

Linking positive outcomes for young people with sustainable development

Case Study 1, March 2010

Action for Children

'Moving On Renfrewshire' Project

Young people make positive changes in their lives on release from prison



The organisation

- Action for Children Youth Services in Scotland

Programme setting, partners in development, reasons for commissioning

The Moving On Renfrewshire Project has been operating since June 2008. The current contract runs until March 2011. The project provides voluntary through care support for young males aged 16-21 who are in custody or have recently left regional prisons.

Formal partners are Scottish Prison Service, Prince's Trust, Fairbridge, Renfrewshire Council, YouthLink Scotland, and Families Outside (all represented in the Moving On Steering Group). Families Outside provides external evaluation of the project.

Funding

The project has four funding streams: Lloyds TSB Foundation, The Laidlaw Trust, The Henry Smith Trust, and The Robertson Trust. Each funding partner covers different aspects of the project with The Robertson Trust taking on the largest part and playing a significant overseeing role in co-ordinating the additional funders.

Who is the programme for?

The project works in Renfrewshire with young men who are currently in custody or have been released from regional prisons after serving their sentences. Working with partner organisations, the intention is to successfully rehabilitate young people back into their local communities within Renfrewshire.

Fifty-five young men have been registered with the project since start-up in 2008. In March 2010 there were thirty-four active clients, nineteen of whom were in the community and fifteen in prison.

as long as it takes

Purpose and objectives

Moving On supports young men to reduce their offending behaviour and to access positive outcomes such as education, training, or employment.

Specific objectives:

- Sustained or improved physical and mental well-being including reduced or stabilised substance misuse
- Maintained or improved relationships with families, peers and the community
- Increased ability to access and sustain community support, for example personal development, financial advice, education, employability, and addiction services
- Ability to access and sustain suitable accommodation
- Reduction in offending behaviour

Structure, flow and activities

Moving On provides a wide range of support services that are tailored to the individual needs of their young people to assist them in making positive changes in their lives.

The length of time Moving On works with a young person will vary as their needs dictate. As young people are often first engaged in prison, the length of their sentence will play a large part in determining the length of time they engage with the project. A case will be closed when a young person has successfully achieved long term positive outcomes and no longer needs the support. The door is always open for a young person to re-engage.

There are two core staff members in Moving On. They are aware that the diverse needs of service users cannot be addressed separately, but must be prioritised and addressed holistically. One young person stated in his regular review: *'I don't think I could have stayed away from my old lifestyle if it wasn't for the Moving On Project.'*

The formal steps in Moving On include referral, meeting, the young person's consent to participate, assessment, and the development of an action plan for each individual. The early steps are one to one, and the majority of later work is done in a group work setting.

This action plan is implemented through structured sessions by Moving On staff, and by partnership working with other organisations' services.

Typically, the action plan provides support for:

- **personal issues** like housing, benefits, substance misuse, and relationships
- **personal development**
- **progression** with and towards education, training and employment.

Part of the support for **personal development** is carried out using environmental projects in the community, and secondly by using outdoor learning provided by partners.

Environmental projects in the community

Moving On runs its own environmental projects in the community. For example:

- **'Arnott Gardens'**: a group of service users agreed to be involved in a 'Challenge Project' consisting of team-building, planning, and completing a landscaping project at a local care home. Six young people contributed 28 volunteer hours in five short sessions plus two full days completing the final landscaping project. Activities included outlining the project, assessing and developing skills as a team and as individuals, site visits, detailed role and resources planning, and then all the landscaping tasks – leading to a successful conclusion.

The Project was designed to help develop the young people's communication, planning and budgeting skills, manual handling, health and safety awareness, and employability and social skills. It also helped to build the young people's confidence and develop self-esteem.

- The **'Hell's Kitchen'** project in which four young people prepared and cooked a three course meal for 20 guests at a restaurant in Glasgow's West End. This was a huge success for the young people involved and something Moving On would like to replicate on a grander scale.
- **Moving Premises** Moving On are themselves moving their office premises. This will provide an opportunity for another real community project. The aim is to provide skills and qualifications to a group of young people including a construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) card, Health & Safety training, and a practical introduction to plastering, joinery, tiling and other trades.

Outdoor learning

Outdoor learning is used by two of the partner service providers in their own residential courses. Moving On has an annual provision of 20 places for young people on the Fairbridge Personal Development Programme and 10 places on the Prince's Trust Team Programme. In both of these programmes, alongside a range of other activities, facilitated adventurous outdoor learning contributes to developing motivation, confidence, and personal and social skills.

The Fairbridge Access course is a five-day personal development course focusing on teamwork and communication skills. Once completed, the young people are eligible for a further short course delivered by Fairbridge in Glasgow. These are all geared to progressing young people towards employment by increasing their soft skills.

The Prince's Trust Team Programme is a 12-week personal development programme which provides young people with a residential experience, work placement, and community projects. During the programme the young people will achieve a certificate in Communications and Social Awareness.

Young people are referred onto either programme if deemed suitable by staff and also the staff delivering the programmes. Often, the timing of the programme plays a large part in who can be referred due to other commitments and needs they may have.

ASDAN

Qualifications are part of the provision addressing a young person's progression to employability. Moving On created the ASDAN modules with the original purpose of meeting the needs of a group of young people who had all missed the cut-off for college courses or training courses. The modules were each delivered over three days by Moving On staff, covering skills in Healthy Living, Employability, and Cooking: aiming to provide each young person with practical skills, certificates and a portfolio to show prospective employers.

The Asdan format of recording the work completed in order to achieve the Asdan Bronze Award for each young person is a flexible approach to gaining qualifications. The Bronze award is recognised by colleges and employers.

The flexible approach described above helps to promote positive outcomes for young people with the long term plan to move young people into education, employment or training.

As part of his 6 month review, one young person said: "*Moving On has helped motivate me to find employment.*"

Young people's roles

Young people are frequently asked about their opinions on programmes and modules and these inform decisions for future ventures. Moving On are also looking into the possibility of a mentoring role for a more mature young person who has shown great improvement and could help mentor younger clients.

Outcomes and impact achieved; reasons for success

An external evaluation in 2009 reflected on the quality of the early relationships with prospective participants.

*'Initial findings showed that young people engaged readily with the project, not least because of the quality of interaction with project staff. Staff met with all eligible young people in the prison, then continued to work with those who signed up to the project both in the prison and in the community after release.'*¹

The estimated take up of statutory voluntary through care is less than 5%, whereas their engagement rate for those eligible is 92%.

The range and quality of the ongoing support once a young man is taking part was recognised in the same evaluation:

'Project staff were particularly skilled at building relationships strong enough to engage with a difficult client group and at identifying and addressing the needs these individuals had. The project workers' ability to engage and retain clients in voluntary through care is especially encouraging.'

88% of the current population of the nearby young offender's institution HMYOI Polmont are serving their second sentence, whereas 72% of Moving On clients have not returned to prison on new charges. The evaluation states:

'This is very promising, as the measures of risk of reoffending in the research suggested that the majority of the client group is very likely to re-offend.'

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¹ Moving On Renfrewshire Young Offender Resettlement Project: The first six months. Briege Nugent and Nancy Loucks. Families Outside on behalf of the Robertson Trust, 2009