



Caulfield, L.S. and Simpson, E. (2019) 'Arts-based interventions in the justice system', in Ugwudike, P., Graham, H., McNeill, F., Raynor, P., Taxman, F.S. and Trotter, C., eds. *The Routledge companion to rehabilitative work in criminal justice*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 396-408.

This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in '*The Routledge companion to rehabilitative work in criminal justice*' on 17/9/2020 available online at:

<https://www.routledge.com/The-Routledge-Companion-to-Rehabilitative-Work-in-Criminal-Justice-1st/Ugwudike-Graham-McNeill-Raynor-Taxman-Trotter/p/book/9781138103320>

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The Routledge Companion to Rehabilitative Work in Criminal Justice

Arts-based interventions in the justice system, Laura Caulfield & Ella Simpson

Arts-based interventions have a long and complex history of work within the justice system. From fine art, to drama, creative writing and poetry, dance, to music – the Art forms are many and varied, as are the areas of the justice system that have incorporated the Arts into their work.

This chapter:

- outlines the range of Arts-based interventions in the UK justice system, including case studies
- provides an overview of the varied and challenging history of Arts-based interventions in the justice system
- discusses the role and impact of the Arts in the justice system, and highlights questions that exist concerning the evidence for the use of Arts-based interventions in the justice system

The range of Arts-based interventions in the justice system

There is a diversity of arts provision in the criminal justice system, and creative practitioners come to this work from an equally varied range of backgrounds and training. From creative writing, drama and theatre, art, music, dance, the list goes on. Arts provision in the justice system takes many forms, and indeed providers often work in a number of different ways. For example, it is not unusual to see an arts organisation that works in prisons, in the community, with young people, and adults. Likewise, the type of programme any one organisation might run can vary according to the population they are working with and their focus at the time. We provide some examples later in this section.

There is no single agenda or ethical agreement concerning the purpose of arts in prisons (Thompson, 2003: 45). This is clearly indicated by the multiple delivery points of arts in prisons, through education departments (Peaker and Vincent, 1990), through therapeutically based interventions grounded in the disciplines of forensic psychology, psychoanalysis and community psychiatry (Laing, 1984; Gussack, 2009; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2012), and through the work of independent creative practitioners (Peaker & Vincent, 1990), some emerging from the radical activism of the 1970s (Johnston, 2004: 95), others embodying a conventional artistic training based around notions of fine arts and conservatoire education (Thompson, 2003: 46-47). Indeed, many creative practitioners have adapted their practices to the requirements of the professions of teaching or art therapy in order to combine their interests in art and work with prisoners. The introduction of an advocacy agenda in arts in criminal justice (Belfiore and Bennett, 2008), has seen practitioners shape their discourses, though not necessarily their practices, to policy requirements (e.g. Mer, 2012).

There are too many individuals and organisations working in this area to highlight in this chapter, so below we list a cross-section of organisations and the type of work they undertake:

Organisation	Art form	Settings/groups
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The Irene Taylor Trust	Music	Prisons, young people in the community, ex-prisoners
Geese Theatre	Theatre and drama	Prison, probation, mental health settings, with young people, with professionals
Rideout	Primarily drama	Prisons, plus European work with a range of audiences
Artist in Residence	Art	HMP Grendon (male prison)
Fine Cell Work	Creative needlework	Prisons
Making for Change	Fashion design (& manufacturing)	HMP Downview (female prison)

Case Study: Good Vibrations

Good Vibrations is a charity that uses gamelan percussion music from Indonesia that has been identified as suitable for community or group settings; it has an informal and inclusive approach; and includes a variety of instruments that can be played without any prior musical training or knowledge of musical notation. Gamelan is the term for a collection of Indonesian bronze percussion instruments, consisting of a variety of metallophones, gongs, chimes and drums. It is a particularly communal form of music-making where participants are compelled to work together (Henley, 2009). Since its inception in 2003 Good Vibrations has worked with more than 3300 participants in 53 different secure institutions in the United Kingdom.

Good Vibrations projects typically run over one week for around fifteen-to-twenty individuals on average. They run in prisons, Young Offender Institutions, and in probation services, and are available to any offender in contact with these services (or, in some prisons, to targeted groups, e.g. the unemployed, the very low-skilled, people in touch with mental health teams or personality disorders, Vulnerable Prisoners). As well as learning how to play traditional pieces of gamelan music, participants create their own compositions as a group. Many also learn about Indonesian culture and associated art-forms (e.g. shadow puppetry, Javanese dance), and gain nationally-recognised qualifications, e.g. in Team-working Skills. At the end of the week, participants perform a concert to which staff, peers, family members and others are invited.

Case Study: 'The Studio' at the Youth Offending Service

(Can we include images?)

Birmingham Youth Offending Service (YOS) runs a music programme for young people in contact with their service. The music programme, known locally as 'the studio', has existed for over ten years. The programme began for young people working with the Intensive Supervision & Surveillance team (ISS), but over time its remit has been broadened and it is now open to any young

person in contact with the YOS. Referrals are made by a young person's YOS caseworker / programme manager, typically where a young person is seen to have a musical talent and/or interest in music. Overall, the young people taking part in this programme are representative of the wider population of the YOS in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, and offence/sentence type.

The aims of the programme are to: develop the creative, expressive and musical ability of children and young people; improve children and young people's self-efficacy and resilience; and improve the level of compliance and successful completion of court orders amongst project participants.

Sessions run on a one-to-one basis between the music leader and young person (with their caseworker present where appropriate). A typical level of engagement is one two-hour session per week over a twelve week period. The programme is run in a professional working studio space located near to the centre of Birmingham and young people can work on a variety of music-making activities, including: digital composition & production; creative lyric writing; vocal coaching & performance skills (rapping & singing); drum kit tuition; guitar tuition; music theory; deejaying skills; studio sound engineering & vocal recording techniques.

In the UK, many individual artists, groups, and arts organisations working in the justice system are represented by the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance (NCJAA). The NCJAA is a network that exists 'to promote, develop and support high quality arts practice in criminal justice settings, influencing and informing government, commissioners and the public.' (NCJAA, 2017a). The NCJAA has over 800 members, demonstrating the scale of arts and creative activities in the justice system.

In 2012 the NCJAA launched the Evidence Library. The Evidence Library is 'an online library, housing the key research and evaluation documents on the impact of arts-based projects, programmes and interventions within the Criminal Justice System.' (NCJAA, 2017b). Other countries have followed the Evidence Library initiative, setting up their own resources. See for example the Prison Arts Resource Project (PARP), which 'is an online library of evidence-based research into U.S. correctional arts programs' (PARP, 2017).

A brief history of Arts-based interventions in the justice system

The relationship between the creative arts and the Criminal Justice System has a long and complex history (Cox and Gelsthorpe, 2012). Indeed, the inclusion of artistic and literary content in official prison regimes appear alongside the emergence of the modern penal system. As early as 1837 Foucault notes that at the House of young prisoners in Paris, amidst a routine of reveille, hard labour and austere rations, the rules included:

'Art. 22. School...The class lasts two hours and consists alternately of reading, writing, *drawing* and arithmetic....

Art. 27. At seven o'clock in the summer, at eight in winter, work stops...For a quarter of an hour one of the prisoners or supervisors *reads a passage from some instructive or uplifting work.*' (Faucher, 1838 cited in Foucault, 1977: 6 - our emphasis).

The 'uplifting' nature of this literature, in the context of the period, was predominantly religious rather than aesthetic (Rogers, 2013: 10), though it was certainly intended to be morally improving (Fyfe, 1992: 18). However, the presence of literature and the arts in prisons was not entirely devoted to scriptural readings and by the 1830s secular literature was entering prisons through the work of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (Fyfe, 1992: 9). The Prison Discipline Society included 'leisure reading' as having a role in supporting the reform process (5th Annual Report, 1823: 63 cited in Fyfe, 1992: 37) and the governor of Coldbath Fields felt that novels were able to effect 'a salutary revolution in the soul *and imagination* of the prisoner' (Pears, 1872: 71-72 cited in Hartley, 2011: 93, our emphasis).

The combination of religion and erudition in the 1800s are embodied in the activities of Elizabeth Fry, 'the best-known and most influential prison reformer of her sex' (Fyfe, 1992: 23). Though she had set out with the intention of providing a school for the children of female prisoners in Newgate, 'the women persuaded her to provide them with needlework and teach them to read and write' (Rogers, 2013: 10 citing Foxwell Buxton, 1818; Cooper, 1981: 683). Nor was Fry alone in these endeavours. Sarah Martin at Yarmouth Jail in the 1800s is also documented as having procured sewing materials to allow both male and female prisoners to engage in craft activities (Carey and Walker, 2002: 53). While alone such examples may suggest isolated incidents of maverick practitioners operating below the radar of official approval, by the time Peaker and Vincent (1993) embarked on the first comprehensive survey of arts in British prisons, they found 'a vast diversity of arts available in the majority of prisons' (Brown, 2002: 106).

Parkes (2011) identifies the 1980s as a notable period for the delivery of artistic interventions in prisons in the UK, which followed on from similar developments in the US during the 1970s (Currie, 1989). In terms of how the arts' entered prisons, there is a history of this work through art therapy. Brown (2002: 107) identifies the early 1990s as the time when a small number of individuals attempted to make art therapy an established part of prison provision. Reassessing the literature on creative arts in the justice system some 15 years later, Hughes (2005: 24) finds 25 projects out of a total of 200 were delivered via art therapy, dramatherapy or psychodrama. Although, as Brown (2002: 107) notes, by the beginning of the 21st century there was a more widespread use in secure units. Guidelines specific to the use of art therapies in prisons were published in 1997 (Teasdale, 1997 cited in Brown, 2002: 107).

The presence of the arts in criminal justice settings has not always been a comfortable fit. Laing (1994: 119) writes about how group therapy sessions were often labelled as 'classes' by prison staff 'thus implying they will be seen as teaching sessions in the scholastic sense'. In the early 1970s there were approximately 100,000 classes organised in prisons with around half of all practical classes consisting of arts, handicrafts and related hobbies (Brandreth, 1972: 32). As late as the 1980s, in a curriculum offering a good deal of variation in subjects and study levels (Laing, 1984: 119), education appears to have included a wide range of creative subjects such as pottery, art and music (Bayliss & Hughes in Bennett et al., 2013: 300). In response to changes in policy, creative practitioners have adopted educational discourses, as can be seen in responses to the introduction of the Core

Curriculum¹ (Bayliss and Hughes, 2012: 300), which was followed by a concerted effort on the part of practitioners to demonstrate the relevance of the arts to basic skills education (Standing Committee on the Arts, 2001; Hughes et al., 2005: 39).

Garland (2002) details the wider context in criminal justice in the 1980s, which saw the treatment or medical model of offender rehabilitation, prevalent from the 1950s, fall out of favour due to 'an astonishingly sudden draining away of support for the ideal of rehabilitation' (Garland, 2002 following Allen, 1981). The shift from reform and rehabilitation to a focus on the 'management of prisons' (Mott, 1985: 2 cited in Duguid, 2000: 75), emerged the 'opportunities approach' (Duguid, 2000: 76), which led to the entry of a large number of outside agencies into prisons as prison administrations sought to contract services out (Duguid, 2000: 93). Brown (2002) augments Duguid's (2000) 'opportunities' era exposition, claiming that at the end of the 1980s 'there seemed to be feeling that art in prison was about to become a vital new way of helping individuals to change' (Brown, 2002: 106). Peaker and Vincent (1990) offer a fuller consideration of how the period came to inform arts provision in prisons. They identify the emergence of participatory arts; a policy commitment from the Arts Council, set out in the *Glory of the Garden* report (ACE, 1984), which aimed to democratise the arts, along with a number of 'profound' changes in the prison system in terms of management, and a new understanding of prison service purpose. Indeed, Peaker and Vincent's (1990, 1992) research emerged out of this confluence of events which resulted in a grant, jointly funded by the Arts Council and the Home Office, being made to enable an investigation into the uses of creative arts in British prisons (Brown, 2002: 106). Out of this work, initially based at Loughborough University and later the University of Kent in Canterbury (Brown, 2002), the Unit for Arts and Offenders emerged in 1992. In 1996 the organisation became a charitable trust (Brown, 2002: 106-107), and changed its name to the Anne Peaker Centre in 2005. It remained a key advocacy organisation for arts in prisons until its closure in 2010 due to lack of funding.

More recently the Arts Alliance was established to serve as 'a representative body which will enable practitioners and service users to gain a representative voice to influence policy, a forum to exchange views, and a stand to promote and raise the profile of the arts in criminal justice sector' (Edwards, 2008: see also Arts Alliance, 2011). The Arts Alliance also took over the research function of the Anne Peaker Centre with its Evidence Library. In tandem with the creation of the Arts Alliance the Ministry of Justice, Department for Innovation, Universities, and Skills and Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport established the Arts Forum which aimed to 'meet with Alliance representatives and work in partnership' (NOMS, 2007). The Arts Alliance is now called the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance, as discussed above.

The impact of the Arts in the justice system

As Parkes & Bilby (2010:106) 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):

¹ In prison education in the UK 'learning became a competitive commodity' (Bayliss and Hughes, 2012: 300) and the focus shifted significantly away from arts and crafts activities to focus on Skills for Life and the introduction of a Core Curriculum in 1997.

'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, and is part of the criteria against which prisons are assessed by the inspectorate. Similarly the goals of HM Prison Service include the duty to look after prisoners with humanity, as well as rehabilitating offenders to lead crime-free lives. 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: 12)

There is significant evidence that participation in the arts increases confidence and social skills (Baker & Homan, 2007; Bilby et al, 2013; Bruce, 2015; Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008;). For example, in Caulfield's (2011, 2014) longitudinal evaluation of an art residency at HMP Grendon, participants showed significant increases in creativity and technical abilities and subsequently an increase in confidence. Similarly in Cursley and Maruna's (2015) Changing Tunes evaluation, participant's improvements in musical ability appeared to improve their self-confidence in rehearsals and performances. Increases in the confidence of offenders lead to a better, more constructive use of their time.

Within the literature on arts-interventions, confidence is often linked to the re-integration of offenders into education (Viggiani et al, 2013). Indeed Cox and Gelsthorpe (2008) and Wilson et al. (2009) have found that prisoners taking part in music projects report increased motivation to engage in future education. Winner and Cooper (2000) suggest that participation in the arts uses cognitive structures such as problem-solving and close observation, and that these skills can be applied to other forms of learning in the future. The mechanisms behind the participation in the arts has shown to increase offenders capability to learn and so in turn can develop important life skills for use after release (Miles & Strauss, 2008).

Attitudinal and behavioural changes often arise through self-evaluation and changes in self-concept (Bruce, 2015). Several studies have shown that through engagement with arts-based activities, participants learn to foster their emotions in a safe way (Winder et al, 2015) and may use the arts as an emotional outlet for any negative emotions (Cartwright, 2013). Arts-based projects are thought to offer a safe space (Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008) away from everyday life challenges (Wilson et al, 2009). The positive regulation of emotions has been linked to increased well-being and decreases in anger and aggression, through participation in arts-based projects (Wilson et al., 2009; Miles and Strauss, 2008).

Building and maintaining positive emotions is crucial to counteracting stressful life experiences and building resilience (Rutten, 2013). Resilience refers to 'the capacity of a system, enterprise or person to [find] and maintain its core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances' (Zolli & Healy, 2012: 6) and is an important factor in lifelong health and well-being, thought to help explain how individuals deal with challenges throughout life. Existing research has noted that participation in arts-based projects increases offenders ability to deal with personal

problems (Wilson et al, 2009; Henley, 2012; Viggiani et al, 2013) and improves coping (Miles & Strauss, 2008) – factors core to resilience. Furthermore, Newman (2002) suggests that participation in the arts 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). Potentially the most powerful bonds that form may be between the arts facilitators and the offenders, although the literature has only just begun to explore this. Henley (2012) reports the high level of trust and respect observed between participants and the arts facilitator, with social barriers broken in the spaces created (Abrahams et al, 2012). Indeed, a 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, 2017:1).

There 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 new found 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, Caulfield, & Ridley, 2013:13).

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 a musicians and individuals with responsibility for their own future (Cursley & Maruna, 2015). Similarly, Anderson et al (2011) report that involvement in arts-based offender 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.

While much useful and insightful research has been produced on the role of the Arts in criminal justice, the evidence base has been subject to criticism. For example, the focus of much research in this area has been on self-reported measures. While it is clear that the voice of participants is crucial to understanding how any project works, Burrowes et al (2013) - in their evidence assessment of intermediate outcomes of arts projects for National Offender Management Services - note that there is a lack of good quality research into the arts in criminal justice, citing a particular lack of robust quantitative data. Even when research has taken a mixed method approach, Burrowes et al note methodological issues with most research in the area lacking any control group to compare results to. In addition, it is rare to see evaluations that use pre-test and post-test scores (Cheliotis, Jordanoska, & Sekol, 2014; Miles & Clarke, 2006), meaning it is hard to clearly establish outcomes in most of the current literature.

Some researchers have, however, argued for the importance of ‘intermediate’ measures, and measures that tell us something of the experience of those taking part. Indeed, reducing evaluation of the arts to a mere quantitative binary measure may risk losing any insight into the real impact of the arts in criminal justice (Caulfield, 2014). As Bilby et al (2013: 10) note: ‘Just as arts practices in

the criminal justice system can be seen as innovative projects in themselves, exploring the mechanisms for change in the journey to desistance needs to be innovative too. Methodologies that can measure changes in behaviour (important in primary desistance²) as well as changes in personal narratives (important in secondary desistance) need to be adopted. This needs to be recognised and accepted by policy makers'. Indeed, as Caulfield *et al.* (2016: 412) note, 'it is clearly unreasonable to suggest that such projects can be directly responsible for reducing reoffending - and nor do they seek to be - but it remains important to consider how a variety of experiences can be relevant in shaping the path an offender takes towards desisting from crime.'

Summary

There is a diversity of arts provision in the criminal justice system, and creative practitioners come to this work from an equally varied range of backgrounds and training. In the UK, many individual artists, groups, and arts organisations working in the justice system are represented by the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance (NCJAA). 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, and there is a growing amount of research that demonstrated a range of positive impacts arising from participation in the arts within the justice system.

Organisations/webpages mentioned in this chapter

Arts Alliance Evidence Library: <http://www.artsevidence.org.uk/>

Fine Cell work: <https://finecellwork.co.uk/>

Geese Theatre: <http://www.geese.co.uk/>

Good Vibrations: <http://www.good-vibrations.org.uk/>

Making for Change: <http://www.arts.ac.uk/fashion/about/better-lives/making-for-change/>

The Irene Taylor Trust: <https://irenetaylortrust.com/>

National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance: <https://www.artsincriminaljustice.org.uk/>

Prison Arts Resources Project: <https://scancorrectionalarts.org/>

Rideout: <http://www.rideout.org.uk/>

² Desistance is the process by which people who have committed crimes stop offending (primary desistance) and take on a personal narrative that supports a continuing non-offending lifestyle (secondary desistance). This essentially refers not only to an individual stopping committing crime, but an individual seeing her/himself as someone other than 'an offender'.

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