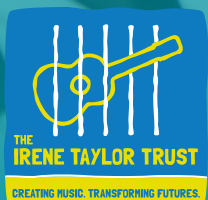


AN EVALUATION OF THE IRENE TAYLOR TRUST'S **SOUNDING OUT** PROGRAMME 2016-2018



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BACKGROUND

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

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



KEY FINDINGS



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

1

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

2

IDENTIFYING FOCUS AND DIRECTION TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT AND AWAY FROM REOFFENDING

3

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

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

1

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

2

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

3

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

4

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE IRENE TAYLOR TRUST

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

FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM:

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

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

FOR FUNDERS

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



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1. SOUNDING OUT PROGRAMME

The Irene Taylor Trust supports vulnerable and excluded individuals (including prisoners, ex-prisoners and young people) to rebuild their lives in, and upon release from, prison by inspiring them through the creation of new music. In 2012, The Irene Taylor Trust piloted a 'through the gate' project to provide extended support for individuals upon release from prison. An independent evaluation of the pilot highlighted the successes and made recommendations that have influenced the delivery of the current Sounding Out programme (Cartwright, 2013).

Sounding Out is a two year, London-based programme, providing ex-prisoners with longer-term rehabilitative opportunities upon their release to bridge the gap between life inside and outside of prison. The programme consists of:

- creative music projects
- live performance opportunities
- one to one pastoral support
- training
- workshop delivery
- mentoring
- work placements.

The Sounding Out traineeship aims to use music as a basis to develop transferable team working and communication skills; instil discipline; increase self-confidence, self-esteem and self-motivation; improve social skills; and develop mentoring skills. The programme also allows participants to demonstrate on a very public platform the positivity, talent and creativity locked inside prisons, challenging the often negative perceptions of people who have spent time in prison. Sounding Out gives participants the opportunity to voice their feelings and experiences and to connect with audiences on a level as fellow human beings.

Musicians in Residence are responsible for referring individuals to Sounding Out during strategic work inside prisons. They select beneficiaries based on a number of factors, including:

- level of skill/aptitude
- reliability
- commitment
- whether improvement has been made/interest maintained during the time projects ran inside prison.

2. RESEARCH CONTEXT

CREATIVE ARTS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The relationship between the creative arts and the Criminal Justice System has a long and complex history (Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2012). As Parkes & Bilby (2010: p106) note, the arts can map an 'alternative terrain to traditional concepts of rehabilitation and treatment'. As a general rule, arts programmes in criminal justice settings aim to have a positive impact on participants in a range of ways (Parkes & Bilby, 2010), rather than having a direct impact on offending behaviour (Bilby, Caulfield & Ridley, 2013):

'there are strong reasons to consider arts in criminal justice an area of considerable significance and innovation. The value of engaging prisoners in purposeful activity has long been recognised.....If we accept that an element of humanity is the need and desire to express ourselves creatively, whether verbally or in other ways, then we must also acknowledge that this demands the provision of creative activities within the prison estate and the wider Criminal Justice System (Parkes & Bilby, 2010).'

Bilby et al. (2013: p12)

There is considerable evidence that participation in the arts has many positive impacts on participants:

- Increases confidence and social skills (Baker & Homan, 2007; Bilby et al., 2013; Bruce, 2015; Caulfield, 2011, 2014; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008)
- Attitudinal and behavioural changes (cf. Caulfield, Devi-McGleish, & Jolly, 2018)
- Changes in self-concept (cf. Bruce, 2015)
- Positive regulation of emotions and increased well-being (Cartwright, 2013; Caulfield, Simpson, & Jacobs, 2016; Winder et al., 2015)
- Decreases in anger and aggression (Wilson et al., 2009; Miles and Strauss, 2008)
- A 'humanising experience' (Allen, Shaw, & Hall, 2004)
- A safe space away from everyday life challenges (Caulfield et al., 2018; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Wilson et al., 2009)
- Reduction of risk factors and increase in protective factors (Newman, 2002).

There is evidence to suggest that arts based interventions within criminal justice settings foster a process of self-evaluation (Caulfield, Wilkinson, & Wilson 2016; Davey et al., 2015; Sibling, 2005), which has been found to positively improve self-concept (Baker & Homan, 2007; Berson, 2008; Henley, 2012). For example, in McKean's (2006) evaluation of a theatre-based project with women in prison, participants reported an enhanced sense of self and a newfound autonomy through freedom to express their emotions. This can be viewed as contributing to secondary desistance (Maruna & Farrall, 2004), where 'desistance is the process by which people who have offended stop offending (primary desistance) and then taken on a personal narrative (Maruna, 2001) that supports a continuing non-offending lifestyle (secondary desistance)' (Bilby et al., 2013: p13).

Anderson et al. (2011) report that involvement in arts-based interventions in Scotland enabled participants to redefine themselves. These examples, among others (cf. Caulfield et al., 2016; Henley, 2012) suggest that arts-based interventions can influence the process of desistance, by creating a sense of personal agency.

IMPACT OF MUSIC IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Many of the findings relating to the arts more broadly in criminal justice hold true for music programmes. Writing and performing music enables individuals to redefine and change their thinking about themselves – important factors in desistance from crime (Bilby et al., 2013). An evaluation of the Changing Tunes music project for ex-prisoners found that participants came to see themselves not primarily as ex-offenders, but as musicians and individuals with responsibility for their own future (Cursley & Maruna, 2015).

A recent review of 12 studies on music programmes in prison concluded that they 'are perceived by participating prisoners as a liberating process, which encourages participation and allows for noncoercive personal development' (Kougiali, Einat, & Leibling, 2017: p1). It's thought that this is mostly due to increased protective factors, including social support, that music programmes can provide (Cursley & Maruna, 2015). The new role models found in participant's peers and art facilitators can be a particularly important protective factor (Viggiani et al., 2013). Potentially the most powerful bonds that form may be between the arts facilitators and the participants. Henley (2012) reports the high level of trust and respect observed between participants and the music facilitator, with social barriers broken in the spaces created (Abrahams et al., 2012).

Numerous studies have shown that participation in music programmes improves the confidence of those with experience of the criminal justice system (Caulfield, 2016; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Viggiani et al., 2013; Wilson et al., 2009). Improved proficiency with a musical instrument in particular has been found to improve self-confidence in performance and rehearsals (Cursley & Maruna, 2015). Increased confidence is linked with a more positive, constructive use of time and associated with integration into education (Adams, 2012; Cheliotis et al., 2014; Viggiani et al., 2013). Indeed, a number of studies have found that participation in music programmes while in contact with the criminal justice system directly increases motivation and engagement with education and other constructive activities (Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008; Wilson et al., 2009; Anderson & Overy, 2010).

Recent work by Daykin et al. (2017) has explored the role of music with young people in community justice settings, suggesting that 'music-making led by professional musicians can serve as a personal and collective resource' (p955). Daykin et al.'s (2013) systematic review of 63 papers exploring music projects in the criminal justice system concludes that 'further research is warranted in relation to music outcomes, particularly personal growth, education and mental well-being' (p204). More recent research in community settings has sought to address this, finding that music programmes can have a positive impact on wellbeing, communication, and engagement with education (Caulfield, Simpson, & Jacobs, 2016; Caulfield, Devi-McGleish, & Jolly, 2018). However, the transition from the prison regime to resettling in the community can be fraught. From difficulties in securing safe accommodation to finding employment to stigma and social exclusion, there are many challenges for newly released prisoners.

A previous evaluation of Sounding Out found that the programme provided valuable support for participants (Cartwright, 2013). This current evaluation builds upon previous research, seeking to further understand the impact that Sounding Out has on participants, but also seeks to understand how (and how efficiently) the project has evolved, and the relationship between this and the outcomes (impact).

3. EVALUATION AIMS

The evaluation aimed to understand:

1. how Sounding Out impacted upon ex-prisoners' motivation, aspiration, and hope, and interest in pursuing other educational opportunities, training, or employment
2. if there is any change in beneficiaries' communication skills and relationships with family members, peers, and others (e.g. employers)
3. if there is any impact on wellbeing (including self-esteem), self-confidence, and self-efficacy
4. the relationship between the *impact* and the *process*, and any barriers to success.



4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 DATA COLLECTION

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ex-prisoners, family members and staff involved in the programme. Data was collected over a three month period. Participants were asked to describe their experiences of the programme, what they gained from it, key success factors, and how it could be improved. Staff were asked to discuss key partners involved in the programme, any challenges they may have faced and how these were addressed, and the impact of the programme on the participants. Interviews were digitally recorded with the participant's permission and lasted, on average, 51 mins.

To date, the participants involved in this evaluation have created and recorded 11 songs during the Sounding Out programme. These songs made up the following three albums:

- Inside Out: Out on License (Cohort 2)
- Inside Out: Out to Lunch (Cohort 2)
- Multiplay: What happened in Hoxton (Cohort 3).

These are publicly available on SoundCloud (<https://soundcloud.com/soundingout>).

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Qualitative data was analysed using a process of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Caulfield & Hill, 2018). The first step of analysis consisted of familiarisation with the data via transcription of the recordings to a Word document and reading the transcripts thoroughly. Working through the transcripts line-by-line, the data was coded inductively (i.e., the codes and themes emerge from the data itself rather than applying a pre-existing structure to the data). The iterative process of analysis allowed the coded data to form themes, which were then reviewed against the data and literature.

The song lyrics were transcribed verbatim and analysed in line with the themes that emerged from thematic analysis of the interview data (as used by Cursley & Maruna, 2015). The quotes are used for illustrative purposes, noted against relevant themes. Song lyrics did not map onto all of the themes identified from the thematic analysis of interview data.

4.3 PARTICIPANTS

The Sounding Out programmes that formed the basis of this evaluation engaged 13 male ex-prisoners in the programme within Cohorts 2 and 3 (eight in Cohort 2 and five in Cohort 3). Cohort 2 had recently completed the Sounding Out programme (October 2016 to September 2018) and Cohort 3 began the programme from January 2018. The first group project for Cohort 3 began during the evaluation period (August 2018). All were invited to participate in an interview. Ten volunteered to be interviewed, whilst contact could not be made with the three ex-prisoners that had previously disengaged with Sounding Out. Eight participants were White British and two Black British.

Twenty-two interviews (19 face-to-face, and three by phone) were conducted, with 17 individuals

- **five** participants in Cohort 2 (one-off interview after completing the programme)
- **five** participants in Cohort 3 (two interviews, one shortly after joining the programme and one after 6 weeks in the programme)
- **six** staff (one-off interview with 3 programme staff; 2 musicians; 1 ex prison-worker)
- **one** family member (one-off interview).

4.4 ETHICS

A highly trained research team, with considerable experience of conducting research in the criminal justice system and with vulnerable groups, conducted the evaluation. The evaluation was granted ethical approval on 15th August 2018 by the Faculty of Social Sciences Ethics Committee at the University of Wolverhampton. No data was collected prior to participants' providing fully informed consent.

5. FINDINGS

The key themes that emerged from this analysis fit into two broad categories. First, the impact of Sounding Out, and second, its delivery, including key components contributing to success and areas that could be developed. Seven key themes emerged from the analysis, of which three relate to impact and four relate to the process of delivering Sounding Out. The themes combine findings from the participants, staff, and family members, allowing the findings to be considered from the perspective of multiple beneficiaries. The themes are summarised in Table 1.

TABLE 1. THEMES

Category		Theme	Sub themes
Impact	5.1	Personal Impact	Confidence Wellbeing
	5.2	Focus and Direction	Focus for the future Employment opportunities Desistance from crime
	5.3	Practical and Social Skills	Musical ability Patience and group work Personal and professional relationships
Process	5.4	Engaging Participants in Sounding Out	Passion for music High quality and professional programme The right time Paid opportunity
	5.5	Expectations of Sounding Out	Managing boundaries Expectations after programme ends
	5.6	Relationships	Staff go above and beyond Experienced musicians Relationships between peers
	5.7	Partnerships	Referral process Criminal Justice staff Reputation and relationships

Overall, the participants reported a highly positive experience of Sounding Out:

“It’s very positive; it’s the most positive thing that has happened to me for a long, long time.”

(Aaron, Cohort 3 Participant)

“Just unbelievable, so efficient, warm, friendly, just fantastic. Can’t say enough about it.”

(Colin, Cohort 3 Participant)

“I’ve enjoyed every minute of it. It’s really been what I’ve expected and more.”

(Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

5.1 PERSONAL IMPACT

Participants and staff reported improvements in participant confidence and wellbeing as a result of participating in Sounding Out.

CONFIDENCE



**"I thank you all for helping me,
To be the man that's flying free,
I made it today"**

Lyrics from 'Make it One Day'

Nine out of ten participants spoke about increases in confidence: both their own and witnessing the confidence of others in the group improve. Some participants spoke about increases in their confidence as a musician:

"Gained a lot of confidence musically because, as I say, I gave up playing years and years and years ago." (Aaron, Cohort 3 Participant)

"At the moment I have no problem playing in front of ten people or thousands of people. They gave me that confidence. Whereas in my first gig after so many years, I was literally shaking when I was playing the guitar." (Mark, Cohort 2 Participant)

Other participants spoke about how the confidence gained through the programme had increased their confidence in their everyday lives:

"I've had an increase in confidence, not just from my ability as a musician, and my ability to be more involved in that as a professional, but in my day-to-day life." (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

"It's given me a lot of confidence back, shown me that I can actually work with people." (Peter, Cohort 2 Participant)

Sounding Out staff also witnessed increases in participants' confidence through the way participants present themselves and their ability to facilitate projects:

"I think he really embraced this idea of hey, I can facilitate this stuff. He's going out on his own and doing it now. So clearly he made a bit of a discovery in himself, actually." (Gareth, Musician)

One of the staff members related increases in confidence in participants to the value other people were now seeing in them:

"He just couldn't believe that someone of that sort of musical talent would want to do something like this, would want to help these guys, that was really powerful watching that and that was quite a turning point for him." (Tom, Staff)

There is significant evidence that participation in creative activities increases confidence and social skills (Baker & Homan, 2007; Bilby et al., 2013; Bruce, 2015; Cheliotis, 2014; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008). The findings here add support to this, and demonstrate that these increases in confidence apply outside of institutional settings, in a community programme for ex-prisoners.

WELLBEING



***"You feel so lost, you feel so lonely,
You're walking on your own,
It's time for healing,
we need loving for the secrets to unfold "***

Lyrics from 'Secret'

Seven out of ten participants spoke about the positive impact of Sounding Out on their feelings and wellbeing:

"I was really depressed as well and that before I done this course. They got rid of all my anxiety, fear." (Liam, Cohort 2 Participant)

"Sounding Out brought me to a space of sanity and to cope emotionally and psychologically." (Ed, Cohort 3 Participant)

Aaron spoke about how depressed he had been since he came out of prison, but that through taking part in Sounding Out ***"it's the first time I've felt positive about my life for months"*** (Aaron, Cohort 3 Participant). This was echoed in the interview with one participant's parent and by two of the staff:

"Aaron said to me yesterday how depressed he'd been lately, and then told me how happy he was to be doing this." (Gareth, Musician)

"I really should thank the Irene Taylor Trust because that's what he needed, he needed something positive, and he needed someone to bring out the best in him." (Anne, Parent)

Two participants spoke about making music and lyric writing as an outlet for their emotions:

"The only way I could express myself at the time was while I was making music ... the lyrics of all our songs say it all. From devastation, to happy moments, to depressing moments, everything is in there. The regrets, the things we've done in the past, where we ended up, what we want to do in the future, it all reflects in our songs." (Mark, Cohort 2 Participant)

Roger spoke about the value of the programme, but noted that the gaps between sessions were not always easy:

"She [Natalie] was a bit concerned that I wasn't managing my mood very well. I have these programmes, and then I go, have a week when I'm alright and then 'oh what do I do now?' That's why I'm really glad I've got this course to go to next week." (Roger, Cohort 3 Participant)

Problems with mental health and wellbeing are associated with increased risk of reoffending in those who have had contact with the criminal justice system. It is clear that the majority of participants experience Sounding Out in a way that is beneficial for their wellbeing. Participation in creative programmes has been shown to reduce risk factors and increase protective factors for mental health and wellbeing, including social support (Cursley & Maruna, 2015), with social barriers broken down in the spaces created in arts programmes.

KEY FINDINGS FOR 'PERSONAL IMPACT'

- Nine out of ten participants spoke of an increase in confidence both musically and in their everyday lives
- Seven out of ten participants reported improvements in their wellbeing and ability to cope with their emotions
- Staff and family members noted improvements in participants' confidence, self-belief and wellbeing during participation in Sounding Out.

5.2 FOCUS AND DIRECTION

General focus towards the future and then more specific focus towards employment and away from reoffending behaviour.

FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE



**"Forget the past, it's done and dusted,
The future is in the world of hope and see"**

Lyrics from 'One Day'

All ten participants spoke about how Sounding Out provided a focus and direction towards a positive future and opened up opportunities that they may not have otherwise encountered:

"Yeah, it's given me that focus again; it's given me that purpose and the realisation that this is what I wanted to [do]." (Colin, Cohort 3 Participant)

"With Sounding Out, it gave me hope for a better future. Not necessarily in music, but in understanding that there are parts of the system that are actually there to support you, to care for you." (Ed, Cohort 3 Participant)

“This is ideal, because it has let me get back into music a little bit, and I’m now going to carry on and get back into it more, outside of the Irene Taylor Trust as well, I want to immerse myself in it.” (Aaron, Cohort 3 Participant)

For two participants, in particular, Sounding Out gave them a positive identity away from risky behaviours:

“Being able to look forward to something as well ... You think differently. I’m not taking all those mad risks I used to take, you get offers to do things and that, and I say no, no I’m in a band...” (Peter, Cohort 2 Participant)

“It gives me a substitute for drugs, for something to focus on.” (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

Five participants spoke about how music can provide a positive and productive activity for any down time. Jack spoke specifically about the importance of having a positive pastime to focus on when faced by the challenges of reintegrating into society upon release:

“What was great about it [Sounding Out] was when you come out you’re a bit confused and have to re-integrate, it helps you stay positive and focused and there was a real momentum about it to begin with.” (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

This was also noted by four staff members and one parent.

“I think it’s really hard for a lot of ex-prisoners to have like goals when they come out ... I think having something that they can work towards, and work on and feel a part of outside, post-gate, I think that’s really important.” (Sophie, Musician)

“Once they come out, they need direction, positive direction, and the Irene Taylor Trust is giving them that positive direction.” (Anne, Parent)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Two participants from Cohort 2 spoke specifically about employment opportunities that arose, in part, through their involvement with Sounding Out and the Irene Taylor Trust. Jack explained how Sounding Out has supported him with his career development:

“[The position will] further my professional credibility within this field and hopefully by the end of it I’ll be employable, that’s a massive thing for me. ... I wouldn’t have that determination and focus had I not been part of this project [Sounding Out], I wouldn’t have known how to apply it, I think that’s the best help.” (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

Staff also described Jack’s achievements following participation in the programme:

“He’s gone on to do the apprenticeship which is brilliant and he possibly would not have had access to that had he not taken part in Sounding Out, and was aware of his talents as a mentor and a musician in that context.” (Sophie, Musician)

Similarly, Peter and his mum spoke about the job opportunity that staff at the Irene Taylor Trust suggested he applied for:

“And now I’m at the Royal Festival, being an exhibition host. ... it’s just opened up my head to just being like ‘you don’t just have to do that madness, do something else, do something else you never thought you’d be able to do’. I got the email from the Irene Taylor Trust, I got the email for the application.” (Peter, Cohort 2 Participant)

“I think it was [Natalie] who was the one who sent him the application and said apply to this, when he first got it he came and read it out, I said ‘go for it’, he said he didn’t think he could do it. ... He was so shocked and surprised and really happy, overjoyed, there isn’t a word to say how pleased he was when he actually got through, and that was just for the interview! When he got the job he couldn’t believe it, he was so happy. ... It’s really helped him, changed him tremendously, the Irene Taylor Trust has helped him become what he is now.” (Anne, Parent)

DESISTANCE FROM CRIME



***“I’ll live better, stay away from crime,
If I live better, this whole world is mine”***

Lyrics from ‘Getting Out

In addition to looking forward towards positive pursuits, seven participants also spoke of the programme providing a focus away from reoffending.

“Well look I’ve been out of jail for two years. That’s a record in itself, usually I’m not even out for six months, and that’s over twenty years, that’s a long time.” (Peter, Cohort 2 Participant)

“I think I would have been back inside by now, if it weren’t for them.”
(Liam, Cohort 2 Participant)

“These people [Sounding Out staff] can help you to make more music and in exchange, actually it stops you from re-offending as well because if your focus has changed now, that stops you from re-offending as well.” (Mark, Cohort 2 Participant)

All of the ten participants interviewed have positively reintegrated into the community. One staff member explained his view on why the programme reduces re-offending rates.

“Our rate of re-offending is really, really low, much lower than the normal average. ... I think it’s being there at a very turbulent difficult time which is when someone’s been released. Giving them the confidence and self-esteem to feel proud of themselves and belief that there are other things they could be doing. Giving them support to get work and that might be work with other people, or working with us. Because, a big reason for committing crime is not having money, so if you can provide that, it is going to be a deterrent.” (Tom, Staff)

This theme supports previous findings that arts-based programmes can support secondary desistance through participants creating new identities and refocussing their lives (Anderson et al., 2011; Bilby et al., 2013; Cartwright, 2013; Caulfield et al., 2016; Cursley & Maruna, 2015). A recent literature review explained, “what arts-based programmes can realistically do –and this is no small feat– is to help create conditions whose emergence in turn makes abstinence from crime more likely” (Cheliotis & Jordanoska, 2016: 37). Importantly, Sounding Out provides a continuation of this positive direction and focus during a challenging transition from inside prison through to release into the community.

KEY FINDINGS FOR 'FOCUS AND DIRECTION'

- All ten participants expressed how Sounding Out gave them a focus towards a more positive future when released from prison
- Two participants realised employment opportunities that arose through direct involvement with Sounding Out and The Irene Taylor Trust
- Sounding Out successfully supported participants to avoid reoffending behaviour, by providing a positive alternative and being surrounded by supportive staff.

5.3 PRACTICAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Improvements in three areas of practical and social skills were described by participants and staff: Musical ability; Patience and group work; Personal and professional relationships.

MUSICAL ABILITY



**"It's time for me to perform
A star within me now born
On a stage with the lights on
Now I'm the man you always knew I could be"**

Lyrics from 'Make it One Day'

Whilst it was common for participants to have some musical experience prior to the programme, eight participants reported an improvement in their musical abilities:

“Definitely holding the bass is getting better. Holding it further up the neck and my speed is starting to get back up again.” (Roger, Cohort 3 Participant)

“Learned a lot about writing music, it’s ignited my passion for the keyboard again, the piano, that’s helped me as well with my music production.” (Peter, Cohort 2 Participant)

For Mark, the impact of Sounding Out was that **“they took us to a next level”** musically:

“I’ve learned a lot from them musically even though I come from a musical background but with music you always learn ... you have to keep up with the new technology, the new era music and what not, so I’ve learned a lot from them.” (Mark, Cohort 2 Participant)

Staff also reflected on the different levels of musical ability, particularly within Cohort two, concluding that participants’ musical ability improved regardless of previous experience:

“I think with cohort two it’s quite a wide range of abilities to begin with, some very proficient musicians, several grades, that kind of thing. Some just starting out. But both have developed within that.... I think even the most proficient ones would say, if they’ve done a Making Tracks project, that that has developed their skills as musicians.” (Tom, Staff)

For the musicians facilitating the process, the beginning of the programme could be a challenge with participants who had less of a musical background, but resulted in big increases in musical ability:

“Looking at the project at the beginning, it sounds like a building site musically, because they’re just non-players. And by the end of it they’re doing the stuff, they’ve written these songs and lyrics, it’s as good as it’s going to get, it’s often of a really high quality.” (Gareth, Musician)

Staff noticed how the process of writing and playing together had helped the musicians improve throughout the programme, even for those with previous experience. They also mentioned the impact of leadership and tutoring. Ellie and Gareth talked about how they trained participants to be music instructors and how this developed them as musicians:

“...our project team works with and gives these new musicians, the former prisoners, the skill to assist the project team in helping the group create music. ... They’re now not being instructed, they’re doing the instructing.” (Ellie, Staff)

“So I did see in that, watching these guys then lead projects, and over a few projects with us, began to step more and more into the mantle of being a leader, as opposed to just awaiting instructions from us, ‘go over there and work with that guitar section because you’re a guitarist’. Taking the initiative and going and doing these things, proposing ideas.”
(Gareth, Musician)

The improvements in musical ability reported here support findings from other recent research on music programmes in community justice settings (Caulfield et al., 2018). As noted elsewhere in the findings of this current evaluation, improvements in ability/capability are related to other positive outcomes.

PATIENCE AND GROUP WORK

Four participants described how the programme had helped them become more patient, particularly through working in a group setting, learning new techniques to remain calm when trying to develop new skills, and learning to compromise in certain situations:

“Working as a team. I was so used to being on my own music wise; integrating into a band was quite difficult because of musical differences and things. It taught me to work around that and come to compromises.” (Scott, Cohort 2 Participant)

Liam had become involved in tutoring young people through Sounding Out, and reflected on how this required both patience and a willingness to overcome challenges, but also that the patience he had developed was a transferable skill for every day interactions:

“Teaching people as well, it’s given me a lot more patience, a lot more focus and drive in life to achieve different things. And not to be scared, and try things different, things that you might not be comfortable in, in different situations.” (Liam, Cohort 2 Participant)

Staff also noticed that participants displayed patience. Gareth gave the example of one participant who tutored a young offender as part of the programme:

“I saw him form a very strong bond at this project we did ... He played bass with him all week, taking a really non-glamour gig, not getting involved in song writing, corrected every wrong note and pointed at the finger board for where his fingers should be. I thought he’s taken a massive step here to do this, that’s really hard, to have that degree of patience.”
(Gareth, Musician)

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS



*“My family, they help me, I’m pleased they are mine,
I’ll have my friends around me, I’ll be just fine”*

Lyrics from ‘Getting Out’

Four participants referred to the positive impact that engaging with the programme had on their relationships with friends and family. Jack particularly noticed the impact on his relationship with his children:

“My children feel definitely proud of the fact I’m doing it, they’re musical themselves. ... My son’s trying to pursue a life musical too, so it’s a good way for us, it’s opened a new channel for us to bond through.” (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

The opportunity for family members to come to gigs and see the band perform was a particular source of pride for Peter and his family, and was in itself a catalyst for his family to come together:

“It made an impact on all of us, to see Peter there and to see how happy he was and confident. Yeah, we know it was all because of this [Sounding Out].” (Anne, Parent)

Peter’s mother, Anne, also described the difference she had observed in his communication skills since starting the programme:

“During this time, it’s been lovely, it’s helped our relationship a great deal because we’ve got more to speak about because it’s more positive, I can then you know try to encourage him to do more positive things that he didn’t think he was capable of doing.” (Anne, Parent)

With regard to professional relationships, developing communication and networking skills were an important part of Sounding Out. One member of staff described how these communication skills could transfer to other contexts, such as employment, and used the example of Jack’s recent appointment as a tutor for a music project:

“I’m thinking about that guy specifically who is doing the Spitalfields thing. Transferable teamwork and communication skills, he would probably say he learnt a good deal working with us and he’ll soon find out those are transferable.” (Ellie, Staff)

The networking opportunities that Sounding Out afforded them were highly appreciated by three participants:

“That was pretty cool networking amongst different criminal justice sector, third sector staff everyone was so impressed.” (Brian, Cohort 3 Participant)

“There will be a lot of people from the charity industry today and from the Ministry of Justice, they’ll be coming in and asking us some questions, so it’s all great. I didn’t think before my imprisonment I’d have the chance to do these things, I feel very lucky and privileged.”
(Mark, Cohort 2 Participant)

KEY FINDINGS FOR ‘PRACTICAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS’

- Eight participants described developing new, or rediscovering previous, musical ability and learning new skills
- Staff supported the view that all participants, regardless of previous experience, improved their musical ability and skills
- Staff and participants noted an increase in level of patience, particularly when working in a group setting
- Some participants described improved relationships with family and valued the networking opportunities available.

5.4 PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT IN SOUNDING



**"I'm going to take it day by day
Seize every opportunity that comes my way"**

Lyrics from 'Make it One Day'

Overall, participants have engaged well with the Sounding Out programme, with five of eight participants from Cohort 2 and all five participants from Cohort 3 still regularly engaged in programme delivery and/or in communication with staff. However, staff highlighted that levels of engagement in the programme have been mixed:

"It depends, you've got some who have engaged really well, some who have engaged, but have engaged on their terms, and some who haven't engaged." (Natalie, Staff)

Both participants and staff mentioned some key factors that can affect successful engagement. Importantly, these relate well to the initial recruitment criteria set out in the programme. These are discussed below under the following headings: Passion for Music; High Quality and Professional Programme; The Right Time; and Paid Opportunity.

Passion for Music



**"Stand out from the crowd,
Because music is the air we breathe,
That laughter is a sound"**

Lyrics from 'Turn My Life Around'

First, all of the participants described having a passion for music. Alongside giving participants a focus, this passion appears to be a key motivation for joining the programme.

"It was a bit of a no-brainer. It's something I enjoy, music is something I have a passion for."
(Brian, Cohort 3 Participant)

"Because I love music, I think music is one of the best things for anybody, that's struggling with mental health issues. Or that's not struggling with mental health issues, they've got other issues, other bits and pieces, like drugs and stuff, music keeps me busy."
(Roger, Cohort 3 Participant)

Eight participants described significant past musical experience, some of whom stated that Sounding Out allowed them to rediscover this passion.

"Having been involved in music for a while, in the past, during my younger days, it actually brought me back to my first passion which is music." (Ed, Cohort 3 Participant)

"I was classically trained as a kid ... it's something I'd been very busy with in my youth and then haven't done so much since. So something I was familiar with and excited to get back into It's re-awoken something within me." (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

Two participants explained having an interest in music but less of an opportunity to get involved before working with the Irene Taylor Trust in prison.

"The Irene Taylor Trust came in [to prison] and done a creative project for like a week and did a performance at the end ... I went along to attend the performance. I was amazed at what kind of sound they were producing with rank amateur musicians who had never really picked up instruments before. Yeah, just really impressed ... All of a sudden, music just became a lot more accessible, clearly it can be done, let me give it a go." (Brian, Cohort 3 Participant)

"I got interested in music while I was in there [prison], and we actually formed a band inside and carried on, met some really nice people ... and yeah it just seemed so much fun, so enjoyable, I learnt a lot that I wanted to carry it on when I got out." (Liam, Cohort 2 Participant)

Two staff members, one of which had previously worked closely with the Irene Taylor Trust inside prisons, supported a passion for music being a key component but not a necessity for participants to get involved or stay engaged:

"...most people would already have an interest in it before they go and get involved. I did see a few people with Music in Prisons who just wanted to try something out, try something new, learn an instrument. I would say they were just as successful; they threw themselves in and engaged really well, which was nice." (Lucy, Ex-prison staff)

"...having an interest in music is a key pulling factor in terms of their engagement; but one guy we've had disengage, he's really interested in music, but he's chaotic, and not ready to face the chaos or to ground himself." (Natalie, Staff)

HIGH QUALITY AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMME

The second key aspect promoting engagement in Sounding Out is the high quality of the programme. Six participants praised the quality of facilities, professional and inspirational venues, and professional atmosphere:

"I've done this with similar kinds of means inside, but it's different outside. We've got a proper studio, with a view to performing at a gig, or a pub." (Brian, Cohort 3 Participant)

"Oh, amazing! It was chapels, churches." (Liam, Cohort 2 Participant)

One participant explained he nearly didn't engage with the programme, expecting the quality to be sub-standard:

"I just got a letter would you come in for an interview, and I nearly said no.... I didn't think the quality would be there as to what it has been, and it's been a brilliant experience."
(Aaron, Cohort 3 Participant)

Speaking about the quality of the programme, Tom – a member of staff – explained the high standards they strive for:

“As an organisation we pride ourselves in things being of a really high artistic value, and that’s the same in prison and in the community. ... We work with really good musicians, we expect really high quality outputs, in turn that gives people a lot of confidence and self-esteem, having a full room of really good musical equipment and really professional musicians ... I think that high quality, high-end stuff makes people really excited and gives people a lot of worth.”

(Tom, Staff)

Five participants made suggestions of how the quality of the programme could be improved in relation to equipment and recordings if the budget was available to do so. This included: developing an instrument procurement service to allow participants to practice between sessions; re-recording of songs as the band develops; and more studio time.

Previous research in community justice settings has found that the perceived quality of music programmes, including the settings and the staff, is an important factor in engagement (Caulfield et al., 2018).

THE RIGHT TIME

Third, three members of staff considered there to be an appropriate time for participants to engage successfully in the programme:

“There were a couple of drop-offs for various reasons that I don’t think were due to the project, they were due to do with other factors coming in and it just not being the right time for them to do it.” (Ellie, Staff)

“Timing and attitude is really key. ... I think it’s always going to be the nature of it works for some, and it doesn’t for others, and it’s not the right time for others. Even a lot of the guys on the project, would tell you ‘if I’d have done this six months earlier I’d have run off’.”

(Natalie, Staff)

One staff member reflected on why two participants disengaged with Sounding Out, discussing both gaining employment and group composition.

“...he got a job. ... He didn’t want to go backwards, he wanted to go forwards, it [being around people he was in prison with] reminded him a lot of being in [prison].” (Natalie, Staff)

In addition to the participants being ready to commit to such a programme, another challenge raised by one staff member is the best time to start the programme given the varying release dates of potential participants. He suggested a more varied programme of activities could be one option towards solving this problem:

“I think it’s a bit prohibitive trying to get all ten to do all things throughout the whole course of the project and that’s to do with the fact I can’t get ten people all ready at the same time, stuff happens, things change, people might not be suitable for everything. So I wonder if it would

make more sense to have more opportunities, or more things going on, but not have everyone do all of them.” (Tom, Staff)

PAID OPPORTUNITY

Finally, three participants highlighted the fact that Sounding Out was a paid opportunity (contributing towards travel costs, lunch costs and funding relevant courses), to be a key component to facilitate engagement in the programme that may not otherwise have been possible due to other commitments and challenges faced upon release from prison:

“To be honest with you, if it wasn’t [paid], it just wouldn’t be viable. ... As much as I would do this for fun, it’s just giving up that amount of time when you have commitments, financial commitments, it’s the only way that it could be viable for me.” (Brian, Cohort 3 Participant)

However, one participant expressed being paid to take part was an added bonus rather than a key factor in participating. Two staff members believed supporting participants’ involvement in Sounding Out through a wage to be an integral part of supporting participants to reintegrate into society:

“Doing everything you can just to make it as easy as possible for them to come, providing them with food, getting them so they get paid to attend, they get like a daily wage.” (Tom, Staff)

“They get paid. So I think that’s definitely a motivating factor. ... Yeah, finances is a big thing for people in terms of reoffending, it’s a massive risk factor especially when they’ve left prison.” (Natalie, Staff)

KEY FINDINGS FOR ‘PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT’

- Having a passion for music was a common factor for all participants that engaged with Sounding Out
- Participant engagement was supported by the high quality of the programme (including musicians, venues and equipment)
- Staff identified there to be a ‘right time’ for participants to engage in Sounding Out, and that external influences can have a huge impact on participant engagement
- Being paid is an important factor to facilitate engagement in the programme, due to the financial pressures of daily living upon release.

5.5 EXPECTATIONS OF SOUNDING OUT

BOUNDARIES: MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS WITH, AND EXPECTATION OF, PARTICIPANTS



**"There's going to be a long road to come
I took it slow, I'm not going to run "**

Lyrics from 'Make It One Day'

All of the staff highlighted the importance of ensuring clear expectations of both the programme and the Trust are set out at the start of the programme:

"I think clarity is really important on every level, musical clarity about why we're doing what we do." (Gareth, Musician)

"We're very clear now about managing expectations in what we can do, some people might think we can do lots more than we can." (Ellie, Staff)

Natalie explained her hopes for each participant engaged in the programme:

"Ideally, having every one of them not reoffend as a key factor, supporting every one of them in to some sort of ETE [employment, training and education] stuff, seeing them flourish and getting something out of it, having a sense of community, that's the ideal, that's always the aim really." (Natalie, Staff)

Whilst participants described the programme's impact on reoffending, employment and training, and relationships, they did not recall these as expectations when starting the programme. Participant expectations of the programme varied. Six participants had clear expectations that they would make and perform music:

"Basically my expectations are to make as much music as possible, to make as many genres of music, to broaden my horizons as much as possible." (Roger, Cohort 3 Participant)

For one participant this was based on previous experience in Music in Prisons:

"I'd already got a sample of what they did, I was expecting more of the same, just people playing music, trying to perfect...or improve as a musician." (Brian, Cohort 3 Participant)

Two participants had no expectations going into the programme:

"I just went into it blind. I thought 'Band? What does this entail?'" (Peter, Cohort 2 Participant)

The expectation of music being a key focus of the programme echoes what the staff believed the participants most enjoyed and fits well with the remit of the Trust:

"I think we had to be very realistic about what we can do, music is our expertise, and that's how we wanted to support them." (Ellie, Staff)

“I think they much preferred the performance aspects, some of them have really enjoyed learning how to deliver Making Tracks project and speaking at events and stuff, but I think a lot of them are very performance focused.” (Tom, Staff)

Four participants spoke of the programme and associated outputs exceeding their expectations:

“I didn’t know we were going to end up playing at Shepherd’s Bush Hall, and then doing this video, the split-screen project, I didn’t know all these things.” (Mark, Cohort 2 Participant)

Whilst participants’ expectations of learning, creating and performing music are generally realistic, Tom and Ellie explain that there is a balance in what can be expected of the Trust through the programme. For example, limitations around the number of gigs and promotion it is possible to support:

“...‘are we going to market ourselves as a proper band, are we going to sell our CD, are we going to become rich and famous?’ That isn’t something we do as part of the project.”
(Tom, Staff)

Sounding Out staff highlighted how important it is to manage any unrealistic expectations:

“We’re learning that people kind of zone in on people who are kind to them, and somehow attach themselves and expect things that as a small organisation that’s primarily focused on music, that we can’t help them with. So at that point we just have to hope that the other agencies come round and kind of join us in supporting.” (Ellie, Staff)

Indeed, Natalie emphasised the boundaries and line that facilitators have to walk:

“It’s a fine line in my work, you want to build that relationship with them and be open with them coming to you if they have a problem, to be completely non-judgmental and listen, but also, especially when working with people with offending history, you have to call them up on stuff ... So you’re really approachable, but also not their mate.” (Natalie, Staff)

This is clearly a complex issue. Working with individuals post-release from prison – and acknowledging all of the challenges that come with that – creates a need for Sounding Out staff to manage these relationships carefully, ever mindful of participants’ wellbeing and engagement with the programme.

EXPECTATIONS AFTER PROGRAMME ENDS

An important element for future consideration is how the programme ends for cohorts, as expectations for the end of the programme raised conflicting perspectives. Generally, these reflect the thoughts from Cohort 2 participants and staff. It would be interesting to explore the expectations of Cohort 3 further when they near the end of the Sounding Out programme, to compare whether these differ between music cohorts that are formed inside and outside prison.

There were mixed feelings about the duration of the programme. Three participants and a family member said they wished it would last longer, but respected this was a funding issue:

“My only issue I suppose would be that there isn’t more of it going on, and that’s a funding and external issue.” (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

“Only that it didn’t last long enough, that’s the only negative I can see.” (Anne, Parent)

Although Sounding Out is designed to be a two year programme, its fluidity with different start dates could mean some participants feel the programme is too short, as Scott described:

“We were on the cohort for a year. It just didn’t seem long enough, it went so quick. Maybe an eighteen month or a two year cohort, if that’s feasible.” (Scott, Cohort 2 Participant)

Staff understood this was one frustration of the participants. However, Tom explained that compared to other programmes in the sector this is of substantial duration:

“Other organisations are always impressed with the length of the programme, I think there’s stuff out there that does some short term interventions which are obviously really good because it catches them at a difficult time, but to be engaged with someone, for two [years], most likely and often longer with us, that’s really impressive to keep them engaged for that long.” (Tom, Staff)

Three staff expressed their expectations that the programme would give participants the skills to be independent:

“...the idea is to make people self-sufficient and not to always be there for them, to encourage them to inspire and fly for themselves, is the idea.” (Ellie, Staff)

Staff respected this often needs to be a ‘delicate’ conversation that ensures participants understand the reasons why it must come to an end and alternative ways for them to engage:

“You sort of just have to explain, we’re not saying we won’t do anything again, we want to keep working with you, but we do need to make sure the opportunities are shared round.”
(Tom, Staff)

Despite aiming to prepare participants to be independent by the end of the programme, two participants from Cohort two noted that this may not have transpired fully through the programme:

“They take ex-prisoners to a next level musically, but once you finish the course there is no support there.” (Mark, Cohort 2 Participant)

Whilst only a short way into the programme, all participants in Cohort 3 spoke about wanting to stay involved with the Irene Taylor Trust, and to give something back to the programme:

“...whatever comes up, if they ask me to do something, I’ll do it, because this thing has been good to me. The Trust has been good to me.” (Aaron, Cohort 3 Participant)

Realising this desire to stay involved, Tom commented on future opportunities that could arise for previous participants:

“We’ve had things where we had cohort one come back and be a bit of a mentor to cohort two. So I think as we get more people, thinking about creating roles for them and finding ways we

can engage them ... but in terms of physical projects and opportunities that is going to have to become less.” (Tom, Staff)

KEY FINDINGS FOR ‘EXPECTATIONS’

- Six participants had clear expectations of the focus being on the music and performance elements of the programme
- It is important that staff manage participant expectations of the support staff can provide throughout the programme
- Participants are very keen to stay involved with the Irene Taylor Trust for longer/ for future opportunities. The expectations of what happens at the end of the programme need to be managed and communicated carefully.

5.6 RELATIONSHIPS

Participants and staff made frequent reference to the relationships between staff, musicians and peers.

STAFF GO ABOVE AND BEYOND

Eight of the ten participants expressed their appreciation of the wider pastoral support provided, often stating that the staff go ‘above and beyond’ to support them:

“They go above and beyond just teaching you music. They become more someone you can reach out to, someone neutral that doesn’t know your family or friends and you can get a load off your chest.” (Liam, Cohort 2 Participant)

Three programme staff also highlighted the importance of the pastoral support, but recognised the intense time commitment this can often require. Staff identified that there was an on-going capacity issue and that the Trust reacted and created an additional post to provide the necessary support:

“...because a big part of it [Sounding Out] is the ongoing support that [Natalie] gives. I’m aware that [Natalie] has been very stretched recently so we’ve put something in place for her and [Tom] to feel less pressured.” (Ellie, Staff)

“From what I’ve heard and I always hear it, everyone loves [Natalie] and her role and the interaction that she has with them is invaluable, because you’ve got someone on your side.” (Sophie, Musician)

Natalie and Tom noted that building relationships between participants and staff early is important to successfully recruit and engage participants. Ellie and Natalie also expressed feeling that

familiarity and continuity with the programme and relationships is an important factor for participant engagement:

“The key thing about that creative week is the fact that it relates back to what they did in prison, so it’s familiarity. So we’re not asking them to do something completely different, we’re inviting them to meet some of the same workshop leaders they’ve already met.” (Ellie, Staff)

Another aspect of Sounding Out raised by four participants and three staff was importance of the non-judgemental environment in participants’ continued engagement.

“It’s quite liberating, you’re part of a community that’s free of judgement.”
(Ed, Cohort 3 Participant)

“We don’t have any judgments of any of the participants who come along, as I said we start from a clean state.” (Sophie, Musician)

EXPERIENCED MUSICIANS

The opportunity to work with experienced musicians was highly valued and discussed by five participants:

“I’m living my dream because we got to work with really, really experienced musicians ... the best thing for me is to be able to work with professional musicians who are our mentors.”
(Mark, Cohort 2 Participant)

“They could be playing anywhere in the world, but they take their time out to go into prisons. It takes a special kind of person to do things like that.” (Liam, Cohort 2 Participant)

Similarly, the staff musicians highlighted how they valued the relationships that developed with participants during the programme. For example, Gareth explained a valuable moment he shared with Mark on a Making Tracks project:

“I told him this, ‘it’s great having you here, your input is so valuable, you’re a real asset to the team on this project, I’m grateful and I thank you for it.’” (Gareth, Musician)

Participants also appreciated that the musicians were able to strike a balance between developing ideas but allowing participants to feel they retained ownership:

“...they’ve guided us in song writing, but we’ve very felt much ownership of the whole process, if we don’t like something, we’ll do something else, that’s how it goes and we’re not forced to do anything, certainly.” (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

“...people are expressing themselves so that’s got to be important. The music and the lyrics should be coming from, ninety percent of it, should be coming from the participants.”
(Gareth, Musician)

The approach to Sounding Out delivery and relationships built during the process supports the development of intrinsic motivation through providing opportunities for participants to have autonomy and interact with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000).



**"The music we made
The words we sang
The songs we played
Was the day it began"**

Lyrics from 'The Day It Began'

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEERS

Working as a group is a key aspect of the Sounding Out programme, as expressed by four staff and nine participants. When participants were asked to describe their favourite part of the programme, all participants from Cohort three mentioned working as a team, sharing experiences and meeting other musically minded peers:

"...make you automatically feel like you're part of the family. That bit's very important for me, it's being around these people, good vibes, good people." (Roger, Cohort 3 Participant)

Cohort two differed as they had met whilst in prison. They explained how Sounding Out helped to keep the group together:

"It's kept me friends with the people I was inside with and with this band, which helps all of us make sense of coming out and starting again." (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

Whilst Cohort two felt a strong bond as a band due to forming inside prison, the staff, particularly the musicians, found this presented challenges to programme delivery:

"I would say not knowing each other has made a stronger band. I found the second cohort was quite set in their ways ... just the challenge of the second cohort, just the resistance against change was a bit tricky to navigate." (Sophie, Musician)

Jack explained why he felt the group work through music is important:

"It's probably better than other arts for that, because it's more of a group process, it involves conversations as part of the process, verbal as well as musical conversation. Which other arts are more insular, painting and sculpture and stuff, you don't require any sort of networking or communication, music specifically there's a communicative aspect to it that would benefit a lot of prisoners." (Jack, Cohort 2 Participant)

Ed suggested wider interaction with peers in other cohorts could strengthen the impact of the programme:

"I think we should share the experience more with more people from different cohorts, at the moment it's cohort by cohort, it'd be interesting to see if the other cohorts would mix at certain points, just to broaden the comradery and the experience as well." (Ed, Cohort 3 Participant)

Developing new and existing relationships have been suggested to be hugely influential in supporting participant behaviour and attitudinal changes (Anderson et al., 2011; Bilby et al., 2013;

Cursley, 2012; Cursley & Maruna, 2015). The participant-art facilitator relationship is particularly powerful. Newman (2002) suggests that participation in creative programmes reduces risk factors and increases protective factors, including social support (Cursley and Maruna, 2015) and new role models in their peers and art facilitators (Viggiani et al, 2013).

KEY FINDINGS FOR 'RELATIONSHIPS'

- Building and establishing relationships early whilst inside prison is important to provide familiarity and continuity before, during and after the programme
- The staff involved, particularly the pastoral support provided as part of the programme, is a key contributing factor to participants' continued engagement
- Participants valued the knowledge and experience of highly respected musicians, but also that they were given ownership over developing their music
- Working with peers was considered an important component of Sounding Out.

5.7 PARTNERSHIPS

The key partners referred to during the interviews were often linked to the early stages of recruiting participants from the criminal justice system – Musicians in Residence and staff working in the criminal justice system. Staff also discussed the importance of ensuring the reputation of the Trust builds as relationships are developed.

MUSICIAN IN RESIDENCE

Participants were asked about how they came to be involved in Sounding Out and the referral process. The process varied for different individuals, including: receiving a letter; being referred; and asking about other opportunities with the Irene Taylor Trust when engaged in a prison project.

The role of staff (Musicians in Residence) working in prisons as advocates for the Irene Taylor Trust and the Sounding Out programme was clear in the interviews with participants. Musicians in Residence were able to advocate for Sounding Out by sharing their knowledge of the programme:

"I worked with him for a while ... he was affiliated with the Irene Taylor Trust. Kind of saw what I used to do, used to do a lot of youth work in that prison, he knew about that, he said there's a project called Sounding Out, you'd be perfect for it. He basically made the referral."

(Brian, Cohort 3 Participant)

One staff member noted that, *"the relationship that you have with somebody inside prison, will get them to come to your programme outside of prison"* (Ellie, Staff). However, one participant noted that the need for a referral was not entirely clear:

“The only criticism I do have is that it kind of is a bit awkward. It’s a bit misunderstood. You have to have a referral. I didn’t know you’d have to have a referral, until I was told by [Tom] that I need a referral, so maybe a little explanation on the phone that you need a referral. That was explained eventually.” (Roger, Cohort 3 Participant)

The introduction of Musicians in Residence was part of a strategy to link projects in prison and Sounding Out, and seen as key to increasing the number of referrals. The concept was supported as important by all staff and also noted as a good idea by a former member of prison staff:

“Musician in Residence, having that link would be really important. Well you say they do have it, so I think that is a really good idea. That sort of level of consistency and continuity is really important.” (Lucy, Ex-prison staff)

Interestingly, the referral process appears to differ substantially for Sounding Out than many other arts programmes in criminal justice. In our experience as evaluators, programmes often put considerable work into advertising programmes and sometimes engage in a ‘hard sell’ in order to get enough participants. However, Sounding Out participants explained that this was not the case with this programme:

“I didn’t really sense it was a hard sell. It was just look, it’s a great project, I think you’d be perfect for it, give it a go, it was left up to you to decide and take that step. I think it got a few guys that way.” (Brian, Cohort 3 Participant)

Ellie, a member of the Sounding Out team, emphasised that while referrals often came from the relationships that developed with participants in prison, the work getting participants involved in Sounding Out only really began post-release:

“...if somebody is released and they feel it’s something that they really want to do, the Musician in Residence will get in touch with [Tom], and [Tom and Natalie] would go speak to them, that’s when the relationship starts to be really properly nurtured.” (Ellie, Staff)

CRIMINAL JUSTICE STAFF

When thinking about their time in prison, participants spoke about how apparent it was when staff (particularly senior staff) in the prison were supportive of the Irene Taylor Trust:

“When the governor heard us playing it, he came and he said that there’s this charity called Irene Taylor Trust and he said that he’s going to be inviting them to the prison to basically listen to us, and maybe they can give us some support.” (Mark, Cohort 2 Participant)

Outside of prison, it was clear that the engagement of criminal justice staff was crucial - in a very practical sense - to support participants’ ability to participate and engage:

“...and they’ve extended the hours for my tag, liaising with the prison and my probation officer which is fantastic.” (Colin, Cohort 3 Participant)

This was highlighted by members of staff, who explained that one project could not have taken place without these relationships:

“...most of the people on cohort 2 weren't actually released, and we managed to get them ROTL [release on temporary license] to come on the acoustic project, that was a manoeuvre, that again was dependant on the relationships with the prisons, which is really good.”

(Natalie, Staff)

“We worked with someone who was still on license which meant he had a curfew, and the project, because he didn't live in London, it meant I needed to speak to probation to get his curfew extended for that project. So within that I'd be liaising with the probation worker and the prison because the prison need to approve that.” (Tom, Staff)

Lucy – a former member of prison staff - explained how important it is to manage relationships with prisons, as partner agencies, appropriately and that the Irene Taylor Trust are skilled at this:

“...the way that Irene Taylor Trust have managed that relationship, where they, I want to say demanding, but that has negative connotations, I mean demanding in a good way, they know what they want.” (Lucy, Ex-prison staff)

Indeed, the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships with partners was highlighted by a member of staff:

“...it's the relationships as well, everything needs to be going hand in hand to make the whole programme work. So if we were to transfer it we would build our relationships in the new area very strongly beforehand.” (Ellie, Staff)

While the value of individual relationships with criminal justice staff is discussed above, the main challenge to successful delivery of Sounding Out was identified by staff as the criminal justice system more broadly. Staff spoke in detail about challenges accessing prisons to work in, the impact of relationships with prisons on participant recruitment, and the impact of changes to the prison service:

“We wanted to really establish relationships in three prisons with intensive projects and Musicians in Residence, the idea of a best case scenario was a Musician in Residence and a six-month intensive project, a lovely flow of people and naturally people being released at some point, they'd all be released into London and Sounding Out would be flourishing with lots of people. And of course things happen in prisons which make it impossible to do. Now the three prisons we've started with are about to be completely different than the ones we thought were going to happen.” (Ellie, Staff)

“...a range of different things from governors changing, our first one we thought he was very supportive, he approached us, he was willing to contribute financially to the programme and that was an agreement with Big Lottery that each prison would financially contribute, he then retired and the governor changed, he didn't want to contribute and didn't want to do week intensives, because it was a working prison and that meant the men wouldn't be working if they were doing something creative. So that had to go.” (Tom, Staff)

Finding prison and probation staff to champion programmes, and the individuals taking part in them, is often not straightforward. This was emphasised by Colin who – despite having personally

experienced the practical benefits of an engaged member of criminal justice staff – highlighted that this was not his usual experience of staff in the criminal justice system:

“There are a few people who genuinely want to rehabilitate people, but there are a lot who can’t be bothered. That’s my opinion and that’s my experience.” (Colin, Cohort 3 Participant)

This was echoed by a former member of prison staff, Lucy, who noted that current issues faced in the prison system present challenges for organisations like the Irene Taylor Trust, which is likely to impact on referrals and support:

“The problem I think at the moment is that prisons don’t feel very sustainable. So I think it’s such a changing environment.” (Lucy, Ex-prison staff)

However, she did also highlight that there are some staff, particularly newer staff, who do clearly see the value of the work of the Irene Taylor Trust and other similar organisations. She noted how the Irene Taylor Trust approached working in a prison setting in a realistic and understanding manner:

“Something the Irene Taylor Trust were always good at, it was [Tom and Ellie] that I worked with, and they were persistent but also very understanding, they didn’t take any shit from us but they also got that it was really hard to run a prison and that we were doing the best we could.” (Lucy, Ex-prison staff)

Interestingly, staff found it more straightforward to work around issues with probation:

“Not so much with probation, we can carry on actually if probation isn’t too tip-top. If I can engage well with the probation officer, that’s always beneficial to the work. You can link up.” (Natalie, Staff)

THE IMPORTANCE OF REPUTATION AND RELATIONSHIPS

While the importance of individual relationships was discussed above, to facilitate recruitment to the programme, and support participant engagement, the importance of relationships more broadly on the success of the organisations were highlighted. Staff talked about the significant time investment in relationship building:

“This whole job is about relationships, whether it’s about the relationships with people on the ground, the relationships you have with your staff, the relationship you have with your funders, the relationship you have with prisons. It’s built on trust.” (Ellie, Staff)

In terms of continuing to sustain funding for the programme, these relationships are key:

“...having to explain to funders that XYZ happened, but we think these things can come out of it because it isn’t common to be able to say this was perfect, wasn’t it? ... That’s where the relationships come in, that’s where the honesty comes in, but I still think we’ve got a fantastic programme here.” (Ellie, Staff)

Concerns over funding were just as apparent with the Sounding Out team as much of the voluntary sector. While Sounding Out has been funded in its entirety until now, there will always remain concerns about where future funding will come from. Work to secure funding is continuous:

“There might be an organisation which is just up for performance of new music, they might fund the creative week and part of the final gig. So then it’s up to [Irene Taylor Trust Staff], to juggle all these bits of money, and of course prisons, we went in with a contribution we thought prisons could afford over a long-term basis. Some were able to give us more than we wanted, whilst others were able to give us none, now it’s all coming down to this kind of level. So it’s a big juggling act and at any point we see a gap in the budget we need to go elsewhere to fill it.”
(Ellie, Staff)

In terms of limited funding, relationships with venues were also highlighted as vital to the existence and continuation of Sounding Out. Some community venues offer free or reduced rate rehearsal and performance spaces.

“The community partners are a big thing, also because we don’t have huge amounts of money to spend on venues.” (Ellie, Staff)

Staff spoke about the time spent in developing and maintaining these relationships. The considerable effort that goes into working with large venues means it is only possible occasionally:

“I’ll be liaising with whoever the venue is that I’m booking the project in, our musicians who deliver the project, if we’re doing a gig somewhere else, that venue, working closely with the Personal Development Co-ordinator to make sure they’ve got that sort of wrap around support during it.” (Tom, Staff)

“Most of the time we can’t do those proper venues, because we don’t have the infrastructure to support doing those kind of events on an ongoing basis, also once you do too many of those kinds of events they start to become less special.” (Ellie, Staff)

KEY FINDINGS FOR ‘PARTNERSHIPS’

- Musicians in Residence provide an important link between the prisons and Trust to promote referrals to Sounding Out and support a natural transition into the programme upon release from prison
- Prison staff and probation officers can have an important practical role to facilitate participant engagement in the programme
- Build relationships based on trust with a variety of community partners that can support delivery of the programme through funding, access to venues, and wider pastoral support.

6. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY

Overall, it appears that Sounding Out has achieved its aims and was received very positively by participants, staff and family members. The report provides evidence of the effectiveness of the music programme in relation to ex-prisoners' motivation, aspirations and hopes; developing communication skills and relationships; increased levels of wellbeing and self-confidence; and supporting reintegration into the community.

The results of this evaluation support findings from previous research on the impact of music in criminal justice and limited previous research with ex-prisoners in the community. It is clear that the majority of participants experience Sounding Out in a way that is beneficial for their confidence, wellbeing, social skills and musical ability. This supports previous findings that participation in creative activities increases confidence and social skills (Baker & Homan, 2007; Bilby et al., 2013; Bruce, 2015; Cheliotis, 2014; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008), musical ability (Caulfield et al., 2018), as well as reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors for mental health and wellbeing, including social support (Cursley & Maruna, 2015).

The findings demonstrate how Sounding Out can support former prisoners to take positive steps towards reintegration into society, through providing a focus on music and opportunities for personal development. The relationships built are vital; music facilitators provide new role models (Viggiani et al, 2013), whilst involving family members can build up their relationships to provide further social support and stability upon release from prison. Previous findings have also shown that arts-based programmes can support secondary desistance through participants creating new identities and refocussing their lives (Anderson et al., 2011; Bilby et al., 2013; Cartwright, 2013; Caulfield et al., 2016; Cursley & Maruna, 2015). Effective delivery of Sounding Out combines participants' passion for music with a professional quality and paid programme. Indeed, previous research in criminal justice settings has also found the programme quality to aid successful engagement and promote positive outcomes (Caulfield et al., 2018). Importantly, the approach to Sounding Out delivery and relationships built during the process supports the development of intrinsic motivation through providing opportunities for participants to have autonomy and interact with others (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The challenges discussed in this report around working with the criminal justice system are not unique to the Irene Taylor Trust. In 2018, the Justice Select Committee highlighted that fewer voluntary sector organisations were working in rehabilitation since the 'Transforming Rehabilitation' reforms were introduced. Clinks (2018) highlighted that voluntary sector involvement in rehabilitation has become 'unsustainable and required many charities to dip into their own reserves to maintain services'. The findings presented in this evaluation provide a clear example of the challenges faced by voluntary sector organisations, highlighting how changes to the criminal justice system impact on the ability of organisations to effectively and efficiently deliver their services. The examples presented in this report – while not surprising to those working in the sector – should be held up as an illustration of the significant challenges, how they impact on the delivery of services, the resource implications for organisations, and ultimately outcomes for beneficiaries. The

contribution and benefit to the voluntary sector to of the criminal justice system is well documented (Meek, Gojkovic, & Mills, 2010). The evidence of impact of Sounding Out presented in this report clearly support this, further evidencing the role that the voluntary sector can play in the resettlement of former prisoners.

Voluntary sector organisations working in the criminal justice system face particular challenges, especially in responding to a changing and often underfunded environment. This means that – as highlighted in this report – considerable time might be spent on relationship building, only for staff to change and consequently new relationships need to be built from scratch. In addition, voluntary sector organisations working in the criminal justice system are often completely dependent on contracts for survival, the nature of the work meaning they ‘cannot therefore rely on the steady flow of donations’ (Meek, Gojkovic, & Mills, 2010).

Providing support for former prisoners ‘through-the-gate’ is important to aid resettlement and reduce risk of reoffending. However, a 2017 inspection of statutory ‘through-the-gate’ services identified that they were not working (HMIP & HMIP, 2017). Providing a programme as a continuation of relationships that have been developed in prison allows for continuity of support, aiding resettlement and rehabilitation. Sounding Out works on exactly this principle. Stability and support are required to help ex-prisoners develop ‘news skills and patterns of behaviours and turn their lives around’ (Nacro, no date). The data presented in this report suggest that Sounding Out is a valuable tool in helping former prisoners develop the skills and confidence needed to live crime-free lives. It is important to note that the evaluation was not designed to measure cost or to assess cost benefit. However, given the clear benefit of these programmes to individuals at risk of re-offending (and the very high levels of re-offending for those leaving prison), the balance is very likely to be in favour of the Sounding Out programme.

Leaving prison and attempting to resettle in the community poses many challenges. Ex-prisoners can often find themselves isolated, without money, job opportunities or clear prospects, and struggling to find a direction in life. Sounding Out is responsive to these challenges. The Sounding Out programme directly responds to the challenges faced by ex-prisoners as they attempt to resettle in the community, supporting individuals to develop the ‘skills, attitude, and self-belief’ to live positive and independent lives in the community (Nacro, no date). The Irene Taylor Trust have a Personal Development Coordinator (PDC) to support their programme beneficiaries. To build upon the positive impact on resettlement achieved through the Sounding Out programme and the PDC, we recommend that participants are clearly signposted towards resettlement guidance services (such as Nacro), to help identify the direction their lives could take next. Building consistent and trusting relationships is an important part of successful resettlement (Catch 22, no date) and the trust and relationships built through Sounding Out provide an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of other ‘wraparound’ services, at a time when participants may be particularly able to engage with other services (skills, attitudes, & self-belief improvement). However, this engagement should be about awareness raising and not an additional responsibility for the Sounding Out team: successful resettlement in part depends on individuals being encouraged to take personal responsibility (McNeill & Weaver, 2010).

A pilot evaluation of Sounding Out reported key elements of the programme that should be continued included high profile venues, payment for participation, personal development support

and relationships/partnerships with probation and other voluntary organisations (Cartwright, 2013). Our findings support these elements being key to the programme's success. The pilot evaluation also suggested a number of recommendations (Cartwright, 2013). These included extending the length of the programme, formalising the recruitment strategy, and incorporating past-graduates into other aspects of the programme. The Irene Taylor Trust implemented all of these recommendations, which demonstrates their flexible and responsive approach. The findings of this current evaluation support the importance of continuing these recommendations and developing them further, particularly in relation to recruitment and considering future opportunities for past-graduates to be involved. These are explored further in the recommendations presented below.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings presented in this report clearly demonstrate that Sounding Out is functioning very successfully and has a positive impact on beneficiaries. Elements of the programme that are particularly important to the success of the programme, and are important to maintain, include:

- The high quality of the provision, including working with professional musicians and working in excellent venues, and the length of the programme
- How valued beneficiaries feel. This stems from the respectful relationships developed with staff, but also includes the value placed on the quality of the provision provided
- The 'wraparound' support available from the Personal Development Coordinator and other staff
- Engagement with Sounding Out was enabled - in practical terms - by the relationships that the Irene Taylor Trust staff developed with criminal justice system staff
- The development of trust, in supporting beneficiaries in the move from prison into the community. The work in the prison, and by Musicians in Residence, is crucial to underpin the later work through Sounding Out.

THE IRENE TAYLOR TRUST (PROJECT TEAM)

The recommendations below are aimed at enabling the Irene Taylor Trust to continue to be flexible and responsive to change, to have an even greater impact.

- **Ensure expectations about Sounding Out are clear to potential participants.** Examples from previous Cohorts could be used in spoken or written literature to inspire potential participants, and emphasise the commitment required. The team should aim for a clear overview, but avoid too much detail.
- **Ensure the aims of Sounding Out are clear to new participants.** This could be as straightforward as stating what the different programme stages/activities will be, and the skills and achievements the team hope participants will gain through the programme. This should also include ensuring clarity about the length of the programme. It would also be of value to enable participants to build in their own aims and expectations at the start of the programme.
- **Consider working towards a rolling participant recruitment cycle.** We acknowledge the adaptations the team have already made to support this, and the associated challenges discussed in this report.

- **Continue to build upon the Personal Development Coordinator role and function.** It is important to balance expectations around support post-project, particularly from a small team, with participants' longer-term needs, to ensure the value of the project is not lost. We recommend clearer signposting towards resettlement guidance services (such as Nacro). This might also apply to the spaces between sessions.
- **Further develop the referral procedure.** The Musician in Residence scheme is working well, but the process could be developed to more actively 'sell' the programme to potential participants. While it may not be possible to bring current/former participants into prisons, 'case study' material could be used. Continue to push for advocates in prison staff teams.
- **Ensure that appropriate training and support is available for staff to manage boundaries with participants.** Working with potentially high-need individuals can be challenging, especially where close working relationships are developed. This can be emotionally challenging for staff.
- **Explore opportunities for ongoing roles for former Sounding Out participants.** Many participants expressed a desire to stay involved and give back to the programme they felt benefited them.

We also recommend:

- **That follow up interviews with Cohort 3 participants be conducted in a year's time.** This will help to explore whether impacts and expectations at the end of the programme differ with a cohort that is made up of individuals, compared to a pre-existing band formed in prison. The findings in this report suggest that Sounding Out may bring greater benefit for individuals entering the programme.
- **The development of a logic model and/or theory of change,** to highlight how the process maps onto the impacts evidenced in this report. This could be useful when engaging with partners and demonstrating all the elements of the project, the impact and why their support is necessary for the programme to maximise its success.
- **In future funding bids, consider seeking investment in new technology.** Music production software may be of particular interest to younger participants.
- **That Trustees and advocates of the Irene Taylor Trust fully utilise their networks and relationships to continue to build relationships for Sounding Out.** Relationships with external partners are key to every aspect of the project from recruitment, to rehearsals, performances and wider opportunities available throughout the programme.
- **That the Irene Taylor Trust share these findings and recommendations,** to share learning and highlight the benefits of the programme to the resettlement of former-prisoners.
- **That a cost-benefit analysis be conducted** to demonstrate the costs to funders and the criminal justice system, and thus add weight to its inclusion in prisons.

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The findings presented in this report highlight the impact of Sounding Out on prisoner reintegration. Sounding Out provides continuation of relationships, continuity of support, positive activity and focus, which aid resettlement and rehabilitation. The data presented in this report suggest that

Sounding Out is a valuable tool in helping former prisoners develop the skills and confidence needed to live crime-free lives.

We recommend that:

- **Criminal justice policy makers and leaders advocate the value of programmes like Sounding Out in supporting prisoner reintegration and rehabilitation.** We recommend this takes the form of policy briefings, and active guidance to criminal justice staff on making the most of the offer from the voluntary sector.
- **When changes of leadership occur in prison, governors formally recommend continued support for programmes like Sounding Out.** The benefits Sounding Out can bring to prisoner reintegration are clear, and prison governors can play an important part in advocating and facilitating continued relationships between prisons and organisations.
- **Relevant funding streams are identified** through existing mechanisms such as education commissioning or new funding streams for bespoke programmes.
- **Metrics monitoring equity of access for people likely to benefit from the programme** are included to secure delivery of Sounding out and related programmes. Metrics in line with those used for activities such as education and employment would be beneficial.
- **That criminal justice staff continue to work to facilitate beneficiary access to programmes like Sounding Out.** The practical examples presented in this report – Release On Temporary License and varying bail conditions – highlight the important part criminal justice staff play in ensuring beneficiaries can fully engage with programmes.
- **Prisons identify a named member of staff to work with the Irene Taylor Trust to identify participants for Sounding Out.** Sounding Out works with prisons and probation to support resettlement and aid rehabilitation. Prisons could make the most of the opportunity by working more closely with Irene Taylor Trust staff and Musicians in Residence.

FUNDERS

The recommendations below are aimed at aiding funders to make decisions that most effectively support organisations like the Irene Taylor Trust, and allow them to flourish.

- **Recognise the value of Sounding Out in delivering outcomes for individuals** and the potential for cutting the costs of crime to families and communities.
- **Appreciate the importance of investment in relationship building** programmes like Sounding Out. Relationship development is fundamental to the success of Sounding Out, but also very time intensive.
- **Be receptive to requests for longer-term support**, either for whole projects or elements of projects.
- **Encourage organisations working in the criminal justice system to seek funding for capacity building.** The significant challenges of working with the criminal justice system, as highlighted in this report, requires investment in organisations that goes beyond the remit of individual projects.
- **Provide a level of flexibility in funding arrangements to enable organisations to be responsive to changes in the criminal justice system.** This might include where considerable time has been spent on vital relationship building, only for prison staff to change.

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