCP achieves important hard and soft outcomes for service users such as accessing accommodation and employment opportunities, building self-esteem and being better able to manage life in the community. Volunteer link workers spoke of personal satisfaction, increased confidence and skills resulting from the range of experiences offered by WYCCP.

The quantitative assessment of the project explored the costs related to delivering the service in contrast to the costs of a man remaining in prison. Through comparing findings from WYCCP's monitoring data with reoffending rates for HMP Leeds, it is arguable that in 2010/11 the service prevented 44 men returning to prison within a year of release, **saving the public purse** between £727,760 and £1,455,520. This is based on the assumption that each of these men returned to serve sentences of six months or 12 months for the larger figure. If the sentences were longer, the related savings would be higher still.

Key **learning** for the organisation in the last few years has mainly focused on two strands - developing the link worker programme and improving data collection and evidencing outcomes.

8.2 Routes to Release

As stated earlier, the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme is funding the Routes to Release Project which funds the Volunteer Coordinator post and the Education, Training and Employment worker post. The work of these two roles has allowed the development of a large volunteer programme, which maintains a continuing volunteer workforce able to link with ex-offenders in the community across West Yorkshire. Twice yearly recruitment rounds are carried out, involving an in-depth training programme and an induction process. The ETE post works directly with offenders in prison, through the gate and into the community focusing on supporting service users with any education, training and employment needs.

This evaluation has highlighted the impact of the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme Routes to Release Project as the work of these two roles is central to WYCCP delivery and key elements in achieving overall outcomes.

Evidence of how the project is making a difference is shown throughout the report:

- Chapter Three provided detail of the independent validation of the Routes to Release Project outcomes for the financial year 2010 – 2011.
- Chapter Five evidenced the difference the project funding is making to the WYCCP service with the benefits for service users, volunteer link workers, the wider community, external stakeholders listed.
- The chapter also referenced how the project is contributing directly to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Programme Outcomes 1 and 2.
- Chapter Six demonstrates the quantitative impact of the volunteer programme and its potential wider savings to the public purse.

- Chapter Four details what works and why in relation to the WYCCP model. As the Routes to Release Project is embedded within the WYCCP delivery in terms of the provision of volunteer link workers and an ETE support worker, the chapter demonstrates what works well about the Routes to Release Project.

The reduced level of reconviction rates of ex-offenders working with WYCCP compared to those who have not accessed the service, demonstrates a continuing need for the service. WYCCP are the only organisation in the area offering a 'through the gate' service with volunteer mentors.

There has been key learning from the Routes to Release Programme and particularly the volunteer link worker programme detailed in Chapter Seven. The most significant learning was the need for a time gap before service users could become volunteer link workers.

8.3 Challenges ahead

The arrival of the payments by results agenda for HMP Leeds heralds a new dawn for WYCCP as they are perfectly positioned to effectively work with the prison to reduce re-offending. The Prison Governor recognises the direct impact the WYCCP service provides in relation to achieving the prisons seven key outcomes. At the time of writing, WYCCP has not been commissioned to deliver services as part of the pilot and, therefore, the service needs to remain alert and responsive to all relevant funding opportunities. In addition, WYCCP continues to receive funding from charitable sources and needs to ensure compliance with grant conditions.

Evidencing Change envisage the challenges ahead for WYCCP include:

- Being visibly commissioning-ready to position for a payments by results contract from HMP Leeds through evidenced outcomes, reporting and monitoring systems.
- Sharpening their evidence base to provide a hierarchy of outcomes relevant to the payments by results agenda, the wider funding opportunities, and WYCCP's strategic plan.
- Ensuring the consistency of internal collection and recording of data.
- The development of a reporting system which allows easy access to relevant data.
- Maintaining independence and distinctiveness as they deepen links with the prison and become more integral to the outcomes of the prison.

8.4 Recommendations

- **Maximising commissioning opportunities**

In order to maximise commissioning opportunities, WYCCP needs to be commissioning-ready which necessitates developing and embedding outcomes focused reporting. It is recommended that WYCCP continue their drive for consistent collection of demonstrable outcomes. Suggestions for developing a strong evidence base are included below.

- **Positioning the service for payment by results commissions from HMP Leeds**

It is recommended that WYCCP work closely with HMP Leeds Prison Governor to evidence why WYCCP is so important to the prison outcomes that they need to invest in the service. Further discussion is suggested on determining the range of evidence required by the prison for payments by results – for example, number of contacts, types of offenders, any analysis of who is resettling into the community and who is going back into prison, and any consequent change in approach by WYCCP. In addition, it is recommended WYCCP discuss with the prison how best the service can work with the prison to ensure WYCCP remains independent but also interlinked.

- **Change reporting to outcome focused rather than in-depth / light touch.**

The distinction between defining service users as either in-depth service users or light touch service users originated in a desire to differentiate between cases. It is suggested that WYCCP consider changing their reporting basis to focus on outcomes / results as the key indicator rather than the time spent or the number of interventions with a service user. The data on time spent and number of interventions should still be recorded as this is relevant as evidence on how the outcome has been achieved, and evidence of time spent with a service user in cases where the service user re-offends.

It is recommended that WYCCP define what ‘results’ they need to evidence and then work through how to measure that, how often, and who should measure it. It may be that the spider tool and the screening tool already encompass a lot of the information required and could provide data for a tracking system. It has been recognised that there is underdevelopment of reporting outcomes and the spider assessment offers a ready mechanism for demonstrating distance travelled, including any lapses, and outcomes achieved for service users. It could be adapted to include a qualitative element through the provision of a box for ‘Any additional comments’.

- **Develop a hierarchy of outcomes**

To show a picture of WYCCP’s effectiveness and provide a comprehensive picture of their impact, it is recommended WYCCP consider developing a hierarchy of data²⁵ with the headline outcome the reduction in the re-offending rate. The system should include collection of data relevant to the 5 short-term targets in WYCCP’s Strategic Plan. Currently the system does not record information on the stated benefits, i.e. receipt of social fund and community care grant in the main benefits box and would require a manual trawl through the notes.

A suggested hierarchy of data could include:

- Headline outcome – aim to reduce re-offending rate

²⁵ Hierarchy of outcomes based on suggestions in *Impact Measurement in the Youth Justice Sector, New Philanthropy Capital, May 2011*

- Interim outcomes – hard and soft outcomes both valid in terms of contributing to resettling into the community and reducing re-offending
 - Offending history and risk profile of those involved to show the project is not just ‘cherry picking’ and also to provide data to allow analysis of the type of offenders the project is having most impact with.
 - Case studies as illustrations of how WYCCP has helped individuals and the difference it has made.

- **Devising more robust approaches to reporting**

As noted in chapter three, the approach for tracking service users over a period of time has some challenges, although project staff are conscious of these and caveat all findings as necessary. However, with some amendments the existing approach could be made even more robust and this would provide WYCCP and their stakeholders a greater level of confidence in their achievements. An overview of the suggested adjustments is set out below:

- As a result of the early findings of the evaluation, WYCCP has had changes made to the data-base so it is now possible to track service users according to their date of release rather than the date of engagement with WYCCP.
- The definition of the outcome could usefully be revised from the number of ex-offenders crime-free a year from release, to the number of ex-offenders who remain in the community. Likewise the organisation could usefully move from discussing re-offending to discussing reconviction, in line with MoJ approaches to data collection.
- Similarly, a consistent definition of how many service users WYCCP ‘worked with’ would provide robustness to the approach – currently, there is no fixed classification for whether men are tracked or not according to the length of time supported or the number of interventions received. Not all service users are tracked, as low-level intervention makes it difficult to attribute behaviour change to WYCCP.
- There is potential for WYCCP to track service users at a range of milestones – 6, 12 & 18 months for example – each of which would provide an insight into success. Following early evaluation findings, WYCCP have begun to track service users at 6 and 12 month periods.
- There could be potential for WYCCP to work in partnership with other organisations such as the police and the probation service to share data and knowledge on service users to make the picture more complete.

- **Improving recording of soft outcomes**

Like many other organisations involved in direct delivery of services, there is some inconsistency in monitoring service user progress post-release. Although WYCCP holds comprehensive records on how many service users have been supported and to what extent, stronger data on soft outcomes could be very useful to the project in demonstrating their efficacy. We recommend that the project develop a protocol for staff working with service users to define how often soft outcomes data should be gathered, particularly by means of repeated completion of the spider tool. This should help to ensure consistency and allow WYCCP to better evidence the strong results achieved by service users.

- **Develop a payment by results focused reporting system**

It is likely that payment by results funding will require identification of individuals supported under the scheme and the results claimed against each individual. It is suggested that WYCCP develop their reporting system to track individuals against outcomes, both hard and soft and outcomes and whether ultimately not being reconvicted. We would recommend that WYCCP invest further in their database and monitoring systems to ensure these reporting functions are available.

- **Marketing and raising WYCCP profile**

The evaluation highlighted the need for WYCCP to raise its profile and broadcast its service. Both external and internal stakeholders felt WYCCP needed to increase its visibility and promote the positive outcomes it achieves. The *Summary Report leaflet* included as part of the evaluation will provide an opportunity for WYCCP to shout about its achievements.

- **Accreditation for existing areas of work**

It is recommended WYCCP consider accreditation for existing areas of work with the volunteers. For example, WYCCP could be well positioned to apply for the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard, or could seek formal accreditation of the volunteer training programme.

- **Service user development**

Some service users have maintained contact with WYCCP over a number of years. Although no longer considered 'service users', they bring valuable experience to the project. It was suggested during the evaluation that the project may want to consider developing the role of service users within WYCCP to encourage greater participation, for example through involvement in the WYCCP Management Board or with the development of a subgroup. Participants would need to be supported and facilitated.

- **Routes *from* Release Project?**

The last few years have witnessed increasing challenges in the role of the ETE worker to access education, training and employment opportunities for ex-offenders yet one of the issues for service users once their initial priorities have been resolved, is how to fill their time. There appears to be an emerging appetite for volunteering opportunities / work placements for some ex-offenders who, influenced by the positive example given by the link workers, recognise the value of meaningful activity bringing satisfaction, improved skills and possibilities for the future. It is suggested that WYCCP consider a sister project to Routes to Release which focuses on volunteering opportunities for ex-offenders post release.