

Press notice: embargoed for 13th December 2012

Evidence, evidence and more evidence: arts sector rises to the challenge of criminal justice budget cuts

A new Evidence Library has been launched that aims to put arts-based projects at the heart of the government's 'rehabilitation revolution'.

Developed by the Arts Alliance, the online Evidence Library is a comprehensive collection of independent research and evaluation on the impact of arts-based projects in the Criminal Justice System.

Arts organisations aim to respond proactively to budget cuts and reforms in the Criminal Justice System, by providing evidence that what they do works.

The Evidence Library has been developed amid deepening concern for the future of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). In a recent survey, 92% of VCS organisations working in criminal justice said that the economic downturn had impacted upon their organisation, or that they expected it to in the future, citing concern about reduced income and budget pressures at a time of increased demand for services.¹

Over 125 independent researchers, academics and criminal justice professionals have contributed so far to the Evidence Library, which will grow exponentially as new evidence is published. The body of research has involved over 3000 participants with an offending history, showing impressive results.

The launch of the Evidence Library coincides with an announcement by Justice Secretary Chris Grayling to 'particularly capture the skills of specialist organisations in the voluntary sector' in the delivery of the government's 'rehabilitation revolution'.

Tim Robertson, Chair of the Arts Alliance and Chief Executive of Koestler Trust, said:

"The arts want to support the rehabilitation revolution and now they have the evidence to prove it works.

With the bill for re-offending coming in at between £9.5bn and £13bn a year, when it comes to the Criminal Justice System, the public just wants results.

A recent ICM opinion poll showed that most people don't care what kind of projects are run with prisoners and ex-prisoners, just so long as they save money and reduce criminal behaviour.² Now, with the Evidence Library, arts projects have the evidence to show that they can deliver."

Fergus McNeill, Professor of Criminology & Social Work at the University of Glasgow and a contributor to the Evidence Library, said:

"The Evidence Library is a tremendous platform on which to build up the evidence base and create a body of rigorous, independent research and evaluation that stands up to scrutiny."

The Evidence Library is being launched at a sold out event on Thursday 13th December which will feature a lecture by Fergus McNeill and a performance from an Arts Alliance member, Only Connect. For a press pass to attend and meet expert commentators and people who have experienced arts projects in a criminal justice setting, please contact jessica.plant@clinks.org

Notes to editors

1. **The Evidence Library is at www.artsevidence.org.uk.** For case studies, pictures of arts projects in action and to find out more about the Evidence Library and the work of Arts Alliance members, please contact Jessica Plant at the Arts Alliance on 020 72483538 or jessica.plant@clinks.org. mobile number 07867 532447
2. Survey of 139 respondents undertaken by Clinks, the national organisation which supports the Voluntary and Community Sector working with offenders in England and Wales, in July 2012
3. Survey of 1000 adult members of the UK public undertaken by ICM Research for the Arts Alliance in June 2012: (67%) agree with the statement 'I don't care what kind of projects you run with prisoners and ex-prisoners so long as it saves money and reduces criminal behaviour'. (Only 3% disagree with this). Agreement is highest with 65+ respondents.
4. The Arts Alliance is the national body for the promotion of arts in Criminal Justice. It represents a coalition of arts practitioners and organisations working in prisons and the community to support people to lead crime free lives. The Arts Alliance is managed by Clinks.
5. High res logos are available if required.
6. Additional information re the Evidence Library:
 - i. The Evidence Library now houses summaries and details of 73 independent evaluations:
 - ii. 24 arts organisations that have commissioned independent evaluations of their work
 - iii. 24 academic institutions that have undertaken independent evaluations of arts-based activities within the Criminal Justice System
 - iv. 13 Independent research organisations that have undertaken independent evaluations of arts-based activities within the Criminal Justice System
 - v. Up to 50 key reference publications with direct links to their websites and download options, 52 prisons and 2 YOTS have had evaluated arts activities (approx 38% out of the 137 England and Wales total)
 - vi. Out of the 8 art forms, Drama = 25 (34%), Multi- Arts = 21 (28%) and Music =17 (23%) are the most evaluated

- vii. Within the identified Outputs, 39 (53%) provided arts-based workshops and 11 (15%) evaluated projects including some form of accreditation
- viii. 33 (45%) out of the 73 evaluations used a combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies
- ix. The Evidence Library (www.artsevidence.org.uk) has been produced by the [Arts Alliance](#) which is the national body for promotion of arts in the Criminal Justice System. The Arts Alliance is a coalition of arts organisations working in the criminal justice system, its purpose is to improve communication and broker relationships between artists and organisations working with the criminal justice sector, offenders and ex-offenders, prison and probation staff, and relevant government departments. The Arts Alliance provides practitioners and service users with a voice through which to influence policy, a forum in which to exchange views, and a stand on which to promote and raise the profile of the arts in the criminal justice sector. The Arts Alliance and all of its activity is made possible by the generous financial support from the [Ministry of Justice](#), and [The Monument Trust](#). The Arts Alliance is managed by Clinks, the national organisation which supports the Voluntary and Community Sector working with offenders in England and Wales.

7. Potential case study of arts organisation **and recent research report:**

‘Good Vibrations’

<http://www.good-vibrations.org.uk/view/1/welcome-to-good-vibrations>

– linked to report published in August 2012, by Dr Jennie Hennely entitled: Good Vibrations: Music and social education for young offenders

<http://imerc.org/papers/goodvibrations.pdf>

Extract from report:

The processes of musical development are shared processes with the development of aspects of individual agency and social capital considered to be integral to desistance from crime. Not only did the music allow participants to develop positive self-concept, communicate with each other and work together, through engaging in musical development,

*Photographs and quotes from participants available if required

* For any further details please contact Jessica Plant at the Arts Alliance on:
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