

Evaluation by:
Inclusion

Report compiled by:
Lydia Finnegan
Mike Stewart

An evaluation of the Sue Ryder Prison Volunteer Programme November 2012

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“It has taught other workers, and me to some extent, to be more accepting of people and less judgemental initially. The prison volunteers I have worked with have mainly proved the negative stereotypes wrong.”

Shop manager

Acknowledgements

Inclusion would like to thank all the programme coordinators, shop managers, volunteers and prison staff who gave up their time to take part in the fieldwork for this evaluation. They spanned a broad range of locations from southern England up to Scotland.

Inclusion is grateful to the Prison Volunteer Programme coordinators who govern the programme in Southern England and Wales, Northern England and Scotland for their cooperation and support during the preparation of this report. The authors would also like to thank Callum Miller, Research Assistant at Inclusion, for conducting fieldwork and helping identify the key themes. The identity of all research participants has been kept anonymous.

Lydia Finnegan

November 2012

Inclusion
Third Floor
89 Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7TP
Email: lydia.finnegan@cesi.org.uk

1. Introduction

Sue Ryder¹ is an international charity providing health and social care in local communities. The charity provides a range of person-centred services to people with long-term and end of life care needs and their families.

In the UK, Sue Ryder offers a broad menu of services including:

- support for people living with complex neurological conditions, such as multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease, in six specialist care centres
- expert palliative care in seven hospices
- community-based nurse specialists, befriending and home-care.

The charity's international work includes support for cancer sufferers in Albania and mobile health clinics in rural parts of Malawi where no other healthcare is available.

Sue Ryder employs over 3,000 staff and engages 10,000 volunteers across the UK. It has over 400 shops and an online store generating £36.6million a year². The shops benefit from an extensive network of volunteers for staffing.

Since 2006 Sue Ryder has been running a Prison Volunteer Programme (PVP) which supports the rehabilitation of currently serving prisoners by offering volunteering placements in its shops, warehouses, workshops and offices. These prisoners are reaching the end of their custodial sentence and are released on temporary licence. The programme has been supported by a range of funders.

With the existing funding programme coming to an end Sue Ryder secured funding from The Bromley Trust to undertake an independent review of the PVP. The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (Inclusion) was selected to undertake this work. It is a leading non-governmental organisation dedicated to tackling disadvantage and promoting social inclusion in the labour market. It has considerable experience and expertise in both the employment and criminal justice fields³.

¹ www.sueryder.org

² 2011–12 Annual Report and Accounts

www.sueryder.org/About-us/Trustees-reports-and-financial-statements

³ www.cesi.org.uk/research

2. The Prison Volunteer Programme

2.1 The PVP was established in 2006 to contribute to the rehabilitation of serving prisoners and to provide Sue Ryder with additional volunteers to increase the scope for generating additional income in support of the charity's care services. The prisoners are released on temporary license to undertake work across the organisation. They undergo rigorous assessment to ensure they are ready and that it is safe for them to go out into the community to undertake work placements. When they have satisfied the requirements they can make a choice about their placement according to their interests and what their future career hopes are. Many choose placements with Sue Ryder due to the charity's positive reputation amongst prisoners, its willingness to place prisoners in hands-on front-of-house roles and the relevant work experience it can provide.

2.2 The programme was initially established as part of a strategic plan to broaden the diversity of volunteers in Sue Ryder shops. The aim was to encourage more young people and men to volunteer and to try to make the shops more ethnically diverse. The person leading the review⁴ had a background working in the restorative justice field and she developed the idea for the programme. The programme initially worked with adult men and later expanded its remit to include women and young offenders.

2.3 The main objectives of the programme are to:

- contribute to Sue Ryder's business model by raising money for its care work from the additional volunteering time provided by prison volunteers in the charity's shops, warehouses and offices
- support the prison service in its resettlement objectives
- provide work experience to a vulnerable section of society who might otherwise have very limited opportunities in the labour market.

2.4 As the programme has developed a range of benefits have been noted:

- the shop volunteers are a more diverse group; there are greater numbers of male and younger volunteers. This in turn has been reflected in greater diversity in the customer base⁵
- there has been a positive effect on staff recruitment. Applicants for jobs across the organisation find Sue Ryder's engagement in initiatives such as the Prison Volunteer Programme, inspiring
- the programme has won a range of awards which has helped increase the charity's profile⁶
- the volunteers are demonstrating that they can contribute to society and the programme helps to reduce the stigma prisoners often face
- those managing the volunteers have experienced increased job satisfaction.⁷

2.5 The programme has grown and delivered over 50,000 volunteering hours from volunteer prisoners in the first half of 2012 alone. It works with over 40 prisons across the UK, offering work experience in 100 locations at any one time including shops, offices and warehouses. Around 250 volunteers pass through Sue Ryder every year.

2.6 An internal survey was undertaken in 2011⁸ to measure how the prisoners felt about volunteering with Sue Ryder. The response was overwhelmingly positive and key findings included:

- 94% had been offered formal job training opportunities
- 78% rated the experience as excellent
- 94% felt the programme gave them a sense of achievement
- 100% would recommend the programme to other prisoners.

⁴ Tracey Mealing, then Head of Volunteer Development and Engagement

⁵ Reported by Shop Managers and Coordinating staff during interviews

⁶ The Scottish Charity Partnership Award 2012, Personnel Today's Corporate Social Responsibility Award 2011, Volonteurop's Active Citizens of Europe Award 2011 and Business in the Community's East of England Right Step Award 2011.

⁷ Reported by Shop Managers and Coordinating staff during interviews

⁸ Prison Volunteer Programme, Survey Results 2011. See also Appendix 4. www.sueryder.org/PVPsurvey2011

3. Methodology

3.1 The scope of the evaluation was determined by the resources available. The key factors taken into account in determining the methodology were:

- the need to incorporate the views of the three key stakeholders i.e. Sue Ryder senior management and shop managers, the Prison Service and the volunteers
- to obtain a representative sample of work experience locations in terms of the areas they operate in, the type of prison they work with and how long they have been participating in the programme
- combining the views of participants with the evidence of outcomes.

3.2 After discussions between Sue Ryder and Inclusion it was agreed that the key evaluation questions were:

- is the programme working for all partners, i.e. Sue Ryder, the Prison Service and the volunteers?
- what do partners think the volunteers have learnt in terms of both soft and technical skills?
- has the scheme affected the prisoners' interpersonal relationships and interactions and how have their behaviours and attitudes changed?
- do partners have any suggestions for further development of the programme?

3.3 The methodology chosen used a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures:

Qualitative

- 23 semi-structured interviews undertaken with prisoners, prison staff and shop managers from a range of locations across the UK
- an evaluation visit to one programme site to conduct two in-depth interviews with the shop manager and volunteer and to witness the programme in action
- three in-depth questionnaires completed by the programme coordinators for Southern England and Wales, Northern England and Scotland.

Quantitative

- analysis of number of volunteering hours per region and the monetary value of these
- analysis of the costs of Sue Ryder's care work to demonstrate the programme's contribution.

Copies of topic guides, questionnaires and detail on the Sue Ryder PVP survey are available in the Appendices.

"I can't directly say sorry to the people I've hurt but now I'm putting something back into the community."

Prison Volunteer

4. Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative data has been analysed in terms of the key themes that emerged from the responses of stakeholders to the topic guide questions.

4.1 Self-esteem and confidence

Prison staff, shop managers and the prisoners themselves all felt that the confidence of the volunteers had grown as a direct result of the work placement. For many of the participants, a lack of self-confidence and nervousness around interacting with members of the public had been a significant barrier.

“My whole attitude has changed since I’ve been with Sue Ryder and I’m a lot more positive.”

“When you’re inside you forget things such as how to speak to the public.”

“Dealing with people was not a skill set I had before.”

These comments are typical of the responses from the prison volunteers. Comments such as these were commonplace across participant interviews. Being able to confidently engage with customers and gaining confidence in their own ability to do the job was developed over the course of the placement.

“Sue Ryder has helped me with my confidence and now I feel I can do anything!”

For many of the prisoners the scheme helped to improve their general outlook on life and their hopes for what they could achieve after their Sue Ryder placement.

One volunteer explained that her confidence had grown to a point where she is now confident enough to take criticism and wants to be told where she has gone wrong so that in the future she can improve and carry out tasks more efficiently. This represented a stark contrast to how she felt when she began the scheme; she was afraid of public places and felt very vulnerable.

The reactions of the volunteers’ friends and families to their participation in the scheme also helped build the volunteers’ confidence. One volunteer in Scotland explained that when his family saw him choosing a different path and taking to it ‘like a duck to water’ they had renewed faith in his abilities.

Building self-esteem and the confidence to engage with colleagues and members of the public is a vital tool on the path to employment. It is clear that for those volunteers for whom this was a problem, they are being given the chance to grow and re-socialise which, in turn, will help with their future employment prospects.

4.2 Working in a ‘real’ environment

Some volunteers welcomed the sense of normality they gained from leaving the prison to work in the shops. Many felt the routine helped them to adjust to what going back to work would be like after release:

“I like the sense of normality and the working routine... leaving the prison facility is very surreal at first...getting into a job with members of the public...but eventually you get used to it and are privileged.”

The views of prison staff supported this. They explained why they value the realistic working environment Sue Ryder provides:

“After approximately six months inside, they develop ‘jail speak’ whereby their communication skills are very poor and they keep very little eye contact...for the prisoners the main advantage is that it gets them into a routine that makes the transition into society when they are discharged easier.”

One prison officer explained how highly regarded the scheme is in terms of its ability to deliver a ‘real world’ environment:

“Sue Ryder is one of our best placements, it provides realistic work experience and there are real jobs on offer.”

4. Qualitative data analysis (continued)

Not only does the scheme provide a realistic work environment which helps prepare prisoners for what they will face upon release but it also helps prison staff assess who will have difficulty readjusting and who may be in need of extra support:

“For the prison it provides opportunities to see how the inmates adapt to freedoms and if they can be given that responsibility.”

Providing a work placement, such as this one, in an unsheltered environment helps prepare prisoners for the life skills they will require in order to cope after prison. In an environment where the provision of through-the-gate support is a persistent challenge in delivering services to offenders, the programme is also providing continuity for those few who continue to work for Sue Ryder post release.

4.3 Skills

Whether an individual has had previous work experience or not, a wide variety of skills can be developed through the scheme. These can include use of the till, data entry, handling customer complaints, ordering goods, stock control, dressing the display, dealing with members of the public and even people management.

For those with limited work experience the programme can teach a broad range of skills in a relatively short time period:

“I had never worked before so this was all new to me... Sue Ryder has shown me all the skills I know.”

The programme not only develops the skill set of the volunteers but also that of the shop managers. They also explained that the programme had given them the opportunity to develop their own skills in management and problem solving.

Whilst the majority of prison volunteers work in the shops, there are a small number of opportunities in other locations such as the Sue Ryder Head Office. One volunteer explained how he has been working for six months at the office, helping with the bid team to reply to tenders for funding.

This volunteer appreciated developing a different skill set which involved constructing surveys and collating information to strengthen the charity financially:

“I really value the placement as it is intellectually challenging.”

The skills prison volunteers can acquire through the programme represent something for everyone and encompass both the technical skills required for the management of a shop, and the sorts of soft skills which are a necessary step on the path to securing sustainable employment.

4.4 Equality

Many participants expressed how happy they were to find that the other shop staff treated them as equals and appeared to have no preconceptions about them joining the team.

The shop managers understood the importance of this; one explained how he had witnessed how important it was for prisoners to feel trusted again. A volunteer broke down into tears over the enormity of someone trusting her enough to let her handle cash. She appreciated the manager treating her as he would any other member of staff by entrusting the shop takings to her.

This level of equality extends to all areas of the work placement; the freedoms and the boundaries. One prison officer explained to Inclusion:

“We’ve asked Sue Ryder to use the same disciplinary code they use with other volunteers.”

The mutual respect project stakeholders have shown each other has led to good working relationships and friendships being formed. One shop manager highlighted this:

“Everyone at the shop missed the first volunteer when he left.”

One volunteer explained how his family at first were concerned about how he would be treated but he was pleased he could tell them that he was treated like anyone else and that all the shop staff worked as a team.

A key reason this scheme works so well is the fact the prison volunteers are placed into a non-judgemental environment where they are supported, trusted and treated as equals by the shop staff and programme coordinators. They are also given the same boundaries to work within, so they do not receive any ‘special treatment’ to mark them out as different.

4.5 Support

All the prison volunteers Inclusion spoke to felt they were supported by both the shop staff and the Sue Ryder coordinating staff. Where some staff managers admitted during interview that they had had reservations before the scheme started about employing prisoners, it was certainly not evident to the prisoners themselves.

In a rare case where the placement had broken down for one prisoner due to personal reasons, she explained how, after returning to closed conditions for a short spell, she was supported into finding a placement at another shop.

“If all goes well I’ll be there for seven months until my parole hearing is due.”

This demonstrates the ability of the Sue Ryder staff and the prison resettlement coordinators to use their partnership effectively to ensure the prisoner’s relationship with the charity does not break down unnecessarily and that they have a second chance at fulfilling a work placement. This was echoed in a comment by a prison officer who felt that Sue Ryder adapted well to the changing needs of the prison:

“Prison staff visit the shop every 2 weeks to check everything is ok for both parties. Sometimes the prison has changes, such as changes to licence conditions; Sue Ryder is always good at adapting.”

Meaningful support is provided across the partnership. Prison officers feel that they are receiving the help they need in guiding prisoners through the project.

“[Sue Ryder] managers and staff are excellent; they provide good feedback on the prisoners which is very helpful for them when they’re coming up for parole. The programme is very well managed. Sue Ryder provide us with two reports, a performance report for us and one specifically for the parole board.”

4. Qualitative data analysis

(continued)

Another prison officer described the care and attention the coordinating staff gave to helping allay fears about the programme:

“The programme coordinator and shop area manager visit regularly. Some shop managers have been apprehensive about starting the scheme so they were taken on a tour of the prison so they could get a better understanding of the backgrounds of the prisoners and the conditions they live in. All the managers came.”

In addition to the coordinating staff being supportive in helping the shop managers deliver the programme, the prisoners themselves are providing vital support to the managers in the shops:

“The main difference is the presence of a full-time worker.”

The shop managers can profit from the continuity the prisoners provide which they cannot always rely on from other volunteers. For those shops that benefited very little from volunteering time from the general public, a reliance on prison volunteers meant that the shops could struggle when waiting for new placements. One shop manager explained that:

“...a waiting list scheme would be beneficial in these instances.”

It is clear that wherever there is a prison volunteer in a shop, additional work is getting done and vital support is being provided to the permanent shop staff. What enables this process to run smoothly is the support network that has been created between the prison, the Sue Ryder shop staff and programme coordinators. Arrangements are in place so that any issues that arise can be dealt with promptly and each partner can rely on support from the partnership.

4.6 Changing perceptions

A small number of shop managers explained that they were apprehensive before the scheme began. They had reservations about what sort of people these volunteers would be and were worried about choosing their words so as not to offend them or draw attention to their offending background. The shop staff dealt with these initial concerns sensitively. The prisoners themselves were not aware of this being an issue.

One shop manager explained how her perceptions changed:

“...He’s just a young guy that went wrong. My perception before was that they’re all criminals and that they deserve to be in there [in prison].”

She went on to say that she developed an appreciation of how any one of us could find ourselves in their situation given the wrong set of circumstances. She said she had learned not to be judgemental and that she sympathised with the volunteer when she saw how young he was:

“Being the mother of children his age...there but for the grace of God go I...”

She felt the benefits of the scheme had been communicated effectively to her by Sue Ryder and that it was about giving people a second chance.

Another shop manager explained that it was not only his perceptions which changed as a result of having the prison volunteers in the shop, but also those of the other staff and volunteers.

“It has taught other workers, and me to some extent, to be more accepting of people and less judgemental initially. The prison volunteers I have worked with have mainly proved the negative stereotypes wrong.”

Even the coordinating staff, whose role it is to ensure the smooth running of the PVP, found it rewarding to have their preconceptions challenged:

“I thought I wasn’t judgemental when I took up the role, but I have realised that I was. I now try not to judge without being armed with all the facts and circumstances.”

This resonated with another coordinator who explained:

“I have learned that it could be me in prison.”

It is not only the perceptions of staff that are being changed through this programme. The prisoners themselves are seeing sections of society in a different light:

“I would never have dreamt of having a conversation with a 70 year old woman before this, if I saw her in the street she’d probably avoid me for thinking I’d mug her, but it’s a real eye-opener.”

The programme is building links between different age groups and genders. In this way it is not only helping a marginalised section of society but it is fulfilling its hopes of boosting diversity.

4.7 Commitment to Sue Ryder

Participation in the scheme has fostered a great deal of respect for Sue Ryder among many participants and a commitment to working hard for what the charity does. One volunteer said:

“I would work seven days if I could!”

Another claimed the only thing she didn’t like about the programme was:

“...that I can only work five days and not six!”

Some participants are hoping to achieve paid work with Sue Ryder on release. This will be possible for some. Others felt that whilst they realise there might not be enough jobs available for everyone to get a job at the end of their placement, it has fostered a commitment in them to look for work in the charity sector upon release.

One volunteer explained that he would never have considered volunteering before and often wondered why people did things for free such as running marathons for charity. He said he gave it a go and really enjoys it. Being on the scheme has opened his eyes to new opportunities. He began to understand how he could help other people through his work and began to stop looking for opportunities that solely benefited him.

“You’re working for something at the end of the day.”

A prison officer corroborated this:

“Feedback from all the prisoners is really positive. All enjoy it, not one said they haven’t. Some have stayed on rather than get paid work which shows the level of commitment they have.”

It is hard to imagine a more fitting testament to the popularity of the scheme, and the commitment of the volunteers to the charity’s cause, than the decision to turn down paid work elsewhere to continue volunteering at Sue Ryder. During the course of the interviews, three volunteers explained how they had the opportunity to apply for paid work but preferred to stay where they were.

4. Qualitative data analysis

(continued)

One volunteer felt that it also made her feel as though she was making reparation to society for her crimes:

“I can’t directly say sorry to the people I’ve hurt but now I’m putting something back into the community.”

She went on to say:

“I had been in and out of prison for ten years; a lack of motivation made me offend...but having a placement like this has put me on the right path.”

Sue Ryder is helping to motivate people who have previously had problems staying motivated in a work environment. This increased level of motivation has also translated into commitment to the work of the charity.

4.8 Progression and future plans

The programme has generated a small number of real opportunities for participants to gain paid work with Sue Ryder on release from prison. In addition, for many, it has developed their ambitions for securing work either in retail or the third sector.

One volunteer described how he had worked in Sue Ryder shops around the country and how the organisation had responded to his skills and his speed at learning the ropes. Having done an initial six week period in a shop in one area he explained:

“...I was moved to work for four months in a struggling shop as I had made a good impression. From there I moved to a paid job in [another area] as a Sales Assistant.”

This demonstrates how Sue Ryder has responded to volunteers who have worked hard by making the necessary arrangements for a participant to progress within the organisation and benefit post release. This participant felt it gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his work ethic and therefore to gain a suitable reference for future employers.

Some volunteers said that they would not have considered a career in retail or the third sector before beginning the placement with Sue Ryder and now they were inspired to seek work in this field upon release.

“It made me look at a career in retail. It felt like you were giving something back instead of just taking. I didn’t feel like I was contributing before.”

One prison officer explained that the programme also provided a vital function for those who were not necessarily looking for a career in this area. Some were hoping to learn a trade but did not yet have the pre-requisite work experience or reference to be accepted onto their scheme of choice:

“It’s a stepping stone for the lads, whereby the initial placement can provide them with work experience and an employer reference from Sue Ryder. They may then go on to other more appropriate schemes which they would not initially have been accepted onto.”

The scheme is providing people with hope for the future. It is helping those that were unsure about their future career path to make decisions about the areas of work they would like to go into, whilst furnishing those who want to work in a different sector with the chance to prove themselves to future employers.

4.9 Communicating success

A great deal of work has occurred to publicise the programme and awareness is increasing. One of the aims of this evaluation is to help confirm the progress that is being made to enable Sue Ryder to communicate its success more widely. As part of their daily work in coordinating the programme, Sue Ryder staff:

- deliver presentations to area shop manager meetings
- deliver one to one training in the shops and prisons
- attend employer fairs in prisons
- visit prison wings and explain the programme to individual prisoners
- deliver presentations to governors
- promote the programme at external volunteering events, on local radio and at care centre open days
- developed a promotional DVD which is available on YouTube and the Sue Ryder website
- sit on the Employers' Forum for Reducing Reoffending as a Leadership Member.

The level of promotional work generated by the small team of programme coordinators is impressive. The word has been spread and Sue Ryder is currently in talks with more prisons who are interested in taking part and more prisoners are enquiring about the scheme. However, as one coordinator explained:

“The public don’t know a lot about the programme.”

Another coordinator said:

“The public... I have addressed, have all had the same concerns as our staff, but again this is based on a lack of knowledge. When the programme is explained they are very supportive.”

Sue Ryder recognises the need for greater public awareness of the scheme. Almost all shop managers we spoke to said that members of the public who came into the shop were not aware of the scheme or that there was a prison volunteer working there. Whilst volunteer privacy must be taken into account above all else, greater publicity of the scheme amongst members of the public would help to counteract public concern around offenders.

“We have worked with numerous charities and have found the Sue Ryder scheme to be the most beneficial and the most understanding of inmates.”

Prison Officer

4. Qualitative data analysis

(continued)

Summary of qualitative analysis

There was a strong consistency in the views expressed by the project's stakeholders.

In broad terms:

- shop managers felt they were receiving worthwhile additional help in fulfilling their daily tasks – and some could rely on their prison volunteers to fulfil an assistant manager role. All shop managers observed changes in the volunteers over time including increases in confidence and take up of skills learnt on the job. The prison volunteers provided them with valuable additional support
- prison resettlement staff valued their relationship with Sue Ryder as being one of the best placements they could send prisoners on. Many were hoping to send greater numbers of volunteers through the scheme in the future
- the prison volunteers felt they had learnt a great deal and many were grateful for the trust placed in them by the charity.

Building **self-esteem** and the **confidence** to engage with colleagues and members of the public is a vital tool on the path to employment. It is clear that for those volunteers for whom this was a problem, they are being given the chance to grow and re-socialise which, in turn, will help with their future employment prospects.

Providing a work placement, such as this one, in an unsheltered environment helps prepare prisoners for the **life skills** they will require in order to cope after prison. In an environment where the provision of through-the-gate support is a persistent challenge in delivering services to offenders, the programme is also providing **continuity** for those few who continue to work for Sue Ryder post release.

The skills prison volunteers can acquire through the programme offer something for everyone and encompass both the **technical skills** required for the management of a shop, and the sorts of **soft skills** which are a necessary step on the path to securing sustainable employment.

A key reason this scheme works so well is the fact the prison volunteers are placed into a non-judgemental environment where they are **supported, trusted and treated as equals** by the shop staff and programme coordinators. They are also given the same boundaries to work within, so they do not receive any 'special treatment' to mark them out as different.

It is clear that wherever there is a prison volunteer in a shop, additional work is getting done and vital support is being provided to the permanent shop staff. What enables this process to run smoothly is the support network that has been created between the prison, the Sue Ryder shop staff and programme coordinators. Arrangements are in place so that any issues that arise can be dealt with promptly and each partner can rely on **support from the partnership**.

The programme is building links between different age groups and genders. In this way it is not only helping a marginalised section of society but it is fulfilling its hopes of **boosting diversity**.

The scheme is providing people with **hope for the future**. It is helping those that were unsure about their future career path to make decisions about the areas of work they would like to go into, whilst furnishing those who want to work in a different sector with the chance to prove themselves to future employers.

Greater public awareness of the scheme could benefit the rehabilitation agenda. Almost all shop managers said that members of the public were not aware of the charity's work in this area. Volunteer privacy must be taken into account above all else, but greater publicity could help to counteract public concerns and change preconceptions.

5. Quantitative data analysis

5.1 Analysis of volunteering hours

The available data supports the qualitative information recorded from stakeholder interviews.

Inclusion was given access to data on the number of hours worked by prison volunteers in shops, warehouses, workshops and offices across all regions, and the monetary value of these hours based on the national minimum wage.

The South of England and Wales region has 77 shops. In the first half of the financial year 2012-13 these benefited from 31,000 combined prison volunteer hours. Based on the current national minimum wage of £6.19 per hour, this has an estimated value of £191,890.

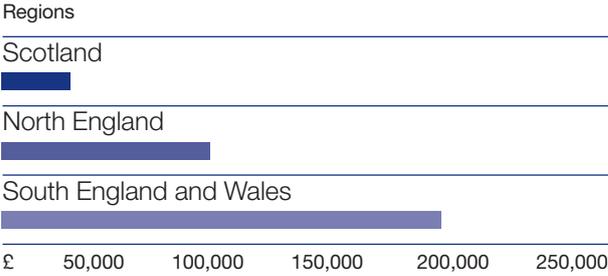
The North of England region has 30 shops which benefited from 16,865 hours in the same time period, equivalent to £104,394.

Scotland has 5 shops participating in the scheme and these benefited from 5,670 prison volunteer hours in the same time period, equivalent to £35,097.

Overall the PVP delivered work equivalent to £331,381 in the first half of the current financial year – and is on course for delivering nearly £663,000 in a full year. There is scope for increasing the scale of the operation.

This work adds value to the retail operations by significantly increasing the throughput of stock and sales. In areas where shops struggle to find volunteers through other routes this programme has made a major difference. Without the volunteer programme, total retail income would be significantly less.

Monetary value First half of 2012



5. Quantitative data analysis (continued)

5.2 What do the prison volunteers pay for?

Shop managers reported how the prison volunteers help increase shop profits:

“More work gets done with them there, sales go up. We’re actually 258% over target, all from the additional support.”

The data to quantify the specific impact on income generated that the PVP delivers overall is not yet available. However, the unit cost for the different types of services Sue Ryder delivers gives an indication of what the extra income provides:

£10

pays for a trained carer to provide one hour of care

£570

covers the cost of a highly trained nurse for one week to offer care and support to patients and families

£15

pays for a stress relieving complementary therapy session for someone living with cancer

£1,000

pays for a clinical nurse specialist for one week in the community to offer tailored support to patients in their own homes

£25

pays for two home visits for someone who has suffered from a stroke

£4,500

covers the cost of running a Sue Ryder residential neurological care centre for those with particularly challenging conditions

£50

covers the cost of a day care/therapy session for someone who suffers from dementia

£5,500

covers the cost of running a Sue Ryder hospice for the day.

£150

enables three family members to receive three bereavement sessions each at a Sue Ryder hospice

Increased volunteering hours in the shops and warehouses translate into more stock being sorted and sold. The more items sold, the greater the amount of money that can be channelled from retail into Sue Ryder’s care services. Volunteers in the Sue Ryder offices also contribute to these costs by completing vital administrative functions and helping prepare bids for funding.

5.3 Increasing diversity

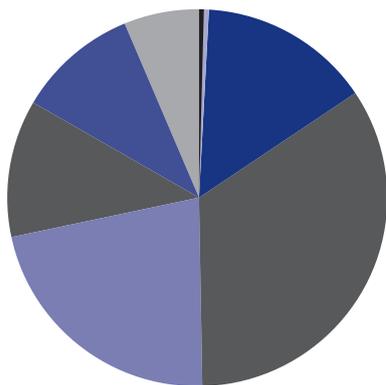
It is the intention of Sue Ryder that, as far as possible, the workforce is representative of the local communities in which the shops, warehouses and offices operate and that a diverse range of prison volunteers are given the opportunity to take part in the programme.

Upon beginning a volunteer placement, prison volunteers are asked to fill out an equal opportunities form which asks for their gender, age and ethnic minority. The pie charts demonstrate the male to female split among volunteers and their age ranges, using data from forms collected in the first half of 2012.

Whilst not all volunteers completed the forms and therefore data on gender and age is underrepresented, it shows a promising contribution to diversity made by having the prison volunteers in the work placement locations. It shows that volunteers range from 14 to 56 and over and that a large proportion of male prison volunteers are working in the shops.

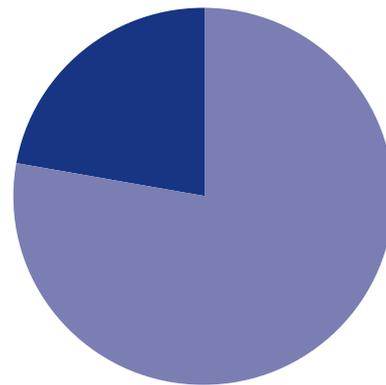
There was not sufficient data on ethnic minority on the returned forms for inclusion in the analysis. Therefore, Sue Ryder are working to ensure that as many volunteers as possible complete the forms in future so that confident statements can be made regarding ethnic diversity.

Prison volunteer age group split
First half of 2012



● 14-16	0.5%
● 17-18	0.5%
● 19-25	14.6%
● 26-35	34.2%
● 36-45	22%
● 46-55	11.7%
● 56+	10.2%
● No DOB	6.3%

Prison volunteer gender split
First half of 2012



● Male	78%
● Female	22%

6. The future of volunteering at Sue Ryder

6.1 Sue Ryder hopes to expand the programme and would like to be able to:

- increase the number of prisons it works with
- secure a nationally recognised qualification for the volunteers
- obtain high profile support to help promote the programme.

6.2 They would also like to broaden the scope of work prisoners can participate in and are currently seeking funding to be able to extend new opportunities to a greater proportion of the prison population.

6.3 Sue Ryder has recently secured funding to deliver **dementia support and awareness training** in Suffolk. It plans to involve HMP Highpoint in the project by undertaking a needs assessment and determine the extent to which prisoners could contribute. Training will also be offered to prison staff so that they can spot the early signs in prisoners and also to prisoners themselves so that they can support their families and potentially provide support in the community.

6.4 The Prison Volunteer Programme coordinators are seeking funding to set up a formal **mentoring service** and to take on a new staff member to coordinate it. They already find themselves informally mentoring prisoners on the programme and are keen to formalise these relationships by setting up a scheme which provides prisoners with mentors coming from across the organisation. A number of staff members have shown interest. The main aim would be to provide extra support to those prisoners moving into paid work with Sue Ryder after release to enable them to sustain their employment.

6.5 There are also plans to work closely with community engagement officers in prisons to enable prisoners to have a greater role in fundraising. This would involve setting up **fundraising forums** to meet regularly to generate ideas and, depending on the category of prison; prisoners may go out into the community to fundraise.

6.6 Other developments include:

- retail's new goods department are working with HMP Onley with a view to opening an eBay **warehouse and distribution workshop** in the prison
- a partnership is being set up with John Lewis and HMP Ford to develop a workshop where prisoners can learn to **refurbish and recycle** old furniture
- prisoners at HMP Send interested in **fashion and design** are learning how to make minor repairs and alterations to clothes and create new garments out of old to be sold in shops
- a **cycle workshop** at HMP Thorn Cross will be set up where prisoners can learn to maintain and repair donated cycles to sell in the shops as part of an educational course
- HMP Askham Grange run a popular **arts and crafts** scheme and are looking at ways of producing items for Sue Ryder to sell
- Sue Ryder is hoping to develop **a line of new goods** manufactured in prison. Current manufacturing would be moved from abroad to the UK to provide prisoners with an additional form of work experience
- the PVP team are also looking at the potential of being able to provide volunteers with opportunities in **health and social care**.

7. Conclusions

7.1 This evaluation set out to address the following key questions:

- is the Prison Volunteer Programme working for all partners?
- what do partners think the volunteers have learnt in terms of both soft and technical skills?
- has the scheme affected the prisoners' interpersonal relationships and interactions and how have their behaviours and attitudes changed?
- do partners have any suggestions for further development of the programme?

The responses to the surveys and interviews have enabled us to draw the following conclusions.

7.2 Is the Prison Volunteer Programme working for all partners?

The Prison Volunteer Programme represents a highly successful partnership between the Prison Service, the Third Sector and the prisoners themselves and demonstrates a valuable contribution to the rehabilitation agenda. Each partner benefits from the scheme.

Sue Ryder benefits from additional capacity which allows for more work to be done in its shops. This generates increased income which allows for more funds to be ploughed back into care work. It also contributes to Sue Ryder's corporate social responsibility agenda and helps raise the organisation's profile.

For the Prison Service, it provides a valuable option when considering resettlement for those in its care. The programme gives prisons the opportunity to test the resolve of the inmates on placement and assess the likelihood of them being able to cope upon release.

The prisoners themselves, many of whom have little or no work experience, are learning new skills and being equipped with the tools that will contribute to them staying out of prison in the future.

7.3 What do partners think the volunteers have learnt in terms of both soft and technical skills?

Every prisoner Inclusion spoke to attested to the success of the programme. Many had gained confidence and developed their self-esteem since taking part.

The programme provided an opportunity for them to work as part of a team and to develop technical skills such as book keeping, stock control and use of the till which are transferable to a range of settings.

At the very least, volunteers come away with a reference from Sue Ryder and some go on to paid work with the charity.

7.4 Has the scheme affected the prisoners' interpersonal relationships and interactions and how have their behaviours and attitudes changed?

Many prisoners who took part in the evaluation described how they felt better equipped to return to the outside world and interact with the public, including different sectors of society, such as women and the elderly.

Some explained how proud their families and friends were of them and how relieved they were to see they were working in an environment where they were being invested in and being treated as equals.

The programme developed the interpersonal skills that have opened up the doors for many to consider a career in retail or the third sector.

7. Conclusions

(continued)

7.5 Do partners have any suggestions for further development of the programme?

Over the past six years, a great deal has been gained by each of the key stakeholders of the PVP. Building on the experience gained during this period, a number of recommendations for further development of the programme were proposed during the course of this evaluation:

The Prison Service could be involved in delivering training to shop staff in preparation for prison volunteers beginning work. Prison officers are best placed to deliver training around the particular challenges that can arise from working with this target group such as raising awareness of manipulation tactics, to give one example.

It would be beneficial for Sue Ryder to explore accredited training for participants. Some of the prison staff felt this would help the volunteers secure work in the future by offering evidence of skills learnt.

Prison volunteer time provides an additional bonus to shops. It is additional to and should not be used as a replacement for usual volunteer staffing arrangements. Shops can become reliant on the programme and this can be problematic if the flow of referrals slows down.

As the programme expands and volumes increase it will be important to try to evaluate some of the key measures relevant to the policies of government departments, the Ministry of Justice and Department for Work and Pensions in particular. Establishing the impact of the programme on reoffending and employment rates will be significant factors in helping to secure the sustainability of the programme.

For similar reasons it would also be helpful to undertake a detailed analysis of the specific financial impact of the programme. Shop managers feel the programme has a major impact on shop income. It would be helpful if systems could be put in place to analyse this as a matter of routine.

This innovative model is highly transferable. Other charities with retail outlets can learn from the Sue Ryder experience to both benefit their business model and to provide work opportunities to a greater number of the prison population.

Appendices

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Interview topic guide: prison volunteers

1. How did you get involved with the Sue Ryder Prison Volunteer Programme?

Probe: were you sent on the placement or was it your choice?

2. How long have you spent working at the Sue Ryder shop?

3. What do you feel you've learnt from the volunteering scheme?

Probe: specific skills e.g. soft skills, work related skills such as use of the till, stock taking

4. Do you think working as a volunteer has helped you at all?

Prompt: If so in what ways? Confidence, self-esteem, communications, job prospects/transferable skills...

5. What aspects have you liked the most about working there?

6. What aspects have you liked the least?

7. Did you encounter any problems during the scheme?

8. If so, were these problems addressed quickly and appropriately?

9. How would you describe your relationship with the shop manager and other team members?

Probe: supportive, nurturing, positive, negative

10. Have the people you've encountered on the scheme e.g. shop managers been understanding of your situation?

11. What is your experience of Sue Ryder staff?

12. Has working in the shop shaped any future plans you might have about work or education? If so, how?

Probe: i.e. would you like to work in retail or work for a national charity like Sue Ryder? Has it inspired you to return to education to learn more skills?

13. How have people you know, e.g. family and friends, reacted to your involvement in the scheme?

14. Would you recommend the scheme to others?

15. Is there anything about the scheme that you would change?

16. Please feel free to make any additional comments.

Interview topic guide: shop managers

1. How long have you been working alongside the volunteers from the Sue Ryder Prison Volunteer Programme?
2. How many have you worked with and how many are you currently working with?
3. What is your experience of the scheme?
4. How did you feel before the placement started?
Probe: nervous, excited...etc...did you have any concerns?
5. How do you feel now?
Probe: how have your perceptions/concerns changed
6. Have you learnt anything new from working with these individuals as part of the scheme?
Probe: management skills, problem solving.
7. How would you describe your relationship with the coordinators of the scheme at Sue Ryder?
8. How have the benefits of the scheme been explained/communicated to you by Sue Ryder staff?
9. How has Sue Ryder supported you in your role and in the management of prison volunteers?
10. Do you feel you were supported adequately?
11. What has your experience been, if any, of the prison placement officer and prison staff?
12. What is your experience of reactions of the public and other shop staff to the scheme?
13. Has taking on a prison volunteer made a difference to the running of the shop? If so, how?
Probe: e.g. more work gets done, profits are increased...
14. What differences have you noticed, if any, in the competence and confidence of the prison volunteer over the course of their placement?
Probe: has the volunteer learnt new skills, gained confidence?
15. Please feel free to make any additional comments.

Interview topic guide: prison officer

1. How did you get involved with the Sue Ryder Prison Volunteer Programme?

2. How do you select prisoners to go on the scheme?

Probe: what criteria do you use?

3. What is your experience of the scheme?

4. What is your experience of Sue Ryder staff?

5. What is your experience, where applicable of shop managers and other shop staff?

6. What benefits do you perceive the scheme to have?

7. Have you noticed, or any of your staff reported to you, any change in behaviour, motivation or skills of those inmates who have taken part in the scheme?

8. How does it compare with other opportunities available to prisoners released on temporary licence?

9. What other interventions are the inmates typically accessing on the scheme? Could you give some examples?

Probe: e.g. drug treatment, CBT, basic skills training...

10. How do you see the partnership between Sue Ryder and the Prison Service?

11. Is there anything about this partnership or the scheme that you would like to change?

12. Please feel free to make any additional comments.

Coordinating staff questionnaire

1. How long have you been working on the Sue Ryder Prison Volunteer Programme?
2. What would you say the main strengths of the programme are?
3. Are there any weak areas you would like to strengthen?
4. How would you describe your partnership with the prison service?
5. How did you set about establishing this relationship?
6. How would you describe your department's relationship with the rest of your organisation?
7. How are you supported in carrying out your daily role? (E.g. by your co-workers, line managers etc)
8. What have you learnt as an individual whilst coordinating the programme?
9. How have you communicated the benefits of the scheme to the programme participants (shop managers, prison volunteers and prison staff)?
10. How have you communicated the benefits of the scheme to the public?
11. What is your experience of the reactions of the public and other shop staff to the scheme?
12. Is there anything about the scheme you would like to change?
13. What are your future plans for the scheme?
14. Please feel free to make any additional comments.

Sue Ryder 2011 shop managers and prison volunteer surveys

In 2011 programme coordinators distributed a survey to all shop managers participating in the scheme to find out how they felt about working alongside a prison volunteer and how many working hours the volunteers gave them. There were 59 respondents⁹. The survey showed:

- 97% of all shop managers said they would recommend the programme to other shop managers
- 80% have been involved in the programme for over 12 months
- 78% have a prison volunteer that works 5 days or more (some also work Saturdays)
- 64% of shop managers said their attitudes towards prisoners had changed since taking a placement

The programme coordinators also sent a survey to the shops for the prison volunteers to complete¹⁰. They were asked whether they enjoyed volunteering with Sue Ryder, whether they had received the necessary training to do their job, and whether they felt their confidence had increased since accepting a placement. There were 37 respondents. The survey showed:

- 94% of prison volunteers said they had been offered formal job specific training opportunities
- 78% of prison volunteers rated the volunteering experience with Sue Ryder as excellent with no prisoner rating our programme as fair or poor.
- 97% of prisoners said the prison volunteer programme have helped them with teamwork
- 94% believed the prison volunteer programme gave them a sense of achievement
- 69% of prison volunteers said that the experience working for Sue Ryder was more than they were expecting
- 100% of respondents said they would recommend the prison volunteer programme to other prisoners.

Important items to note from this survey are the fact that 97% and 100% of shop managers and volunteers respectively would recommend participating in the programme to peers. In addition, the fact that 78% of volunteers work five days or more in the shop contributes to the continuity and stability of the programme, both in the continued funds it can channel to care services and the realistic work environment it can provide to volunteers.

⁹ Prison Volunteer Programme – Shop Staff Survey Results 2011

¹⁰ Prison Volunteer Programme – Prison Volunteer Survey Results 2011

This independent report was commissioned by
Sue Ryder with funding from the Bromley Trust,

For further information about Sue Ryder's Prison
Volunteer Programme visit www.sueryder.org/prisons

or contact:

Carol Davis, Prison Volunteer
Programme Coordinator

Call: 07767 007 074

Email: carol.davis@sueryder.org

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