ART IN CUSTODY: GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT

Strengthening the case by demonstrating the value of prison arts interventions

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Strengthening the case by demonstrating the value of prison arts interventions

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ABSTRACT

The Northern Ireland Prison Service sought to explore the rehabilitative effects of arts in prison through limited scale research and an international literature survey.

This study informs the approach for a wider and longer term evaluation. It focuses primarily on a summary of the relevant literature within the UK to summarise the current status in relation to arts within custodial settingsand to inform a credible evaluation framework.

It includes a limited research element which examines the feasibility of utilising a number of research approaches supporting the proposed evaluation framework within the Northern Ireland context.

It was evident from the literature that the majority of arts organisations working within criminal justice settings continue to struggle with the evidence based practice standards required by criminal justice organisations. Due to a range of contextual factors it is considered that these standards are neither attainable nor appropriate for arts organisations.

While the evidence base, suggesting that arts interventions in custodial settings have numerous benefits, is increasing, there remain questions about the quality of the emerging evidence base.

The framework developed herein is based on a realistic evaluation approach. Qualitative data techniques trialled as part of this study included observation and questionnaires. Administrative data was also collected to determine the scope and nature of data held in relation to participation in arts interventions and its potential for supporting improved evaluation in the future.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study emerged from a request by the Northern Ireland Prison Service to explore the rehabilitative effects of arts in prison in Northern Ireland through limited scale research, and an international literature survey placing a particular focus on Great Britain. The stated objective was to gain a better understanding of the "value for money" of the expenditure on arts programmes across the three prisons in terms of its rehabilitative and restorative impact - the value that it provides to make individuals on release less likely to reoffend and make a positive contribution to the community" (NIPS, 2010, P1). Such a study has not previously been conducted within Northern Ireland, although a significant amount of evaluation has been conducted within Great Britain (Arts Alliance, 2011) and internationally, in particular the US (Johnson, 2009).

This study in itself does not intend to satisfy the wide ranging objective specified by NIPS as it was not considered feasible to fulfil this scope within the limited timeframe of this study. The study rather aims to inform the approach for a wider, longer term evaluation and as such focuses on a summary of the relevant literature to work towards a credible evaluation framework. Some of the most recent UK literature has concluded that while there is much to celebrate in terms of arts interventions within custodial settings, there still remains a need to build a clearer, more coherent, and credible evidence base which will only be achieved by a concerted effort to share good practice and underpin research with more robust evaluation methodologies (Arts Alliance, 2011).The question of determining "value for money" of interventions was excluded from scope, as the range of methodologies to determine value for money are based on firstly establishing and evidencing the outcomes of programmes, prior to quantifying them in monetary terms (HM Treasury, 2011). As will be discussed throughout this paper, the first hurdle of establishing and evidencing outcomes itself remains a formidable challenge (Cabinet Office, 2009).

The study sought to address five areas of interest. Firstly, it summarises the predominant status, or 'state of the art' in terms of research on arts interventions within a criminal justice custodial setting, focussing on emerging conclusions from evaluations, quality of evaluations conducted and the nature of supporting evidence. Secondly, it summarises the evidential standards required in criminal justice research to assess how far the 'state of the art' position is from this requirement. Thirdly, it suggests what a credible evaluation framework might be. Fourthly, it examines from a particular Northern Ireland context, what the possibilities, challenges and restrictions might be in terms of building such an evaluation approach. Finally, it concludes with any compromises considered possible, appropriate and acceptable to bridge the gap between the intuitive or faith based ('we know it works') views of the arts community and the requirements of

the criminal justice community, including policy makers and funders. The longer term objective, towards which this study aims to contribute, is to ensure that the perceived theoretical promise of arts interventions within the criminal justice system, as represented in the literature and in the intuitive understandings of those involved in the delivery of such interventions, can be underpinned by stronger evidence.

The NIPS prison arts programme delivered across the three institutions (HMP Maghaberry, HMP Magilligan, and HM Prison and Young Offenders Centre, Hydebank Wood) is primarily facilitated through, or delivered by, the Prison Arts Foundation (PAF). PAF was set up in 1996 with the aim of promoting access to the arts and releasing "the creative self of all prisoners ex-prisoners, young offenders and ex-young offenders in Northern Ireland using all of the arts and crafts including writing, drama, fine art, craft, music and dance" (PAF, 2011). The interventions delivered by PAF range significantly, not only in terms of art form delivered, but also in the manner they are delivered. The interventions are non- structured in a number of ways – aims and objectives are largely left to the facilitators and there are no manuals or programme materials supporting interventions. There is no prescribed length of recommended participation and no formal end or completion date for participation. Participation is on a voluntary or self-selected basis with participants putting their names on a waiting list for some interventions. Interventions could be described as classes (although not following a set programme), projects, workshops or sessions (a music 'jam' session was observed). Interventions include group and one-to-one delivery formats. Stated PAF goals include: opening an alternative conduit into education and formal ways of learning; positive reinforcement of life skills; promoting self-esteem; and creating a culture of positive exchange which inspires change and other viewpoints. The PAF philosophy also appears to align with distinctions made elsewhere in the UK literature in relation to outcomes; such distinctions including categorising outcomes as intrinsic and extrinsic or alternatively direct and indirect (Allen et al, 2004). Specifically the PAF states "In addition to the discipline inherent in the individual art or craft, the prisoner will absorb the secondary disciplines of planning, time management, critical analysis, research etc. Communication skills and articulacy are also likely to be enhanced as a consequence of the individual participating in something he or she is likely to enjoy." (PAF 2010 P3). All of these are seen by the PAF as stepping stones in the journey of change.

In working towards a credible framework, usable within the Northern Ireland context, the study explored predominantly UK based literature on arts interventions, evaluation methodologies and theories of change. It also trialledcertain data collection tools to explore the feasibility of conducting in-depth research and testing under the proposed framework. These tools included questionnaires, interviews and observation. In addition, three year administrative data (2007-2009)

was collected covering all offenders, programme participants, programme characteristics, and programme attendance. While some limited work has beencarried out by NIPS in terms of monitoring these courses, there has to date been little or no evaluative work. Due to the fact that male offenders represent the vast majority of the Northern Ireland prison population and the majority of participants on arts interventions, the research feasibility tests were conducted within a male institution (HMP Maghaberry) with male offenders. Notwithstanding this, the data collection element focused on the entire prison population and questionnaires were sent to artists working across all prisons with male and female prisoners. The study focussed on developing a high level evaluation framework and it is considered that this is relevant and generalizable to the full population. However, the study does not intend to disregard or oversimplify differences at granular levels across the population including age, gender, sentence length, type of offending behaviour and other inmate characteristics. Rather, its objective is to work towards a broader framework within which more specific targeted interventions can be planned, understood and evaluated. A comprehensive analysis of the "differential effects of participation in specific art forms" (Hughes et al, 2005, P8) was also beyond the scope of this study.

The contextual environment is of key relevance asno one evaluation model will suit all organisations (Holma et al, 2011). Hughes et al (2005) in comparing arts organisations delivering interventions within the criminal justice arena state "The variations in delivery practice are immense" (P2). Within a different sector facing similar challenges, Holma et al (2011) state, that "it is impossible to discuss adequate evaluation methods for all NGOs, since these naturally differ from one to the other" (P184,) due to the fact that they are very diverse organisations with different aims, delivery models and value systems. This is a pertinent point as while the high level framework adopted by the PAF may have similarities with those utilised by other organisations, the exact components of the framework and its practical implementation on the ground may be quite different. The PAF, for example, delivers a vast portfolio of different art forms; Safe Ground however, which has been recognised in the literature for its sophisticated explanatory theoretical models and measurement frameworks delivers a narrower range of structured and accredited programmes (Arts Alliance, 2011).

While the phases of the PAF conceptualised journey, commencing with 'doodling', referred to in further detail in chapter one, are intuitively understood to be part of the rehabilitation journey, the PAF works on the principle that this journey takes place outside any explicit rehabilitation agenda and is primarily, open, expressive, encouraging and supportive in approach. "Art is a medium for change – Prison is just a venue" (PAF, 2011). The PAF adopts a much wider mission and outcomes focus than that which would traditionally be of interest to a criminal justice audience. In addition to

funding received from NIPS, it also receives funding from the Arts Council and as such its stakeholder base is relatively wide. This study however focuses primarily on improving evaluation and building a better evidence base from a criminal justice perspective.

Throughout this analysis the question of what constitutes useful evaluation is critically analysed in as open a manner as possible recognising that there is a need for knowledge building as opposed to knowledge affirmation, and that there may be many different evaluative approaches and analytic methods which, individually, or on a standalone basis, may have limitations and flaws but together may represent an acceptable basis upon which to make rational decisions. The end goal of evaluation it will be argued is not just to say 'what works' based on evidencing effect in terms of outcomes but rather to build a better knowledge base which improves understanding of how and why something works,which should in turnsupport the transfer and replication of effective practice.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter summarises the literature on evaluation of arts interventions within custodial settings including the outcomes suggested, quality of the evidence base and methodologies deployed. In doing so it focuses primarily on the literature within the UK. As the study is focussed on developing the credibility of the evidence base and robustness of evaluation methodologies, it also explores the literature on evaluation with a view to developing an appropriate and workable framework (chapter three). As it is a constant criticism that the arts have not developed a core set of models or theoretical frameworks this chapter also focuses on theories of change, which may be of relevance to the arts in criminal justice.

Literature on arts interventions

In the last decade there has been a significant growth in the critical mass of literature relating to evaluation of arts within the criminal justice arena (Arts Alliance, 2011). This literature includes secondary reviews of evaluative work across the sector (Hughes et al, 2005, Miles et al, 2006, Arts Alliance, 2011) addressing the emerging conclusions, quality of the evidence base, types of evaluation methodologies involved and the range of challenges and opportunities facing the arts sector in demonstrating value within the criminal justice context. While these reports have critically examined the breadth and depth of evaluations, many clarify that they are neither systematic reviews nor meta-analyses; most are either compendiums of individual literature (Arts Alliance, 2011, Part 1), critiques of the current position on outcomes, theoretical approaches and methodologies (Hughes et al, 2005) or a combination of both (Arts Alliance, 2011, Miles et al, 2006). Simultaneously with a growth in the level of critique at this general level, individual arts organisations have developed their own evaluation approaches, methodologies and conclusions. Some arts organisations e.g. Safe Ground and Geese Theatre are now conducting evaluations on a recurring basis (Arts Alliance, 2011) and many interventions are recognising the importance of investing in, and embedding, evaluation within programmes (Anderson et al, 2011). It should be noted however that while progress has been made in developing the sophistication of evaluations, the overall standard in terms of individual evaluations varies greatly and in the majority of cases falls short of the strictly defined 'evidence-based' approach traditionally required to demonstrate outcome achievement within the criminal justice arena. Nonetheless, while this may appear like a poor summary of the current status, there is positivity in that much of the literature repeats certain key messages in terms of what is believed to work, what outcomes are demonstrable, and the

contextual challenges and developmental opportunities in relation to conducting more robust evaluations and building a stronger evidence base (Arts Alliance, 2011).

Hughes et al (2005) have pointed out that there is an abundance of success stories within the field of arts interventions in criminal justice, with the largest evidence base in respect of those within custodial settings (Hughes et al, 2005, Arts Alliance, 2011). Johnson (2009),writing from an international perspective,similarly states that "Plenty of evidence suggests that the arts perform an effective role in offender rehabilitation and improve the quality of life in correctional environments" (P290). Many individual evaluations carried out by arts organisations, or on their behalf, claim effectiveness across a range of criminal justice outcomes, including addressing some of the NOMS 'Seven Pathways to reducing Offending' (Cox & Gelsthorpe, 2008). The evaluations are not, however, merely trying to establish or prove outcomes and many represent process evaluations seeking to garner lessons learned. The Arts Alliance (2011) recently compiled a compendium of evaluations carried out across the UK, with evaluations varying in scope and including outcome evaluations, process evaluations and combinations of both. Some of the outcomes identified across these evaluations included: increased openness to, and engagement with, learning; positive behavioural changes; improved stress release and management; improved employment opportunities and reductions in re-conviction rates (Arts Alliance, 2011). Those that focussed on processes identified learnings from the actuality of implementation. Thus contextual factors such as structure and planning; the role, skills and expertise of facilitators; delivery methods; and the prison environment itself were identified.(Arts Alliance, 2011).

Hughes et al (2005) structured the range of outcomes of arts interventions across five major categories. The first category 'impact on society' included outcomes relating to reconviction rates, raising community awareness of the criminal justice system and cost effectiveness. The second category 'impact on institutions' related to reductions in rule-breaking and anger and hostility, enhancement of staff and inmate relationships and enrichment of prison regimes. Thirdly 'impact on delivery of education in custody' included promotion of basic and key skills, enabling access to higher education and enhancing the prison education curriculum. The fourth category 'impact on individuals' addressed anger reduction, changing attitudes to offending, maintaining connections to the outside and personal and social development. Finally, 'impact on the intervention/programme' referred to the role of arts interventions in enhancing other programmes including offending behaviour programmes and therapeutic interventions. This is not necessarily an exhaustive list but is a useful categorisation as it shows the expanse of potential impacts which arts interventions may have.

Allen et al (2004) use a range of other categorisations to portray the benefits of participation in the arts. They categorise benefits as intrinsic and extrinsic with the former referring to benefits of the creative activity such as participation in drama resulting in improved acting skills, and the latter relating to the by-product of the creative activity such as increases in self-confidence and communication skills. They also categorise benefits as "direct, such as improved writing skills, or indirect, through improved social skills such as working as part of a team or increased self-esteem" (cited in Nugent et al, 2011, P358). Maruna (2010) uses a temporal categorisation by splitting impacts into intermediate/short-term and medium/longer-term impacts. Hughes et al (2005) argue that while there is much debate on how to slice and dice arts provision, distinctions such as those between 'instrumental' art and 'true' art ("art for art's sake") are not useful and do not "reflect existing activity across the sector which shows creativity has instrumental outcomes for individuals and society" (P52) spanning the development of hidden talents, developing confidence, skills and capacities and supporting therapeutic or personal change. While it does not represent an exhaustive list, a range of outcomes and impacts as identified within some of the UK and international literature is included in Appendix 1. This list has been structured under the five categories set forth by Hughes et al(2005).

Hughes et al (2005) adopts a positive tone stating that the number of findings repeating the same message is suggestive of strong evidence. However, like many others (Miles et al, 2006, Arts Alliance, 2011), Hughes et al (2005) acknowledge that there remain significant questions in relation to the quality and reliability of the evidence presented and the sustainability of impacts beyond the duration and context of the intervention. The Arts Alliance (2011) collated 61 evaluation documents, of which 51 were considered to have clear evaluation foci. The evaluation focus of just over half was on social and life skills and attitudinal change with the balance looking at: Learning, education, training and employment; specific criminal justice system indicators; behavioural change; specific skills such as parenting skills, and finally, evaluations focussing on the effectiveness of the artform (Arts Alliance, 2011, P28). Despite clear evaluation foci and repetition in messages across the outcomes it is evident from a review of some of the evaluations that the robustness of the evidence and the quality of the methodologies vary significantly. Hughes et al (2005) similarly point to this variation in the degree of evidence indicating which outcome categories have strong or weak evidence. In relation to 'impact on society', while many reviews look at reconviction rates the robustness of this evidence is often questionable due to the failure to establish causation or surmount the attribution challenge "research has not taken into account alternative explanations of outcomes – correlations are generally treated as evidence without consideration of other causes" (P37). Many others have also pointed to these issues in relation to claims of reduced recidivism, with

Miles et al (2006) explaining that statistical association between variables does not evidence or explain causality and pointing to the difficulties for arts organisations to evidence causality at least in line with the officially recognised "Gold Standard" approach of experimental design including randomised control trials. Others (Hughes et al, 2005, Tilley, 2000) claim however that while this represents a significant challenge it is not insurmountable and have pointed to Duguid & Pawson's (1998) critical realist approach to the evaluation of a liberal arts university prison education programmein Canada which is discussed further below. Hughes et al (2005) suggestthat 'impact on institutions', including reductions in rule-breaking, has one of the most promising of evidence bases with methodologies examining administrative data such as adjudication records pre and post intervention. However, this evidence base is also not without potential flawsincluding the issue of statistical significance where the base rate of adjudications may be low (Mc Guire 2007) and the lack of controlling for original factors such as motivation of participants. Anderson et al (2011) similarly note that "on a methodological note, behaviour reports do not in themselves appear to provide a useful measure" (P90). They claim that difficulties associated with the use of adjudication records and behavioural records include the low level of the base rate, the fact that previous histories may be short with no previous adjudications and thus any adjudications arising following the programme may suggest failure (Anderson et al, 2011). At the very least adjudication or behavioural records would also need to look at the nature or severity of the breach or its underlying causes or reasons to be in any way meaningful. Based on a review of individual reports identified within the Evidence Library (Arts Alliance, 2011) much of the evidence here appears to be based on reports of prisoners themselves or of staff and in many cases is anecdotal and unsystematic. The category 'impact on delivery of education in custody' is also suggestive of a wide range of possible outcomes but the vast amount of evidence would appear to relate to statistics in relation to participation, engagement (in terms of intensity and continuity of participation), completion and awards (Clarke et al, 2005; In Arts Alliance, 2011). In relation to 'impacts on individuals' including the development of personal and social skills the range of suggested outcomes is extremely wide and is underpinned by many different evaluation approaches from anecdotal and self-report evidence to more structured approaches including self-report questionnaires and accepted scales for social and personal response measurements e.g. STAKI (Arts Alliance, 2011).

Despite the range of benefits which have been widely postulated or at least "tentatively" (Anderson et al, 2011) suggested, there is much recognition that the arts sector must work in a more clear, coherent, and consistent manner to prove its case and build a more robust evidence base (Hughes et al, 2005, Miles, 2004, Arts Alliance, 2011). This challenge involves a number of dimensions. Hughes et al (2005) state that the arts sector needs to build a body of theory, from

which models of change can be identified, which outlines hard and measurable outcomes and which is backed up by a testable model of change. Ellis et al (2011) focus on the practicalities of conducting evaluation and the need to plan an evaluation to ensure the right questions are asked, the aims of the intervention are clear and the evaluation can be structured, including collection of data, to appropriately answer the evaluation questions. They also refer to the need to be clear about what outcomes are expected and how these will be measured. Miles et al (2006) comprehensively address the contextual challenge of delivering arts interventions within a custodial setting – arts interventions are poorly and inconsistently funded, small, short term, ad hoc, and opportunistic. They explain that these characteristics have a range of impacts for evaluation and theory development. Arts interventions often fail to communicate clear aims and objectives for the individual programmes or articulate a clear methodology outlining the processes and the desired outcomes. Another limitation which has a consequence for research relates to how participants are recruited to arts projects – often this is in an ad hoc manner and not clearly outlined or indeed consistently understood or communicated (Miles et al, 2006). The ad hoc nature of recruitment arrangements to these interventions "prohibits the manipulation of samples into treatment and control (or comparison) groups, the validation of outcomes by testing for statistical significance, and the ability to generalise from or extend findings" (Miles et al, 2006, P5).

While it is widely acknowledged that a significant amount of work is required to more concretely communicate and prove that arts interventions do in fact have benefits and real outcomes from a criminal justice perspective, this does not necessarily represent an insurmountable challenge. As Hughes et al (2005) point out "the number of people, projects and related evaluation findings repeating the same message strongly suggests that these outcomes are the immediate and short-term effects of taking part in the arts in prison" (P46). However, Miles et al (2006) concluded that it is impossible for the arts as currently configured to "meet the types and standards of proof favoured by the Home Office" (Miles et al, 2006, P5). These limitations, were also addressed by Hugheset al (2005) "In the main, research and evaluation in the sector has tended to be short-term, lacking in conceptual and methodological rigour, over-reliant on anecdotal evidence, unable to adequately specify, quantify or explain outcomes, or to demonstrate clear causal connections between participation in the arts and a positive outcome" (2005, P13).

Literature on evaluation

Much of the preceding theoretical discussion centred on the question of the quality of the evidence base supporting the effectiveness of arts interventions and the quality of the methodologies

deployed. This therefore poses the questionof what evidential and methodological standards are currently required by a criminal justice audience – primary policy makers and funders. The answer to this question is relatively easy as we can decipher from documentary evidence and other accounts what the general policy statements and requirements are in relation to evidence and evaluation methodologies. Whether this approach is appropriate is a more complex question and depends on the scientific philosophy and epistemological assumptions adhered to. For the purposes of simplicity we will initially address the first question – what evidential and methodological standards are currently required by a criminal justice audience.

It is generally accepted that evidence based practice has become the de facto standard for policy evaluations of social programmes including criminal justice interventions (Miles et al, 2006). While it has been suggested that "the current Government is at the moment, not so obsessed with the details of evidence-based practice as the previous Labour administration" (Arts Alliance, 2011, P36) this suggestion is almost negated for the arts sector by the following statement that "there may be scope for innovative practice within individual prisons, as long as they can be seen as directly contributing to actually reducing re-offending statistics" (Arts Alliance, 2011, P36). It is this question of direct evidence of effect in relation to re-offending statistics which represents a significant, if not insurmountable, hurdle for arts organisations and is at the crux of the debate between different epistemological approaches to evaluation. The recent move towards 'Payment by Results', which favours, if not wholly mandates evidence-based standards (Fox et al, 2011) would suggest that it remains the requisite standard (Fox et al, 2011). Maruna (2010) summarises the challenge for arts organisation working within the criminal justice arena "The problem is that in an era of "evidence-based" practice in all aspects of governance, policy makers expect more concrete explanations for how intervention projects work" (P3). Specifically in the area of criminal justice, Ellis et al (2011) argue that there is likely to be a requirement for "more direct evidence that an intervention can demonstrate an effect on re-offending rates or have a clear effect on risk factors for offending such as substance use or employment prospects" (P10).

So what does "evidence-based policy" mean or require? The term, as generally understood involves the adoption of scientific research methods based on the systematic monitoring and evaluation of experimental projects to determine the effectiveness of programmes or projects (NIO, 2008). It is based on the philosophy that well-designed evaluation studies will build a bridge between end results, evidence, and policy decisions. Evidence based policy is linked with the "What works" concept which has a turbulent history (NIO, 2008). It is not intended to recount here this lengthy history as it has been comprehensively addressed elsewhere (NIO, 2008, Ward and Maruna, 2007, Miles, 2005), but, rather, to point out the salient characteristics of the evidence-based practice

approach. In this context in determining what is required by evidence based policy and the concept of "what works" this study looks initially to the Maryland Report (Sherman, 1996) definition of 'what works' as mediated through more recent adaptations of that approach within the UK (Harper and Chitty, 2005, Maguire, 2011) and Northern Ireland (NIO, 2008) contexts as well as more recently issued guidance on how evaluation should be designed and undertaken to determine policy effectiveness (HM Treasury, 2011). The analysis also explores the opinions of critics of the evidence-based policy approach.

A central tenet of the Maryland Report (Sherman, 1996) is that if more resources are invested in scientific impact evaluations, based on transparent and generally accepted research and experimental design criteria this will expand our knowledge of "what works" in crime prevention and hold organisations and programmes accountable for results and expenditure. It holds out significant faith in scientific evaluations andthat rules of science are capable of providing a consistent and objective way to draw conclusions about cause and effect. These rules of science relate to good research design including fundamental components such as baseline measurement, comparison of before and after effects, sample size and attrition, randomization, controlling for variables and the various threats to internal validity of the researched experiment such as cause and effect, chance factors and selection bias (Sherman et al, 1998). The recognised scientific standards and methodologies require researchers to apply rigorous approaches to ultimately determine which measures can show a demonstrable impact on crime reduction (Sherman et al, 1996). Ultimately the Maryland report classifies a list of programmes based on the rigorous research and experimental design criteria into four categories– 'what works', 'what doesn't work', 'what's promising' and a catch all 'what's unknown'. 'What works' are programs where there is reasonable certainty that they prevent crime or reduce risk factors for crime in the contexts in which they were evaluated and for which the findings can be generalised to similar contexts in other places and times. 'What's promising' is a lower hurdle where the level of evidence is currently too low to support generalizable conclusions but where it is considered that further more rigorous research may support a higher level of certainty (Sherman et al, 1996). Notwithstanding the conclusions of the Maryland report, there is an initial caution that these programs classed as 'working', are only reasonable likely to be effective, but however not guaranteed, to be – this is mainly due to the issue of external validity and the need for all characteristics and conditions of the program to be replicated to further ensure success Despite recommendations to further build the evidence base, in line with these rigorous standards, the report does recognise that scientific evaluations also have their limitations. These include the fact that scientific knowledge is always being refined and at any point in time is only provisional, that generalizations are always difficult due to the fact that while internal validity can be

managed to a certain extent, the approach and rules are less clear as regards external validity (Sherman, 1998). Sherman et al (1998) recommendthat while process evaluations can produce valuable evidence they cannot demonstrate whether programmes work or not, and while combined impact and process evaluations are the most informative these can be expensive and time consuming. They recommend that a few strong evaluations are better and more cost effective than multiple poor quality evaluations (quality over quantity), that an emphasis should be placed on impact evaluations to build a stronger evidence base of effectiveness and that funding should be set aside specifically for evaluation. While Harper and Chitty (2005) appear to straddle the boundaries of what constitutes improved knowledge, accepting conceptually that there are possibilities and opportunities beyond the narrower "what works" standard, they conclude that the only way to certainly demonstrate effectiveness is to adopt appropriate research design to test for outcomes, with this design normally requiring some form of randomised control trials. A similar review within the Northern Ireland context (NIO, 2008) states that evaluations within the UK and Ireland have rarely achieved the rigorous standards set out in the Maryland Report and that there is little if any firm evidence of "what works" in crime reduction. They arguably promote a much more open dialogue in terms of achieving the objective of strengthening links "between policy and good quality research evidence" (ibid, P9). In particular they state that "The idea that science can tell us "what works" and "what doesn't" in crime reduction is a seductive idea" (NIO, 2008. Pix). Echoing the Maryland Report they state that science is provisional or contingent and always developing but argue for more theoretically rich research which asks 'how' changes work in addition to 'what works'. They also caution firstly against 'programme fetishness' or the desire to evaluate those programmes with clear guidelines and manuals simply because they are easier to evaluate and secondly, treating potentially important contextual factors or mechanisms as extrinsic such as interpersonal dynamics or relationships. They also distinguish between the medical model approach of the "what works" literature where one can be "cured" and the real life scenario of crime, rehabilitation and desistance where the role of agency is key. In short, while they argue for the need for better quality evidence there is a strong argument towards a more open and generative approach to knowledge and evidence creation including better theorising and the adoption of a range of research approaches including "observational, ethnographic methods, interviews with criminal justice clients, and "basic" scientific research into the processes of criminal aetiology and desistance" (xi).

The recently updated Magenta Guidelines (HM Treasury, 2011) also evidence a strong move from the narrower interpretation of 'what works', defining evaluation broadly as "an objective process of understanding how a policy or other intervention was implemented, what effects it had,

for whom, how and why" (P11) and the repeated recommendation that "Evaluations need to be tailored to the type of policy being considered, and the types of questions it is hoped to answer" (P11). The guidelines are premised in the notion that good evaluation is required to ensure that value for money is achieved on public monies and that the "ability to obtain good evaluation rests as much on the design and implementation of the policy as it does on the design of the evaluation" (P5). This has a number of important connotations for the evaluation approach – it requires that evaluations deliver more than pass/fail judgments but should also provide information to improve less effective policies, identify the better and more successful aspects of a policy and support the targeted investment of resources. The guidelines also stress the importance of underpinning evaluations with a strong understanding of the theory underlying the intervention evaluated. However, it echoes the Maryland report stating that while there is merit in process evaluations, conclusions on the ultimate outcomes will generally require impact evaluations which establish the counterfactual (what would have happened in the absence of the policy) by controlling for compounding variables or other factors which might have played a role and will generally only be achieved by randomised control trials or other similar alternatives, where possible (Magenta, 2011). The barrier as such remains high for any definitive conclusions albeit that it is recognised that empirical impact evaluations are less feasiblewhere there is a complex relationship between outcome of interest and drivers of change, with many potential compounding factors; where a small effect is expected and effect builds up slowly over a long period of time, and there is subjective allocation of policy. (HM Treasury, 2011)

Pawson and Tilley (2004, Tilley, 2000) have repeatedly criticised the approach of the "what works" literature for its lack of theoretical basis and failing to provide cumulative knowledge and for the fact that they ignore programme context by aggregating results across multiple studies. We will subsequently explore their proposed methodology, realistic evaluation, a form of theory based evaluation which is generally viewed as the main alternative for complex social programmes (Magenta, 2011, Holma et al, 2011, Miles et al 2006). Ward and Maruna (2007) also adopt an interesting angle to the 'what works' debate, coming also from a critical realist perspective, by suggesting that in the area of offender rehabilitation ""What works" is probably the "wrong question".Rather "What helps people go straight?" (P12) might be more enlightening due to, the difficult to concretely prove, but generally accepted, fact that a significant amount of people do go straight. They argue that unless the process of desistance from crime "is completely random, some things must be helpful in making this transition. To deny this is to deny everything most of us believe about the social world." (P13). They argue that to answer the second question "What helps people go straight" (P12) similar approaches and methodologies including random control trials and

systematic reviews are useful, but that this does not mean excluding other approaches such as interviewing ex-offenders to find out what worked or helped them go straight and to develop theories on how rehabilitation works within the natural environment. Similar to the NIO (2008) they also refer to the importance of human agency with the analogy that although computers are an important help to complete a book, they will not complete the book in and of themselves. This call by Ward and Maruna (2007) which reflects a less narrow approach to knowledge creation is probably at the heart of the balance which needs to be struck between building a robust evidence base and the rigorous but also somewhat restrictive evidence-based approaches which have become the almost de facto standard internationally for government policy and funding decisions. Miles et al (2006) summarise the position by claiming that while many commentators have argued for the exploration of other approaches "the official response to this problem has been to reassert the primacy of the positivist experimental research model" (Miles et al, 2006, P16). They refer to this as "naïve positivism" and recount the main criticisms of this approach by commentators as "(a) whether the experimental method is actually achievable and (b) whether it can deliver what it claims in terms of knowledge" (P16). Miles et al(2006) suggest that the "main alternative to positivism and the experimental approach in social research is 'realist' evaluation" (P17), to which we will now turn.

Realistic evaluation is a theory driven evaluation approach (Coryn et al, 2011) based on a generative view of causation which treats context and mechanisms as intrinsic to an understanding of change and is grounded in the philosophy of realism. As Pawson and Tilley point out (2004, Tilley, 2000) realism itself is not a research technique but a 'logic of inquiry'. Guided by this philosophy realist evaluation also adopts an exploratory and explanatory quest whereby programme theories are understood and tested for the purposes of refining them. Realist evaluation aims to answer the question of "What works for whom, in what circumstances and in what respects and how?" (ibid, 2004, P2). Prior to elaborating on the technical approach of realist evaluation is important first to look at how a social programme is viewed under this approach. Pawson & Tilley (2004) outline, uncontroversially, that social programs to address specific problems are concerned with change or, what they describe as, effecting a change in an existing regularity deemed to be problematic. Evaluation attempts to understand how these regularities are altered, but recognises that the programmes themselves are complex interactions amidst a complex social reality. Programmes themselves are regarded as theories and it is the aim of realistic evaluation to explain the various theories underlying the programme. Programmes can entail various different interventions and in turn interventions can have various different components. Particularly for more complex social changes there can be many possible theories. Henceforth, the terminology of interventions will be used in place of programmes. A realist view of interventions assumes that they are 'theories' as

described above, that they are 'embedded' or located within social systems, that they are 'active' in that they are located within and affected by the reasoning and resources of those involved in or affected by the intervention, and finally that they are part of 'open' systems and for that reason cannot be protected or kept aloof from various personal, social, political and other externalities. Realist evaluation works towards understanding the theories of change involved in interventions through its concept of 'context-mechanism-outcome pattern configuration' (CMOC) which explains how different elements of an intervention come together to result in various outcome patterns. Pawson & Tilley (2004) use the metaphor of a recipe which requires "assembling the right ingredients in the correct proportion to suit the tastes of the diner" (P10) to explain the realist approach to causality where outcome patterns follow from the coming together of a specific combination of attributes. The CMOC pattern explains how an intervention activates a mechanism in a particular context to produce outcome patterns. The mechanism relates to the elements and attributes of a measure which cause it to have a particular outcome pattern in a particular context or what it is about an intervention that can bring about effects. To use a practical example from an arts perspective a mechanism may include the resources made available to participants including access to experts, materials, feedback, skills and other forms of support as well as the motivation, choices, attitudes, decisions and reasoning of the participants themselves. Pawson and Tilley (2004) emphasise that realistic evaluation is based on a "profoundly sociologically view of change" (P4) where interventions are based on the resources they make available to enable individuals to change, and how the individuals interpret and apply them to make them work. Context is also a pivotal aspect which may enable or prohibit certain mechanisms from working in a particular way. Tilley (2000) describes context as the conditions "needed for a measure to trigger mechanisms to produce particular outcome patterns" (P7).

Again turning to the example of an arts intervention the conditions may vary significantly from one intervention to another and this may relate to either the facilities available, the context of participation (for example whether the participant is drug free) or what theirneeds and expectations of the intervention are. Active or passive participation can alter the context; if someone is there for alternative reasons such as merely to access materials this is a different context to someone who is there and eager to turn their lives around or actively engage in the process. Evidently there are many factors which can produce a range of different outcome patterns for, what may appear on the face of it, similar interventions. Pawson & Tilley (2004) describe a prison education programme which is illuminating for arts interventions thus - "For instance, a programme of prisoner education and training may offer inmates the immediate resources to start on the road to reform. Whether the ideas transmitted will cement depends on a further four I's: i) the individual capacities of trainees

and teachers, ii) the interpersonal relationships created between them, iii) the institutional balance within the prison toward rehabilitation or containment, iv) the wider infrastructural and welfare systems that support or undermine the return to society" (P4). The goal of realistic evaluation, in summary, is to elucidate the underlying theories of how an intervention works by formulating a number of CMOC theories of how mechanisms are activated for whom and under what conditions or contexts. The goal is then to test these CMOC theories through the collection of appropriate or best available data, to interrogate and systematically test the theories, and finally interpret the results.

So what approach offers the best alternative for arts interventions?Miles et al (2006) cite Smith (2004:43) in asserting that the positivist experimental approach due to the fact that it controls for so many variables results in "decontextualized preoccupation with outcomes" and such conclusions are inconclusive or contradictory due to the very fact that "the theories that it is supposed to be testing depend crucially on the context and process of their implementation" (P18). Miles et al(2006) argue that, as it is virtually impossible for most arts organisations as currently configured to reach the official standards required by the Home Office, the main opportunity "lies with process evaluations and the exploration of intermediate or non-reconviction outcomes" (P17)and that a "multi-method realist evaluation framework offers the arts in criminal justice a more sympathetic and workable research model"(P17). In contrast while Sanderson(2002) does recognise the promise of theory driven evaluation approaches such as realistic evaluation, he cautions that this approach "presents significant challenges in terms of articulating theoretical assumptions and hypotheses, measuring changes and effects, developing appropriate tests of assumptions and hypotheses, and in terms of the generalizability of the results obtained in particular contexts." (P64) It is considered here however, in concurrence with Miles et al (2006), that on balance, realistic evaluation is the most appropriate model for the arts. This is due to the fact that the processes involved in the arts are deeply sociological and in the language of Pawson and Tilley (2004), realistic evaluation is profoundly sociological in its approach. Secondly, as a counter challenge to Sanderson's critique, the fact that it is a complex approach does not invalidate its appropriateness. One of Sanderson's (2002) key criticisms of theory driven evaluation is due to "inadequacies in our capacity to theorise social processes due to the prevalence of linear, closed system thinking which fails to recognise processes of reciprocal causation, fuzzy conceptual boundaries, and the influence of social context on how programmes work" (P65). However, again this represents a challenge to overcome rather than a reason for dismissing. The key goal it is argued here is to expand knowledge rather than to fallaciously attempt to take short cuts to attempt simple answers to complex questions. This recommendation is not however to set the arts outside the realms of accountability in terms of outcomes but rather to acknowledge what is currently possible until better and more

comprehensive knowledge is developed. There remains an onus on arts organisation to effectively 'up the game' in terms of defining and communicating aims and objectives of programmes, embedding evaluation in programmes, and developing clear theoretical and explanatory frameworks. It is to the concept of explanatory theoretical frameworks to which we will now turn. Arts organisations have for too long been constrained in an attempt to fit in to the evidence based practice model – effectively trying to place a square peg in a round hole. This has resulted in poorer quality evidence and methodologies due to the perceived need to demonstrate direct impact on reducing re-offending. Recent literature (Arts Alliance, 2011) is suggestive of a more positive approach focussed on working towards intermediate, non-reconviction outcomes, developing the underlying theory base, and improving the quality of a range of approaches in particular qualitative approaches.

Explanatory theoretical frameworks - Theories of change

On the basis that one of the key criticisms of the arts literature is the lack of a theoretical base to underpin good quality research, and that a better understanding of the theory base of how and why programmes work, or have effects, is increasingly emphasised as a fundamental aspect of any type of evaluation (HM Treasury, 2011), this study now turns to the theories of change or change models which underpin arts interventions. It firstly explores the theories of change which have been suggested or are currently emerging specifically within the literature on arts interventions. Secondly, it looks towards the wider psychological and sociological theories of change which have wider application but which bolster or align with the existing and emerging theories within the arts (Hughes et al, 2005). Finally the study looks towards the core theories of change in criminological literature – theories of rehabilitation and desistance.

Hughes et al (2005) provide examples of the processes and outcomes associated with a number of specific arts forms – visual arts and film, drama, theatre and performance, creative writing, dance and music. They outline that music involves learning and using patterns to develop language and communication skills and a more refined interpretation of the world. While they caution that the examples are not comprehensive or fully refined, they claim they represent a good starting point or "some theoretical bases for substantiating claims for the effectiveness of arts practice" (Hughes et al, 2005, P70). While they note, using the language of realistic evaluation, that there may be "mechanisms within different art forms that lead to specific effects or impacts" (P70), there would appear to be a significant degree of overlap "which suggest generic, or broader conclusions to substantiate claims for the effectiveness of arts provision" (P70). While they

acknowledge that knowledge is far from complete they suggest that these are "stepping-stones towards the development of testable models of change which might inform future research" (P63). This would accord in many respects with the theory refining concept and objective of realistic evaluation. More generally, they suggest that "arts work on affective, cognitive and behavioural, as well as neurological levels. Themes that recur across all art forms relate to the role of the arts in improving perceptual/thinking ability and emotional insight and, above all perhaps, in creating a context (physical, social, emotional) to facilitate personal change." (Hughes, 2005, P70)

Hughes et al (2005) provide one of the most comprehensive accounts of theories of change from an arts perspective, drawing on a range of established explanatory models in psychology and sociology including cognitive behavioural theory, role theory/social learning theory, resilience theory, social capital theory, learning theory, intelligence theories and arts therapies. They suggest that many outcomes associated with these more established models are similar to those which the arts literature suggests result from arts interventions. Resilience theory in particular would appear to align significantly to many of the processes and outcomes identified in the broader arts literature and in some of the results arising from this study (Chapter five) with individual resiliency factors including: cognitive competence (ability to think abstractly and flexibly); social competence (empathy, acting independently, sense of humour); goal-oriented competence (ability to set goals and make plans, motivation); physical competence (health/fitness); and civic competence (participation, respect) (Hughes et al, 2005). Mc Guire (2009) also looks to similar theories to explicate the workings of an arts based programme 'Family Man' as outlined further below.

Many of the outcomes associated with arts have a significant crossover with those arising from other explanatory models (Hughes et al, 2005). They suggest that the "transtheoretical model of change" (P57)from health research (a concept which has also been used by Maruna (2000) in the field of desistance) is a useful perspective in that it suggests commonality in change processes across different theories and interventions and describes features implicit in all change processes. Perhaps most importantly, the processes here are "cyclical rather than linear, where relapse is the norm" (P57). This trans-theoretical model suggests three key dimensions of change – the processes of change, the levels of change and the stages of change. It is considered worthwhile to elaborate on these as it can inform the concept of readiness for arts interventions. The first dimension 'processes of change' refers to those activities used by individuals to change behaviour for example, consciousness raising, self-liberation, self re-evaluation, and helping relationships. The second dimension 'levels of change' refers to that which needs to be changed including cognitive ability, interpersonal skills and family systems. Finally 'stages of change' refer to when change actually occurs for example pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance. This

parallels to some extent to the Prison Arts Foundation's characterisation of the journey of change involving a number of temporal stages. The PAF sees artistic activity in a prison following a number of stages which represent the journey of change, commencing with 'doodling', an activity done in isolation where ideas are generated and creativity has its expression. This phase leads to the interaction stage or 'drama' which is characterised by relationship, exchange, negotiation and conflict. At this stage the prisoner attempts to improve at the activity, requiring concentration and representing the first stage of learning. Finally, the journey reaches what they term the 'exhibition' stage, or performance part which involves the acquiring of new skills. These skills are presented as the participants offering or as a part of their identity "Here I am. This is my offering" (PAF, 2011). This phase involves positive exchanges, community building, inclusion, the sharing of viewpoints, appreciation, judgment formation and the development of self-esteem amongst other processes. While these phases are intuitively understood to be part of the rehabilitation journey, the PAF works on the principle that this journey takes place outside any explicit rehabilitation agenda and is primarily, open, expressive, encouraging and supportive in approach. "Art is a medium for change – Prison is just a venue" (PAF 2011).

In turning to criminological models of change or rehabilitation theories, it is pertinent to note that another criticism of criminal justice interventions in general (NIO, 2008) and criminal justice arts interventions in particular (Hughes et al, 2005, Miles et al, 2006, Arts Alliance, 2011) is that they lack a clear theoretical base and do not "consider the basic criminological science behind why these interventions should (or should not) work, nor ….review the best developed theories of change involving criminal behaviours." (NIO, 2008, xi).Ward et al(2007) state that a good theory of offender rehabilitation should act as a bridge between causation and treatment; it should they argue be clear and comprehensive and "specify the aims of therapy, provide a justification of these aims in terms of its core assumptions about aetiology and the values underpinning the approach, identify clinical targets, and outline how treatment should proceed in the light of these assumptions and goals" (P92). At the most practical level they argue that rehabilitation theories should translate into practice on the ground by specifying the most suitable type of treatment, guide therapists attitudes towards offenders, address motivation and define and give a central position to the therapeutic alliance. As such a theory must be overarching and comprehensive acting as the overall blueprint within which clinical and treatment decisions are made and relationships are managed and developed. The following analysis looks at three theories of offender rehabilitation – risk needs responsivity, good lives model and desistance to determine which if any could or should guide the rehabilitative nature of arts interventions in criminal justice settings.

The risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model is founded on a general personality and cognitive social learning theory of criminal conduct. It is based on three principles.The 'Risk' principle relates to who should be treated and is based on the assumption that criminal behaviour can be reliably predicted and that treatment should focus on the higher risk offenders. It suggests that recidivism can be decreased if treatment levels provided are proportional to the offender's risk to reoffend. The 'Need' principle refers to what should be treated and recognises that while offenders may have many needs requiring treatment, not all of these are criminogenic and as such there is a focus on criminogenic need or dynamic risk factors. An example provided by Andrews and Bonta (2007) is that although treatment may increase self-esteem this may not positively impact criminal behaviour and could merely result in more confident criminals. The 'Responsivity' principle determines how treatment should be provided and is broken down into general and specific responsivity. General responsivity is based on cognitive social learning and in practice the treatment approach includes "pro-social modelling, the appropriate use of reinforcement and disapproval, and problem solving" (P1). Specific responsivity is referred to by Andrews and Bonta (2007) as a "fine tuning" of the cognitive behavioural approach and accounts for "strength, learning style, personality, motivation and bio-social characteristics of the individual" (P1). The practice approach described by Andrews and Bonta (2007) includes a number of key characteristics: emphasis on a tailored approach; recognition that change processes are complex and influenced by many factors; the need to attend to a whole range of personal-cognitive social factors, the need to attend to motivation and barriers to participation in treatment and the need to attend to or deal with an offender's readiness for treatment. This model has been described as one of the most influential rehabilitation models with a strong evidence base (Ward and Maruna, 2007). However, Ward et al (2007) argue that as a theory of rehabilitation it is conceptually lacking and adopts a reductionist approach to human behaviour, failing adequately to address human agency, personal identity, offender motivation, and human needs. Theyargue that the emphasis on avoidance goals is a major impediment to successful treatment and practice and that it is negatively characterised by a "pin-cushion model" (P88)focusing on removal of individual risk factors rather than a holistic approach. They criticise its failure to adequately prioritise the therapeutic relationship and the fact that it does not adequately address contextual factors associated with offending and rehabilitation resulting in a "mechanistic, one-size fits all approach" (P89). Ward et al's criticisms are in the context of a direct comparison with the Good Lives model and as such some of the criticisms when compared to the vision set out by Andrews and Bonta (2007) would appear to be criticisms of degree. Andrews and Bonta (2007) have recognised that many critics object to the focus on criminogenic needs but claim that there is

attention to both sets of needs. However, it appears difficult to reconcile this argument with their emphasis on criminogenic need and the metaphor of the confident criminal.

The Good Lives rehabilitation model (GLM) is a "strength based perspective concerned with promoting offender's goals alongside managing their risk" (P89). This dual focus is based on the premise that helping offenders lead more fulfilling lives is the most effective way of managing risk. Ward et al (2007) argue the aim is "to equip the offender with the skills, values, attitudes, and resources necessary to lead a different kind of life, one that is personally meaningful and satisfying" (P91) while balancing this with the need to avoid harm to others. This is based on the premise that all human beings are goal-directed organisms who seek a range of primary goods. These primary goods are obtained by secondary goods or in other words the instrumental means used to access them and offending can be considered a socially unacceptable means of attaining these primary goods. A good lives plan requires the addressing of risk factors which "represent omissions or distortions in the internal and external conditions required toimplement a good lives plan in a specific set of circumstances" (P92). There are a number of fundamental dimensions of the Good Lives model. It emphasises the construct of personal identity and the need to provide offenders with "the opportunity to fashion a more adaptive personal identity, one that bestows a sense of meaning and fulfilment" (Maruna, 2001, In Ward 2007 P92) and also emphasises the importance of continuity for the offender between the ""old" offending self and the construction of a new self" (P95)by emphasising the continuation of commitments and values in respect of primary gods but a change in how these are obtained or achieved. The GLM is described (Ward et al, 2007) as holistic in its approach recognising the need to be tailored or individually shaped to address the offenders' strengths, conceptualisation of a good lives plan, relevant environmental factors and identify competencies and resources required to implement the plan. In terms of treatment the therapy process and the therapeutic alliance are seen as pivotal. Most fundamentally the GLM is a "positive model, based on the assumption that people are more likely to embrace positive change and personal development, and so the kinds of language associated with such an approach should be future-oriented, optimistic and approach-goal focussed"(P93). Ward et al (2007) acknowledge that critics have argued that such strength based approaches are idealistic and simplistic. However, he argues that the GLM is realistic in that its aim is to "promote what goals are possible, taking into account each offender's unique set of circumstances" (P96). In particular "constraints relating to offender's abilities, the provision of resources, and the degree of support in their environments moderate the nature of such plans" (P97). As Ward et al(2007; Ward and Maruna, 2007) point out strength based models such as GLM are beneficial, appealing and motivational as "offenders want better lives not simply the promise of less harmful ones"(P106).

Desistance while not an overarching rehabilitation theory such as RNR or GLM is a key resource in that it can shed light on the processes of individual change.Maruna (2000; In Mc Neill, 2004) has recommended, that due to the limitation of both rehabilitation and desistance on their own, "with the desistance research's focus on the successstories of those that desist offering an 'individual-level view' that, inpartnership with the rehabilitation literature's identification of generalpractices that seem successful, can better inform understandings of thechange processes involved." (P427). Primary desistance is inherently difficult to measure (Anderson et al, 2011); however, many evaluations of shorter and medium term outcomes suggest that participants on arts courses at least believe that they have improved their chances demonstrating hope for the future and suggesting transformations of one form or another. There is also (mainly anecdotal) evidence that people have utilised what they have discovered or learned inside, on the outside including continuing in art education or building careers within that domain (Arts Alliance, 2011). The outcomes identified in arts interventions are generally shorter term and relate to components suggestive of secondary desistance. The concept of 'generativity' in desistance described as a "product of both inner drives and social demands" (Maruna, 2000, P118) also has a number of parallels with arts processes and outcomes as well as other sociological and psychological theories considered to underpin arts practice such as role theory (Hughes et al, 2005) and could merit further exploration.

The Arts Alliance (2011) has pointed out that the Good Lives Model "has a growing credibility within key areas of criminal justice policy, especially regarding interventions with sex offenders" (Arts Alliance, 2011, P33) and it is suggested therein that there are opportunities in evaluating impacts of arts based interventions to connect with more strength based models, using criteria from both the desistance model and the Good Lives Model. The Arts Alliance (2011) also suggests that the desistance model of change and rehabilitation has current credibility with the Ministry of Justice and suggest that key components of this model are often recited by participants following interventions including role of family and relationships; hope and motivation; having something to give; having a place within a social group; not having a criminal identity; being believed in. The holistic nature of GLM and the fact that it is a positive model which supports positive change and personal development would appear to align more closely with the philosophy of the PAF. However, without compromising on this philosophical outlook and values, the collection of evidence supporting the addressing of what are accepted as criminogenic needs may satisfy a criminal justice audience.

The state of the art – what the front runners are currently doing

It should also be borne in mind, as pointed out by the Arts Alliance (2011), that the degree of progress and sophistication in undertaking evaluations ranges significantly. This, they argue, ranges from the new entrants who try to evaluate too much and perhaps with less quality and success to those more mature organisations, experienced in evaluation, who carry out specialised and robust evaluations. Two examples provided by the Arts Alliance (2011) include SafeGround and Geese Theatre. Geese Theatre for example specialises in specific areas and works with academic institutions to test models of change and supports its work with robust methodologies including the collection of quantitative data. SafeGround specifically ring-fences funding for external evaluation, carries out almost annual evaluations which include exploring explanatory theoretical models for how interventions work and also constructing measurement frameworks supported by strong data collection. Others have also adopted combined impact and process evaluations and improved disclosure of the methods deployed and the assumptions made (Cox and Gelsthorpe 2008).

Mc Guire (2009) in a review of the 'Family Man' programmedemonstrates a theoretical approach and presents the evidence base in a non-quantitative manner by proposing "a conceptual or theoretical basis" (P2) for the work involved in a "structured, drama-based, educational programme….to help maintain links between prisoners and their families during the difficult period of separation" (P2). This programme 'Family Man' delivered by SafeGround, he suggests, achieves its effects through a number of different mechanisms, a realist term for defining what it is about the programme that brings about effects, and proposes a hypotheses or model to explain this change addressing the programme activities, the taxonomy domains (cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains) through which it works and the group factors which stimulate and support change (Mc Guire, 2009, P14). While such evaluative work does not constitute evidence of effect it represents a substantial tool to support improved and more structured exploratory, explanatory and evaluative work.

Similarly, Maruna (2010) developed a logic model based on the identification of processes at play and resulting outcomes in a music intervention 'Changing Tunes'. The method was based on a grounded theory approach, as it was considered that this would best reflect the experiences of the participants and represent a realistic as opposed to idealistic account (Maruna, 2010). He suggested that the resulting logic model was a plausible rehabilitation model which could be refined or substantiated by further testing.

While not a recent study, Duguid & Pawson's (1998) study of a liberal arts university prison education program in Canada based on a realistic evaluation approach has been recognised in the

literature as a relatively unique case of robust evidence supported by high quality methodologies (Hughes et al, 2005). This study did however take in excess of two years (Duguid & Pawson, 1998) and demonstrates the rigour which must be applied in a situation where the context and mechanisms are highly complex.

CHAPTER 3: TOWARDS A CREDIBLEEVALUATIONFRAMEWORK

One of the key aims of this study was to work towards a credible evaluation approach forarts interventions within a custodial setting. Having covered the literature on evaluation, the important question to ask is what we mean by 'credible'. While this may appear a ridiculous question, it comes to the heart of the challenge for the arts sector and the question of what constitutes robust evidence of effect. Dictionary definitions of credible return words such as' trustworthy', 'reliable', 'dependable',' believable', 'convincing', 'plausible', 'likely' and 'realistic' to name but a few.The 'What works' standard described above is based on 'reasonable certainty' that crime or risk factors are reduced. While there is much criticism of the appropriateness and achievability of the 'what works' standard this may be as much due to what Miles et al (2006) describe as the restrictive manner in which standards have been applied in official circles and the tendency to "reassert the primacy of the positivist experimental model" (P17). While it is not possible within the scope of this review to fully address this ongoing debate about what constitutes knowledge, truth or more specifically good evidence, the standard which this study aims to achieve is similar to all the above variants of the definition of credible including the'what works' concept of reasonable certainty. However, this study suggests that knowledge and credibility is not solely achieved through hard statistics in relation to hard outcomes based on positivist experimental principles but based on testing and refinement of our best theories at any given point in time or what Sanderson (2002) refers to as practical wisdom. As Sanderson argues (2002) we must accept the limits of knowledge in dealing with ambiguity and accept that a broader framework of reasoned argument and judgment is required in certain cases which allow us to "make rational assessments stepping stones to reasonable decisions and ensuring that we take action that is 'appropriate' to situations" (P71). To do otherwise in the context of the complex field of arts interventions within criminal justice custodial settings would result in forever trying to seek a perfect truth or perfect knowledge, possibly never reaching a position to test or refine our understanding.

The aim of this study was notto provide simplistic answers to complex questions (Pawson & Tilley, 2004) but rather to provide a conceptual framework within which programmes can be designed, or perhaps more usefully within which the design of existing programmes can be communicated. The Magenta Guidelines (HM Treasury, 2011) state that "establishing a framework for the evaluation provides a consistent and systematic means to designing the evaluation, collating and analysing the existing evidence and the new data created, and generating and interpreting the results"(P53). The framework set out below is a theory-based evaluation approach which "provides an overarching framework for understanding, systematically testing and refining the assumed
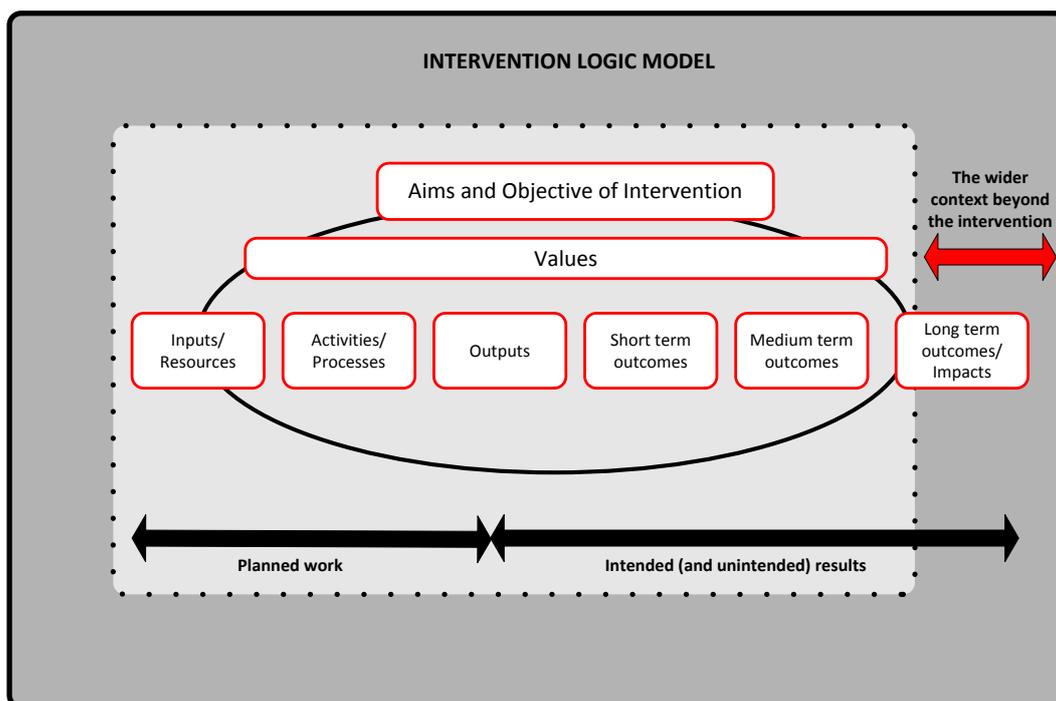
connections (i.e. the theory) between an intervention and the anticipated impacts" (HM Treasury, 2011. P37). It adopts a realistic evaluation approach to understanding the ultimate question of 'What works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how?' (Pawson & Tilley, 2004, P2). The framework outlined below may appear laborious but to do otherwise would be to ignore the complex dynamics of the social world and the individuals who make it up(Pawson & Tilley, 2004). The framework is guided by Pawson & Tilley's caution that to achieve success in this field is no easy won battle "Realist evaluation requires sustained thinking and imagination to work through programme theory, to define expected outcome patterns, and to figure out exactly what footprints or data signatures to look for and where to find them to test or arbitrate between theories. None of this is easy. It requires advanced theoretical understanding, abilities to design research and techniques for data analysis." (2004, P23).

The framework is presented below acrosssix stages. The first three stages are iterative and should be reconciled prior to moving on to the selection of the specific hypotheses to be tested in stage 4. While many components of the evaluation framework posited here may be usable in more generic settings, the discussion and commentary relates to the field of arts interventions within a criminal justice custodial setting. Merely defining and communicating stages 1 and 2 in a coherent and consistent manner would represent significant progress for many arts organisations.

Stage 1:Understanding and communicating the intervention as theory

This stage is based on developing a logic model for the intervention based on a theory driven evaluation approach as (Diagram 1). 'Inputs/Resources' refer to the resources required to achieve the intervention objectives and for arts interventions may include the arts facilitator, art materials, facilities, and participants. 'Activities/Processes' are what is delivered to the recipient, and for an arts intervention might include the nature of the activity, for example a seminar, a workshop or a performance. Sub-activities may include group discussion, skills development, facilitator feedback or research of ideas. At a specific art form level, such as drama,activities may include role-play and learning of lines. These elements may be uninteresting in themselves but it is the attributes of these elements which provide a more illuminating insight into these aspects categorised as planned work in Diagram 1. For example, a facilitator represents an 'input/resource', but the attributes of that facilitator are arguably the more important with much literature pointing to the importance of the role of respect for the artists andthat of the therapeutic alliance. Hughes et al (2005), points out that "Practice in the US tends to favour a 'master artist' model where contact with a professional artist is thought to enrich the creative process and provide a model of a non-traditional career path for offenders" (P51). Other important attributes of 'inputs/resources' and 'activities/processes' may

include the class size, the profile of the participants and the quality and availability of resources and facilities. The class size could, for example, determine whether the desired mechanism was triggered or not; for example, too many participants may result in failure to trigger creativity or alternatively too few participants may fail to trigger group dynamics.'Outputs' are categorised below as both planned work and intended results and refer to what is produced by the intervention or what the recipient does with the resources. From an arts intervention perspective outputs can relate to either the number of sessions delivered, levels of attendance or may also refer to products of the intervention such as the exhibition, a completed painting or book, or a performance. 'Outcomes'refer to the effects on the targeted beneficiaries. The target beneficiaries may primarily relate to the participants on arts interventions but it is generally suggested that outcomes can have a wider effect extending beyond the direct participant population, to other prisoners and staff as well as families and the wider community. 'Impacts' are used to describe the wider effects of the programme in the medium to long term and are sometimes referred to also as 'long term outcomes'. These may include wider societal and economic benefits such as reductions in re-offending. It is extremely doubtful whether reductions in re-offending is a realistic target for most art organisations due to the contextual factors discussed in chapter 1, and the wider context beyond the intervention particularly personal and environmental factors affecting the rehabilitation journey post release. As such it is more realistic to try to establish intermediate outcomes to demonstrate effectiveness, particularly those linked to criminological models of change such as desistance. A list of sample outcomes is included in Appendix 1.

INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL

Aims and Objective of Intervention

Values

| Inputs/ Resources | Activities/ Processes | Outputs | Short term outcomes | Medium term outcomes | Long term outcomes/ Impacts |

The wider context beyond the intervention

Planned work | Intended (and unintended) results

*Diagram 1: Adapted version of the Kellogg Foundation Logic Model (HM Treasury, 2011)

The main adaptations to the basic Kellogg Foundation Logic modelreflect what are considered from the literature to be important additional influencers of the causal pathways leading to outcomes. The first adaptation relates to the explicit inclusion of aims and objectives of the intervention within the framework. A recurring criticism within the arts literature is the failure to communicate the aims and objectives of interventions. The second adaptation involves the separation of outcomes into initial outcomes, intermediate outcomes and long term outcomes due primarily to the fact that outcomes identified in arts interventions are generally shorter or medium term and relate to components suggestive of secondary desistance (Anderson et al, 2011). The third adaptation involves the inclusion of values. Ward (2007) has written extensively on the importance of values in rehabilitation theories and similarly but within the NGO context,Holma et al (2011) argue that "understanding values is essential for a proper understanding of mechanisms searched for by realistic evaluation" (P187). They explain that while some NGOs may value gender equality some may believe in respecting traditional cultural gender arrangements. Equally it is considered here that no intervention is value neutral and we should try to explicate these values and understand their implications. The fourth adaptation is to depict outcomes as both planned work and/or intended results rather than as merely intended results under the traditional model. This is to recognise the fact that for many arts interventions the relationship between an output and an outcome is not directly linear. To provide some examples here it is suggested that while the creation of a painting may result in an output (a painting ready for exhibition), the outcome of increased confidence may relate to the creative activity of the social dynamic involved in creating the painting but not the painting itself. Conversely, the painting itself may be the generative factor which leads to the outcome where the outcome of self-esteem or improved family relationships is generated by the pride in the painting itself. This is to suggest that the relationship between outputs and outcomes can vary and is not necessarily in all cases linear. The logic model approach has been widely criticised (Holma et al, 2011) for its rigidity due to its linear conceptualisation of change. However, it is suggested here that the model is useful in developing and communicating the elements and attributes of an arts interventiononce it is understood that the processes of change inherent therein are cyclical rather than linear and a sociological perspective is taken. It is suggested here that the logic model provides the first useful stepping stone – a definition of the programme theory and the expected outcome patterns. Practically it provides a useful framework to identify the elements and characteristics of an intervention to supportelaboration onthe Context-Mechanism-Outcome-Configurations (CMOCs) of realist evaluation leading us to the second stage of the framework.

Stage 2:Developing the Context-Mechanism-Outcome-Configuration based on the InterventionLogic Model

Adopting a realistic evaluation approach a range of hypotheses or individual theories of change (CMOCs) may be postulated in relation to the intervention. The aim of this approach is, as Duguid & Pawson (1998) suggest, to "comprehend the suppositions behind the program being evaluated – those theories, ideas, and practices that might account for or explain its success" (P473). Due to the complex nature of art interventions and the multiple pathways which could be followed by the participants, this stage will be based on a number of hunches as to "how the various …interventions are expected to trigger various causal mechanisms within the varying contexts of an initiative and so generate a range of outcomes". (ibid, P473). These 'hunches' should be developed in conjunction with the main stakeholders in the process - prisoners (participants and non-participants), ex-prisoners, practitioners/facilitators, delivery organisations,and management and staff of individual prisons. The literature suggests that outcomes of arts interventions spread more widely into the community including prisoner families and over time, and especially for particular interventions these constituencies should also be used to inform outcomes. To provide a practical example, it is useful to explain the study conducted by Duguid & Pawson (1998) of a liberal arts university prison education program in Canada. The study involved examining post release success of participants,comparing actual post release behaviours with predicted post release behaviour based on a recidivism prediction advice as well as understanding how the programme worked and for whom. Based on staff interviews to understand the program a number of hypotheses were developed to understand the latter question. Following the development of hypotheses the data collection element involved the review of administrative files where 60 variables related to the hypotheses generated were collected. Once all the data was collected and analysed, further discussions were held to further refine the hypotheses and the data was then analysed in detail to test these hypotheses. While not specifically adopting the approach of realist evaluation, other work, within the wider family of theory driven evaluation, includes Maruna's (2010) logic model for Changing Tunes and Mc Guire's (2009) theoretical model for Safe Ground's 'Family Man' programme. The CMOCs are a useful tool as they include a delineation of outcomes or what is generally now referred to in value for money and SORI literature as an outcomes map (Cabinet Office, 2009).

Stage 3:Refine the hypotheses prior to comprehensive data collection

The initial hunches or hypotheses should be refined prior to data collection. This might be done through a range of different research approaches including further consultation with

stakeholders (including prisoners, practitioners, prison staff and the delivery organisation) and review and reconciliation to other existing theories speculated to be of relevance. These could include a range of established sociological and psychological theories which are suggested to be closely aligned with many art specific models of change (Hughes et al, 2005). Again a practical example of this would be Mc Guire's (2009) proposed theoretical framework for 'Family Man' wherein he suggested that the core model of the programme was rooted in cognitive social learning theory and suggested that "it is therefore hypothesized that the following processes are those that are activated by the component materials and exercises and which drive change during, and as a result of, the programme sessions. They are separated into three domains – cognitive, affective, and psychomotor – but in practice this is somewhat artificial and change occurs as a fusion of all three." (P11). Perhaps more importantly hypotheses should be informed and reconciled where possible to emerging criminological theories of change such as desistance to examine and potentially build an evidence base supporting secondary desistance outcomes.

Stage 4: Design and conduct the data collection

Realistic evaluation is open to a variety of data collection approaches and as such there are no prescribed approaches. Rather the aim should be to collect the best available data to support conclusions through a range of systematic methods. Many have criticised the overuse of qualitative methods within the art sector with much of the evidence based on narratives. However, it has been countered that "the mistake the CJS authorities make is that they perceive the evidence to be poor because it is qualitative evidence, whereas the academics think that the qualitative evidence is poor because historically the evaluators are not social scientists, are not trained professionally and not truly independent of the projects". (Arts Alliance, 2011 P34). The use of humanistic and grounded theory approaches would appear to be becoming more widely adopted (Arts Alliance, 2011). It is useful to plan the data particularly in relation to outcomes to ensure that the correct data is obtained at the outset. The Magenta guidelines (HM Treasury 2011) provide a range of general but useful tips on data collection planning. Ellis et al (2011) also provide practical support specifically for arts organisations working within criminal justice settings stating that rather than trying to measure outcomes directly organisations should ask what observable measures or indicators of success will show the extent to which these outcomes are being achieved. They suggest, by example, that for an outcome such as increased motivation, how motivated a project participant feels is only one indicator of motivation, and where it is difficult to measure a specific indicator directly, proxy indicators such as level of participation, take up of other courses and activities, different choices and changed lifestyle, and positive steps to find employment may be equally as useful.

Stage 5:Analyse and interpret the data and present results

Finally the data should be analysed for the purposes of testing the theories, and refuting or refining them.

The following chapter presents a number of tools trialled for the purposes of examining their feasibility to support this model. The tools trialled relate to theory building as opposed to theory testing due to the conclusion that the maturity level of evaluation within the Northern Ireland context is currently low.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A key area of interest ofthis study was to examine from a Northern Ireland context what the possibilities, challenges and restrictions might be in terms of building a credible approach to evaluation of arts interventions within custodial settings. To assess the feasibility of developing and testing the proposed framework outlined above,various research approaches were trialled to examine this feasibility for future comprehensive evaluations. The research approaches adopted were quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative data collected was existing administrative data held by NIPS,therefore not specifically assimilated for this study. The other approaches involved the collection of additional, new data. The data collection tools were informed by tools already trialled and evaluated in other reviews to ensure that existing and emerging best practice was taken into account and to enable comparison to the extent possible (Magenta 2011, Miles et al, 2006). The following methodologies were adopted: distribution of questionnaires to artists/facilitators; observation of art sessions, interviews with prisoners and staff and finally, the collection of data from NIPS on offender characteristics, offence characteristics, intervention details (education and arts), and participation details. These specific methodologies were supplemented throughout (at planning, design and post completion) by conversations with a key stakeholder– The Prison Arts Foundation. Due to the short timeline of the research period, planning and design of the evaluation approaches took place in parallel. As such it was not possible in most cases to apply learnings from individual approaches to others, or to feed information gathered into subsequent stages. In particular, the administrative data was only obtained at the end of the research period and could not inform sampling approaches. However, it is considered that this would be a useful and informative approach to adopt in the longer term. As the objective of this research was to explore feasibility of the approaches rather than to make any substantive conclusions the lack of sampling was not a significant issue, albeit that it would have allowed better sampling for the purpose of interviews to ensure a richer pool of data. For example some or all of the following could have been targeted – ad hoc participants, high attendance participants, non-participants, repeat offenders, new inmates, long term prisoners, and vulnerable prisoners. Each of the methodologies is considered in turn below, commencing with the more qualitative approaches.

Artist Questionnaires

The questionnaire was distributed to all 14 facilitators of various different arts interventions working across the three NIPS institutions. The sample to which it was distributed represented all arts forms

across all three prison institutions. The questionnaire firstly gathered general profile information in relation to hours of facilitation, profile of the participants and descriptions of the art forms delivered. Secondly it collected the facilitators' views on arts interventions within custodial settings including the aims and objectives of the programmes, their views and experiences of how these programmes impact upon the prisoners including any feedback from prisoners themselves, their views on their own roles in the process and the challenges and opportunities to practical implementation and development of such interventions. It was intended that the questionnaire capture details of both the process and outcomes in order to inform the type of theory based evaluation on which the proposed framework is based and was informed by methodological guidance on structured data collection, in particular surveys, and included factual questions, knowledge questions and attitudinal questions (Magenta, 2011). An example of the full questionnaire is included as Appendix 4.

Observation of individual art sessions

Observation of arts sessions was carried out on one occasion only –a visual arts project. It was not possible within the short timeframe to identify a programme at commencement stage to gather baseline information across expected impact indicators or to assess at intervals and/or completion of programme the progress against these indicators. In any event the objective of this methodology was not to measure outcomes but rather to examine the feasibility of the observational technique. At the session the observer was formally introduced at the outset and watched, and participated in, the lively group discussion as well as chatting individually to prisoners as they worked. While a structured templatewas brought to the session it was considered inappropriate at the outset to use this and rather a more open and flexible approach was adopted. The session provided an opportunity to observe and have group and private discussions with prisoners. The content of the semi-structured prisoner interview questionnaire (Appendix 5) wasalso addressed. A summary of the discussions with prisoners and the observer's own observations were written up immediately following the session. Due to the limited sample involved (only oneobservation session)as well as the limited number of participants (7) it was not considered appropriate or useful to content analyse this limited data in line with any particular methodology. However, it was compared to other literature relating to processes and outcomes of such interventions for the purpose of judging the feasibility and value of such an approach.

Interviews with prisoners and staff

While an attempt was made to organise a number of staff interviews, the research timeline, staff work commitments, and the holiday period meant that it was not possible to arrange appropriate times within the time constraints of this research piece. Nonetheless, during the course of other visits a number of informal discussions were held with staff which proved illuminating and as such while the feasibility of this approach was not thoroughly tested it is considered that this would be useful in the future. A template semi-structured questionnaire wasprepared at the outset for the purposes of both prisoner and staff interviews and is attached as Appendix 5. In addition, and again due to the short research timeline, it was not possible to arrange individual prisoner interviews. However, it was possible during the session attended for the purposes of observation, and following that session, to have individual chats with participants. These were also supplemented by group discussions during the session. In addition at the early stages of research planning a focus group was held with a number of prisoners (mainly life sentence prisoners preparing for resettlement) which assisted in informing the approach to this study.

Administrative data collection

In addition to the more qualitative approaches outlined above, it was considered important to identify what level of data was held by the Northern Ireland Prison Service in relation to participation in arts interventions. A number of meetings were held with representatives from the Northern Ireland Prison Service including Learning and Skills staff and Information Technology staff to determine firstly what was recorded and secondly how feasible it would be to collect such information. The key system for storing details on offender characteristics, programme characteristics (e.g. education and arts) and attendance details is the PRISM system. However, the whole profile and history of an offender ismaintained across a range of disparate systems and paper based files and as such there is no one full view of an offender profile readily available. However, for the purposes of this study the PRISM system did store the vast majority of required information and as such was considered a more than adequate starting point for knowledge building. The data collection approach involved a number of stages as follows: Distribution of initial data request to the Northern Ireland Prison Service including proposed safeguards for data handling and risk management procedures (Appendix 2); a meeting with an IT representative to specify in further detail the required and available data fields; on-going correspondence in relation to data transfer,

procedures for anonymising the data,and general data protection requirements.. The data was accessed, summarised and finally anonymised within NIPS headquarters and only wholly anonymous data was taken off site for the purposes of further analysis.

Before proceeding to the results and analysis it is important to note that while there is a wide range of analytical methodologies and tools which could be used in line with the evaluation framework set out above, there are a number of reasons why the selected sample was trialled. Firstly, data collection methods which were considered useful for the purposes of theory building as opposed to theory testing were prioritised. This is due to the fact that this is the first study of its kind within the Northern Ireland context and the fact that the level of maturity of evaluation would thus be considered low. Secondly it was considered that a comprehensive understanding of the logic model underpinning arts interventions needs to be developed and as such the best way to understand this was to observe the interventions in practice and to collect data on the views and experiences of those involved. It was believed that the approaches adopted would explore the feasibility of collecting a range of data types including numerical (the administrative data), factual (the administrative data and factual answers from the questionnaires), observational data (based on the observations of the researcher), and knowledge, experiential and attitudinal data from participants in the process (e.g. prisoners and practitioners). Other research methods including for example profiling, participant diaries and tracking (See Miles, 2006) were considered to be more useful for theory testing of individual hypotheses. It is also important to state that there was one final limitation to scope of the feasibility assessment process. Two important constituencies were not included in the approach – non participating prisoners and ex-prisoners. This again was due to the limitations of the research period but it is considered that capturing the knowledge, experiences and attitudes of these groups is also crucial to theory development.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Results are presented below under each individual methodological approach due to the original objective to test the feasibility of such approaches. By outlining the results of each methodological approach separately it is easier to see the value of each individual approach. There is one exception however. As it was not possible to conduct individual prisoner interviews during the research period, informal discussions were largely conducted during or immediately following the observation sessions. As such, all of this content is presented together as it was considered unrealistic and unrepresentative to try and dissect one from the other due to the natural fluidity of the process.

Artists Questionnaires

Of the sample of 14 questionnaires circulated to artists, six completed questionnaires were returned. All responding artists had been involved in the delivery of arts interventions within a custodial setting for in excess of 5 years, with the exception of one (3-5 years). In total approximately 200 prisoners per week, 90% of whom were male, were seen by this sample of artists. This group of prisoners was relatively evenly divided across age groups, albeit that one of the questionnaires with a total of 70 prisoners significantly skewed the balance towards the 20-25 age group. The group also spanned custodial categories with approximately 25% remand prisoners, 25% life sentence prisoners and the remaining 50% categorised as other. The majority of intervention types were delivered in a group setting or as either group and one-to-one sessions, with one intervention type delivered on a one-to-one basis only.

The results of the questionnaires are presented below in line with some of the elements of the logic model presented in chapter three including 'aims and objectives', 'inputs/resources', 'activities/processes' and 'outcomes'. As an important dimension of realistic evaluation, but equally any theory based evaluation approach, context is also used as a key category in the presentation of results. Responses to questions posed in relation to the main purpose of delivering arts interventions within a custodial setting are illuminating of the 'aims and objectives' but also highlight the value dimension. A number of central themes were repeated across and within questionnaires. It should be noted that the questionnaire relating to art psychotherapy, albeit that it addressed similar values and themes, was different in emphasis and degree and it is considered that the underlying theory or the context-mechanism-outcome-pattern configuration, to use the language of realistic evaluation, may be somewhat unique.

The 'aims and objectives' of interventions are in the main left to the experience and discretion of the facilitators with some pointing to the bottom up or 'organic' nature of delivery where prisoners themselves have a key role in decision making. The aims and objectives had a number of central themes including the facilitation of a space and opportunities to develop and express creativity. Art was seen as a key medium for engaging communication and expression of hidden thoughts, complex ideas, a variety of emotions and as a means of self-reflection and stimulating reflection on offending behaviour. The creative aspect was also considered pivotal to the aims and objectives including personal development in terms of raising self-esteem, self-belief, creating pride in work, encouraging choice and decision making by prisoners, and allowing for an individual contribution. From a therapeutic perspective some of the aims and objectives were to build trust and develop trusting relationships, provide a safe environment for the expression of emotions and discover more positive and less damaging ways of coping as an alternative to self-harm and drugs. The purpose of delivering arts interventions was described in a pragmatic and practical fashion with some explicitly steering away from the terminology of rehabilitation and others recognising that while rehabilitation was an aim this played only a part in the process. Aims and objectives were also described as instrumental including acting as a catalyst or conduit to education, a means to develop new and specific skills and in developing readiness for therapy and the communication of emotions.

In terms of 'inputs/resources' and 'activities/processes' many of the above themes were again recounted. Resources, particularly materials, were in the main considered to be limited. In relation to 'inputs/resources' the role or attributes of the facilitator were described as multiple. For example, one described the role of the facilitator as being a surrogate family member, a confidante and counsellor. Others described the need for the facilitator to bring a touch of humanity within what is a difficult environment and the need for flexibility, patience, perseverance, encouragement and improvisation. While flexibility was considered important there was a repeated emphasis on the need to challenge – the intervention and the facilitator was not, and would not be considered "a pushover". The profile of participants appear to vary considerably with responses highlighting the wide range in literacy and communication abilities, readiness for participation or therapy, some having a range of mental health and behavioural problems and others having significant hidden talents. The most common theme across participants was perhaps the progression route with many suggesting that at the commencement of processes many were reluctant to fully engage or held back significantly on creativity or expression. The 'activities/processes' underpinning arts processes included offering a wide scope and range of art materials and choices, allowing a significant amount of decision-making and choice by the prisoners themselves in terms of how and what they want to

do and achieve, and tailoring the approach to the different needs, abilities and interests of the individuals.

Outcomes spanned a wide range. Personal outcomes included the enjoyment in creating something new, a sense of achievement, enhanced confidence, becoming braver, improving communication skills, enhancing self-reflection, and developing wider perspectives and new ways of thinking. Personal outcomes of a more directly therapeutic nature included enabling participants to make deep seated changes, improving mental health, reducing self –harm and developing improved coping mechanisms. Social outcomes recounted included the development of trusting relationships (primarily but not exclusively with facilitator), improved interaction and communication with fellow inmates and staff, improved behaviour, and better communication skills. Some outlined the benefits from a wider institutional perspective highlighting the role of art in improving the environment through creative produce, improved behaviour and discipline and improved relationships between inmates and staff. Participation in arts and in particular the products of this creativity including paintings, exhibitions or other tangible records of participation and achievement such as CDs were considered to have personal and societal outcomes including something to show family and friends or create something for people outside that they miss. There were some accounts of people continuing with art or the skills developed on the outside through continued classes, professionally, or as businesses. Others pointed to potential indicators of outcomes by highlighting that it can't be bad when people are looking forward to coming, are highly engaged and show progression through researching for information and ideas, and coming up with their own ideas on how to improve or do things differently.

From a contextual perspective, art or the space it created was seen as unique within the prison setting which carried with it many limitations. Contextual limitations in general included the chaotic, disorganised and restrictive prison regime, security issues, classes clashing with other activities such as visits, gym and other sessions considered to be given higher priority. Contextual limitations directly relating to and impacting the delivery of art included limited resources and materials, limited stimuli to promote and nurture creativity and the difficulties in encouraging and enabling prisoners to be brave, step outside the norm and develop an open mind to try new things.Art was distinguished from other forms of 'provision' such as education with some claiming that it was not comparable. Again, creativity was a central theme with one saying that creativity was wholly different to learning. The responses informed the nature of the underlying context and mechanisms highlighting that key factors were the lack of association between art interventions of this type and formal processes such as learning particularly for a large cohort of participants who hated schools and had poor associations with formal and traditional means of learning or

'institutional' processes. The fact that this was seen as an 'open-ended journey' and was not restricted to a programme was also considered important. From a therapeutic perspective contextual obstacles included the fact that the overall system was not designed for people with mental health problems and in many cases their overall needs could not be, and were not, met; with many prisoners not yet emotionally ready to engage.

Finally, artists were asked to provide their views on how a stronger evidence base might be built. A significant list of recommendations was put forward with a high degree of repetition. It was suggested that there was a need to more clearly and concisely pinpoint the benefits and impact of arts within prison settings, without however overstating what it is realistic for the arts to achieve. It was considered that there was a need to clearly express what they were doing and why. From a pragmatic perspective some pointed to the need for better quality research methods, including quantitative data as it was perceived that this was what funders and policy makers wanted. Another suggested the need for new and more refreshing ways to document and present the evidence as statistics were not enough. It was suggested that researchers should both look to innovative approaches adopted by other arts organisations and also incorporate the views of the prisoners themselves "by asking the boys directly how they feel". It was considered that the arts needs to demonstrate and publicly promote what it does and why through showcasing work and highlighting capabilities – demonstrating that prisoners are capable of going good.

Observation of individual art sessions and interviews with prisoners (combined)

The visual arts class attended had a total of seven participants of various ages. The majority of these participants were also actively engaged across a range of arts and education courses, with some doing almost a full week of courses (8-9 sessions). One participant, who described himself as reasonably well educated, was not interested in other programmes 'I'm interested in arts, design, creative things.' Many initially described their main motivations for participation in this type of course as a way to get off the landing, to pass the time or something 'to keep us sane'. Conversations with, or observing other people who were involved, as well as a little bit of further probing, revealed other motivations such as 'It's (the art) something to give to my family' with another suggesting 'you can't give much else'. Some had heard others talking about it and therefore were interested in coming along. One indicated he was now at a better stage of readiness to participate 'The last time I was in I did nothing – just wanted to mess, play about. I want to do it differently now, doing lots of things – not come back in'. The participants were unanimous in saying that they would encourage others to come, with somehaving already done so. However, they were

careful to point out that some people come along, and they know they're not interested – 'Some people come and you know they won't stay. They're just here to get stuff – you know them straight away'. They felt it was unfair that people were on waiting lists who really wanted to come and others came who weren't interested – 'They ruin it for us, the ones that aren't interested'. Many of the observations and comments collected during this observation session have similar footprints to the processes and outcomes already discussed in the literature earlier. It was considered useful to demonstrate some of the overlap in the presentation of these results and as such Maruna's logic model (Maruna, 2010) is used to show the overlap in processes and outcomes between this visual arts session and a different art form, music.

Maruna (2010) describes the process of 'mutual support' as including support and encouragement between participants, the social and bonding nature of the group, and the presence of role models or talented individuals acting as an aspiration for others. Many of these factors were also present in the visual arts class where there was a significant variety in talent and experience across the group. There was a definite sense of collegiality, with a lot of comfortable banter to and fro. Most claimed that the social interaction was a key attraction for them - 'We have the craic, the banter is good. A few of us know each other well now'. There was also evident encouragement between group members with one gently encouraging another -'That's really good. You should put a bit of glitter on that, try it'. It was also observed that one participant appeared to take another under his wing 'that's what I keep telling him – he should keep it up. …. you like it don't you?' There was one participant in particular who was extremely talented and served as a bit of inspiration for some of the others 'You like to see yourself improving – I'd like to be as good as X, maybe someday'.

Maruna (2010) describes 'therapeutic alliance' as an allegiance to the delivery organisation and in particular the bond with the facilitator – this bond was based on respect for the facilitator's talent but also an emotional connection. The facilitator, he suggested practiced a form of "pro-social modelling" (P9). The role of this therapeutic alliance has consistently been signalled as a key element in offending behaviour programmes and in particular as a key element of effective practice in art interventions (Hughes et al, 2005). There was a clear respect for the visual arts facilitator evident in the participants' explanations '[Facilitator] sees stuff I wouldn't see. ….it pushes you on. I can finish this now'.

It was the responsibility given to participants themselves, Maruna (2010) suggested which created a sense of 'collective ownership' with some suggesting that this intervention was for them, something they were in control of. It was evident from the range of visual art being produced that there was a high degree of flexibility. People basically chose what they wanted to do themselves albeit that the facilitator did encourage them to try new things. There were a number of books lying

on the table and participants were encouraged to search for ideas and stimuli. When I asked whether they were going to do a new exhibition, the facilitator immediately asked them if they had any ideas.

Maruna (2010) described the 'challenge' nature of the process as participants getting out of their comfort zones, pushing themselves and being pushed by the facilitator, with the sessions having a purpose-driven and focussed nature. This was clearly a core element of the visual art class where participants were encouraged to put their own stamp on things. One of the participants explained "[Facilitator] makes you think differently. Something you wouldn't do yourself". One of the participants brought me to look at his collection, explaining that he generally did portraits but these were some things he did "for the facilitator….I've definitely done stuff here I wouldn't have done".

Maruna (2010) suggests that the participants were enthusiastic about the 'public performance element of the work and also those who recorded CDs had a sense of pride "treasured proof of their achievements and something they can give as a gift to family members and others" (P13). The 'public performance' element for the visual arts course was represented in a number of ways: an exhibition; the paintings hung in prison halls, in the visiting room and individual cells; and also paintings provided to friends and families. The sense of pride in both progressing and finishing work was evident. I was shown a number of previous works and also many felt pride and utility in that it was something they could give to their families and friends. There was a clear attachment to, and pride in the work.

Maruna (2010) observed the role of 'praise' in the process or "hard-won praise" as the manner in which participants praised and encouraged each other and the impact that this had on participants who rarely get praise in their daily lives. One of the participants who was recognised among the group as extremely talented was continuously praised by his colleagues. However, the role of "hard won praise" was evident when he restarted a painting based on a comment from the facilitator. While he was painting they had an argument about how the painting should look and although he disagreed initially, after looking at it for a while, he wiped it out and started again. While others in the group had already admired the painting he had set himself a different standard. There was an obvious sense of pride in the work and in response to praise many of the participants invited the researcher to look at further work.

Maruna (2010) also discussed how the process 'fostered a sense of achievement' and a "recognition of a person's hidden talents or inner capabilities" (P13). Many of the participants in this present study displayed this sense of achievement in many different ways. Some were adamant that while they were never going to be brilliant artists, they did get a sense of achievement from the

activity itself 'You just keep at it and you see yourself improving. Don't think I will ever be a professional but it's good. I just enjoy it'. This sense of achievement in improving or progressing was a repeating theme 'I'm definitely getting better. I see it'. There was a definite sense of achievement in terms of the completed works – 'I have a painting up in visits –did you see it. It's a XXXX'. The revealing of hidden talents was also important to individuals 'I didn't know I was good at it – I enjoy it'.

A range of outcomes were also identified by Maruna (2010) which he categorised as 'immediate and short term outcomes' and 'medium and long term outcomes'. Many of these immediate and short term outcomes were also mirrored in the visual arts class. 'Emotional energy' in terms of enthusiasm, engagement and excitement was demonstrable – 'I would do this every day if I could' and 'You can just get lost in it'. The visual arts class also appeared to have 'therapeutic benefits', described by many as therapy for them, with one explaining 'It keeps your mind active'. One prisoner showing a painting said it symbolised depression 'I suppose that's depression. You often get like that in here'. He described the art as something to take his mind off missing his family and depression; something he could spend hours doing to pass the time. Many referred to art as a means of keeping them sane and a means of passing away the time or alternatively as Maruna (2010) called it 'coping with the pains of imprisonment' Art was something which could be done in the cell 'You can whittle away for hours at it' and an alternative to the enduring boredom 'My cellmate just watches TV and stuff; I just sketch away'. Maruna (2010) also referred to the benefits for the wider prison environment; while this was not specifically mentioned, there is likely to be some benefit from the number and range of paintings now dotted around the prison including the visitors centre. Participants however did refer to creating paintings to brighten up their cells and also mentioned that other prisoners would come to them occasionally asking them to create something for them.

Maruna (2010) outlined a number of longer term outcomes including 'increased confidence', 'finding one' s voice and creativity', 'an identity separate from being an offender' and 'increased employability'. While the outcome pattern was somewhat different for the arts some of these themes were present. There was a demonstrable degree of confidence with people saying that initially they did not think they would be good at this but clearly able and willing to declare that they were improving. There was suggestion that doing activities of this nature was an avenue to doing things differently this time and perhaps not end up back in there. Generally people were pragmatic about their ability to use their skills and talents professionally or as part of a business, some referring to it as something they would love to do "but who knows", and another saying that it was something that he would consider. Certainly many of the individuals seemed to be committed to

continuing and improvement was a major theme and something that seemed to give enduring satisfaction. The ability to give something to friends and families was important to many, and in terms of outcomes, it is perhaps this outcome of maintaining connections with families and friends, demonstrating that they were doing something meaningful in which they had pride, which was the most evident.

Administrative data collection

The data returned was three year data for the period 2007 to 2009. Before considering the future feasibility of using this data it is necessary to point out some issues in relation to the robustness of the data. Firstly, the integrity of the dataset is questionable for a number of reasons. There are significant gaps across the dataset. While this is acceptable and appropriate in relation to a number of fields which would not necessarily be filled for all participants (e.g. adjudications or session attendance), there were blanks in relation to core contextual information such as postcode (32%), race (6%), first language (4%), and marital status (8%). The absence of key fields which should be completed for all prisoners, calls into question the completeness of the remainder of the dataset and in particular those fields which may or may not be filled for each prisoner. There were also a number of definitive errors identified in the data. This included data in relation to attendance. For example, although total actual attendance for a class may have been recorded as 6, the number of individual prisoners recorded as attending did not in all cases reconcile to this total and as such actual attendance by individual prisoners may be understated.

The nature of how interventions are recorded also complicates the data interrogation process and would need some degree of confirmation to ensure that the data is correctly interpreted. Interventions such as arts and education classes are classified as activities and sessions, with a session relating to the most granular level i.e. an individual class. The terminology used to describe a session varies significantly and is not intuitive. For example sessions are described inconsistently and may include some or all of the following – the time of the session (e.g. Friday am), the name of the person delivering the session, or the location of the session. In some instances some level of the description is provided in the session name e.g. IT course, but this is not the case for the majority. The activity description within which the session sits is generally more descriptive. Data analysis is also complicated by the absence of a unique identifier for an individual session.

Although the dataset collected is based on three year information across the full prisoner population across the three institutions, the samples available for research purposes are considered quite small. It is anticipated that due to data quality and attrition issues this sample would also be

further reduced. The number of session types and attendance levels per session type are low and usable samples are further reduced by the fleeting nature of participation.

It was not feasible within the timeframe of the study to conduct a data cleansing exercise to improve the quality of the dataset but some level of work would be required to utilise this data for the purposes of making research conclusions. However, as a realistic evaluation approach is being proposed in this study it is suggested that the data, even with its limitations could provide a useful resource for hypotheses building. Pawson & Tilley (2004) have referred to this approach as utilising 'leads' for hypotheses testing. The data could be used, in conjunction with other sources, including quantitative approaches such as conversations with prison staff, prisoners and arts practitioners to identify these 'leads'.

There are unavailable data fields which would be useful for the purposes of a study of this type. The unavailable data fields related to literacy and numeracy levels on entry and the on-going assessment or update of literacy and numeracy levels during custody. This type of information on the initial profile of education levels and the development throughout custody could prove a useful measure for outcomes measurement, particularly under the heading 'impact on delivery of education' (See Appendix 1).

While it would be possible, to present 1-year and 2-year recidivism statistics for prisoners and present a comparison between participants on arts interventions, participants on education interventions, participants on both, and non-participants, this is not considered a useful statistic for a number of reasons. Firstly, as Payne (2007) points out prison data of this nature only counts recontact with corrections (those that are caught and charged) and as such may underestimate actual recidivism rates among the population. It may also overstate recidivism for those who were held on remand but not charged (albeit that this could be identified and removed from the data in this instance but may in turn underestimate the two year recidivism data for those awaiting sentencing). Other definitional and counting issues relate to "the type of reoffending chosen as an indicator of recidivism"(Pix) and "the unit of measurement selected to count the indicator event (for example, will the study aggregate offences occurring at the same time on the same day, or will they be counted separately?)" (Pix).Even if the data was considered sufficiently robust to calculate recidivism rates an experimental approach to compare a 'treatment' group, namely participants on arts courses, education courses or arts and education courses to a matched group of non-participantsbased on similar profiles or criminogenic factors such as age, index offence etc. would not be appropriate as this would ignore the questions of motivation and self-selection. A more useful approach might be to utilise this information in conjunction with recidivism prediction devices similar to Duguid & Pawson's (1998) study.

Analysis

The research feasibility tests outlined above sought to examine from a particular Northern Ireland context, what the possibilities, challenges and restrictions might be in terms of conducting a credible evaluation.

While the data was not considered robust enough for the purposes of presentation, it is considered that this would provide a useful resource (once cleansed and clarified) for on-going monitoring and to inform evaluations. Notwithstanding a cleansing and clarification exercise it is likely that the data will continue to have gaps due to operational issues. However, such an exercise will at least highlight the gaps, inform quality control practices, and should in the medium to longer term become a more useful resource.

Even with the limited nature of the feasibility tests it was evident that observational and interview techniques would be key to the roll out of the approach recommended in chapter 3. With a limited amount of follow up conversations with practitioners, staff and prisoners and based on wider psychological and sociological theories, initial logic models and hypotheses could be developed for individual art forms. It would appear from the literature and the limited feasibility testing that there could be a high degree of overlap in terms of processes and outcomes at least across some interventions.

It is important to note that there were a number of impediments and lessons learned from the questionnaire approach adopted. Firstly, the artists were not included in the initial planning stages and there was no consultation at the outset to either design the questionnaire or to provide an overview of the objectives of the programme. While it was attempted to overcome this somewhat by providing an outline of the objectives in the questionnaire itself it is considered that better engagement at the outset between the researcher and the artists (for example, by means of a focus group or individual discussions) could improve understanding of, and hence buy in to the process as well as the development of a more tailored questionnaire. However, notwithstanding this limitation the questionnaires returned were rich in content and as such would represent very powerful tools for theory development. In particular the questionnaire responses were highly consistent and also repeated themes addressed or suggested within the wider literature. Finally, the questionnaires accidentally led to another potentially useful tool, in particular with one respondent including detailed but anonymous case studies of offenders worked with. This data was rich in content and would prove a useful tool in detailed hypotheses development.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Evaluation continues to remain a challenge for arts organisations working in the criminal justice sector. A recent summary of the position by the Arts Alliance (2011) stated that the evidence base remains somewhat incoherent, un-coordinated and unclear. While the quantity of evaluations conducted to support building a critical mass of evidence has increased and has been welcomed within the sector there remains a concern about the quality and robustness of the evaluations and the evidence itself. At a sectoral level, the Arts Alliance is encouraging sharing of best practice, knowledge and experience in relation to evaluations, something which should benefit organisations like the PAF who have limited evaluation budgets and can leverage gains made across the sector. While there is much criticism of the evidence base, it is important to point out that lack of evidence does not necessarily equate to lack of effect (Hughes et al, 2005) and there is general consensus that the challenge now lies in figuring out how best to demonstrate the effects which have consistently been suggested across multiple evaluations. Outcomes spanning personal and social development at individual level, educational, institutional and societal levels have repeatedly been identified and while on a standalone basis these may have little evidential weight, taken together the number of evaluations emphasising the same message is increasingly convincing.

Evidence based practice remains the de facto standard required in the criminal justice arena and sets high standards in terms of evidence of effect, normally requiring impact evaluations including some form ofrandomised control trials. It is arguable that the incompatibility of arts based practice with the evidence based approach required by criminal justice organisations, has played some role in the stagnation of good practice in evaluation approaches and a less than robust evidence base within the arts sector. Faced with what has been described as an unrealistic and unattainable standard for the evaluation of arts interventions (Miles et al, 2006), many arts organisations have either maintained the status quo of producing anecdotal but unsystematic evidence or attempted to comply with these standards, aiming for quantitative statistics to demonstrate effectiveness without underpinning this with rigorous methodologies or challenge of the results. Much of the work has been atheoretical in an attempt to satisfy the quantitative positivist approach underpinning evidence based practice. However, as always, there are exceptions to the norm and some arts organisations have succeeded in developing theoretical models to explain more clearly how the interventions actually work, for whom, why and in what circumstances. Such models should support improved evaluation but also strengthen the power of the arts sector to communicate its potential by offering credible explanations of change.It is hoped that the development of such models will permeate the sector and shed light on the design and evaluation of

programmes. The new focus on 'Payment by Results' which inherently requires strong evidence of effect may however stifle more innovative, and arguably useful evaluation approaches. Nonetheless there still remains a vast gap between what the arts sector knows or believes, in terms of outcomes, and what it can actually demonstrate through robust evidence. Official publications such as the Magenta Guidelines (HM Treasury, 2011) and the Northern Ireland analysis of what works to reduce offending (NIO, 2008) which are suggestive of more open debates and approaches are however promising developments.

So what compromises are possible, appropriate and acceptable to bridge the gap between the intuitive or faith based ('we know it works') views of the arts community and the requirements of the criminal justice community, including policy makers and funders? Certainly, for the vast majority of arts organisations the positivist application of evidence based practice is not attainable, or, at the very least, not attainable to the standards of demonstrating direct evidence of an effect on re-offending rates (Ellis et al, 2011). In any event, it is considered that the evidence based model, as generally interpreted based on positivist experimental principles is not appropriate for arts interventions within custodial settings. The evaluation approach recommended herein is realistic evaluation. This approach is considered appropriate on a number of grounds: it is a theory driven approach; it enhances learning; it is sociological in perspective and as such it allows conceptualisation of how change actually takes place. Realistic evaluation offers a more pragmatic conceptual framework to understand the contexts and mechanisms at play in relation to arts interventions. The framework proposed herein is based on the philosophy that "there is nothing quite so practical as a good theory" (NIO, 2008, Px). The challenges to building a credible evaluation approach in relation to complex social processes should not be underestimated. However, neither should the utility of a good theory. There has been a trend in recent years, at least within the most sophisticated evaluators to develop more theoretically rich understandings of the models underpinning arts interventions. As has recently been pointed out (Arts Alliance, 2011, Hughes et al, 2005) there is also an increasingly rich source of theory within the arts sector itself, in wider psychological and sociological theories of change, and in particular in criminological models of change such as the Good Lives Model and desistance which arts organisations such as the PAF can tap into and refine for their own purposes. A suitable compromise may be to demonstrate effects in relation to accepted understandings of criminogenic needs while not compromising on the guiding philosophy and values underlying interventions.

Research is both time consuming and costly and as such it is important to consider what in reality are the possibilities, challenges and restrictions in terms of building a credible evaluative approach, in particular for organisations such as the PAF with limited evaluation budgets. While

some organisations have attempted to make grandiose claims in terms of outcomes, the credibility of these approaches and the resulting claims have been called into question due to a lack of appropriate research standards (Arts Alliance, 2011). The goal here is to expand knowledge incrementally rather than to fallaciously attempt to take short cuts to attempt simple answers to complex questions.There does however remain an onus on arts organisation, including the PAF, to effectively 'up the game' in terms of defining and communicating aims and objectives of programmes, embedding evaluation in programmes, and developing clear theoretical and explanatory frameworks. The framework proposed here is considered workable for the PAF as it is not significantly resource heavy as the theorising rather than data collection is front loaded. Secondly, it is considered that the type of data collection tools trialled here are a feasible way to build knowledge. Thirdly, it is also likely that there will be repetition across the models in terms of mechanisms deployed, in particular for interventions run in group settings. Finally, the administrative data obtained as part of this review could potentially represent a key asset for both the PAF and NIPS and therefore consideration should be given to evaluating the integrity of this data and automating its production for future purposes.

The small sample sizes within the Northern Ireland context, particularly if viewed from the standpoint of individual art form types would present difficulties for substantiating claims of effect, particularly from a 'what works' perspective. However, better theorising is perhaps the most plausible compromise to overcome this barrier and move evaluation forward. From a practical perspective to develop its evaluation capacity the PAF should communicate the aims and objectives of the interventions, the mechanisms which are considered key to success and the outcomes which are believed to follow from there. This in itself does not offer direct evidence of effect but enables organisations firstly to communicate how and why these interventions are presumed to have effect (a plausible explanation of change) and develop a model which is then amenable to more rigorous testing. Communication of these aims and the key ingredients of success is in itself important as an inability to do so may jeopardise the potential success of interventions should alternative approaches be dictated (hence impacting the key ingredients for success) on value for money or other grounds. As outlined in chapter three, merely establishing and communicating the model of change and the processes and outcomes involved would represent a significant first step, something which many arts organisations have not yet achieved. It is considered that the sociological approach of realistic evaluation provides a reasonable compromise between the largely faith based and anecdotal approach of arts organisation and the rigid constraints of evidence based practice. Administrative and monitoring data is also a key source of evaluation data (Magenta, 2011) and both to enhance learning and to facilitate evaluation, the PAF and NIPS should work together to share

useful information on participation and non-participation in the arts and other programmes. This administrative data should in particular be used to understand the profile of participants and to develop better understanding of trends across the data including recidivism and paths into education. Another key challenge for arts organisation will continue to be how to demonstrate sustainability beyond the context of the interventions. The sustainability of impacts is inherently difficult to measure not only due to the wider contextual factors which may affect an offender's journey of rehabilitation but also due to the fact that it is practically difficult to access information once the offender has left custody and as Pawson and Tilley point out (2004), rehabilitation only fully transpires on the outside. However, measuring outcomes associated with secondary desistance provides a useful alternative and should be prioritised as part of theory testing. In conjunction with improved administrative and monitoring data the PAF should also attempt to more systematically capture the organisational knowledge across its artist base, in particular formalising some of the anecdotal evidence of success in terms of skills development, educational attainment, behavioural improvements and post-release experiences.

While value for money in terms of ultimate outcomes (short-term, medium term or long term outcomes) and indeed wider societal impacts was considered beyond the scope of this review, it is pertinent to point out that from a practical perspective a feasible value for money objective may lie in ensuring, that interventions are targeted where they are considered to deliver the best outcomes, based on the best available knowledge and understanding at any point in time. This could be informed by better theorising on those contexts and mechanisms considered to be most successful to producing positive outcomes, including for example the' readiness' of participants for particular interventions. However, flexible access to the administrative data is a key requisite for this. There is a growing emphasis on understanding and planning the cohorts to whom specific types of interventions are provided (Arts Alliance, 2011) and it has been suggested that "Careful consideration should continue to be given to the relevance, appropriateness and accessibility of the activity in question to the participants for whom it is intended." (Anderson et al, 2011)

On a final note, with the multitude ofmessages suggesting similar effects of arts interventions it isarguably as difficult to disprove effect as to prove it. Nonetheless, it remains the case that from a criminal justice perspective the arts will remain guilty (of no effect), until proven innocent, and as such, evaluation will have to improve in credibility.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Illustrative outcomes map

Appendix 2: Data request to Northern Ireland Prison Service

Appendix 3: Data map (Overview of data fields collected)

Appendix 4: Artist questionnaire

Appendix 5: Semi-structured (prisoner and staff) interview questions
- Prisoner Interview questions
- Staff interview questions

Appendix 6: NIPS REQUEST: Study into the rehabilitative effects of arts in prison

APPENDIX 1: ILLUSTRATIVE OUTCOMES MAP

Individual – personal	Individuals - social	Education delivery	Other Interventions	Institutional	Societal
• Anger reduction • Change in attitudes to offending • Superior coping skills • Higher levels of social responsibility • Improved self-image • Promoting a positive sense of identity • Fitness/health • Confidence • Improved motivation • Sense of achievement • Self esteem • Positive memory experience • Improved discipline • Improved self-control • Expansion of perspectives • Patience • Relaxation • Self-expression • Insight into own creativity • Enjoyment • New interests • Goal-oriented • Safe and acceptable means of escape (not self-harm, drugs)	• Maintaining connections to the outside (relationships) • Maintaining links with the real world (competence and readiness) • Cooperation • Understanding cultural differences • Development of leadership skills • Establishment of friendships • Team-working • Peer review and support • Ability to mix • Less judgmental attitudes	• Delivery of basic and key skills • Accessing advanced education levels • Enhancing prison education curriculum • Disaffected groups reengaged • Learning of specific discipline • Skills in concentration • Skills in communication • Ability to discipline oneself	• Enhancement of offender behaviour programmes • Increased engagement of those resistant to therapeutic and other interventions • Readiness for therapy • Improved trust • Break down of barriers and defences • Communication of feelings/experiences (that couldn't be expressed in words alone) • Release of suppressed feelings and energy	• Reducing rule breaking • Reducing anger/hostility • Enhancing staff-inmate relationships • Enriching regimes • Improving quality of prison life • Safe and acceptable means of escape utilised within prison	• Reconviction rates • Raising community awareness of Criminal Justice System • Cost effectiveness • Improving family ties • Reducing impact on families of incarcerated relatives • Facilitating reintegration into the community • Higher levels of social responsibility on reintegration

Information Request – Accessing records on prisoner participation in arts programmes

For the attention of: Alan Patterson (NIPS)

From: Rosemarie Mc Hugh (QUB student) – in conjunction with the Prison Arts Foundation

1. **Background:** NIPS/PAF requested that some limited scale research be undertaken into the rehabilitative effects of the arts in prison to gain a better understanding of the "value for money" of prison arts programmes. This research was to focus on the rehabilitative and restorative impact of such programmes and whether and to what extent they make individuals on release less likely to reoffend and make a positive contribution to the community. While this research is mainly focussed on an international literature review, aspects of the particular Northern Ireland context will also be researched. To fulfil these requirements this information request is forwarded to NIPS for the purpose of accessing certain information on prisoner participation in arts programmes.

2. **Objective:** To retrieve records of prisoner participation in prison arts programmes to determine the level of uptake of courses, understand participation and completion trends, and examine repeat participation or re-uptake of courses by prisoners.

3. **Risk analysis:** The information sought is highly sensitive and NIPS as the data holder has a legal obligation to ensure its protection. It is understood that a policy of minimum access will be adopted in relation to the data and as such the proposed methodology sets out a means to ensure that the risks of inappropriate access and/or accidental release are minimised to the greatest extent possible. The proposed methodology includes a high number of risk reduction measures and as such the residual risk is considered extremely low.

   The proposed methodology set out below is based on the risk analysis set out in Table 1 attached at the end of this document. The risks identified were:
   - Inappropriate access to data leading to unauthorised visibility or disclosure
   - Release of data into public domain (accidental or otherwise)

4. **Proposed methodology**

3.1 Key steps in the process

- A NIPS representative (authorised user) ONLY will access the requisite records and mask all sensitive data e.g. PRISONER_NUMBER and any other personal details
- Only the most minimal number of fields required to satisfy the objective will be extracted e.g. Prisoner_number (masked/anonymised), Participation details, Completion details, Other (to be discussed)
- The masked data file will be stored on a secure area of the NIPS network and will at no point be removed from the NIPS site or network
- The data will be accessed on site by the researcher, in the presence of a NIPS representative where appropriate
- Only summary information will be reproduced and the form of the reproduction will be agreed in advance and on completion with NIPS

3.2 Masking (anonymising) the data

- **Masking the data:** All identifiable and distinguishing characteristics will be removed thus rendering the data anonymous
- **Maintaining relationships between data entities:** The data must retain some linkages e.g. a row associated with a prisoner must still be capable of being associated with another row associated with that prisoner. As such while the unique prisoner identifier will be masked, this identifier will be replaced by another unique identifier which retains the relationship between records associated with that prisoner. Each individual prisoner in the dataset will be distinguished by unique identifier e.g. PRISONER_NUMBER which is unique to the individual. However, the data may contain more than one row per PRISONER_NUMBER e.g. each time the prisoner attends a class or starts a new course, a new row is added. The earlier rows for the PRISONER_NUMBER will remain as history of previous engagement. This means that if the PRISONER_NUMBER field is masked for one row, the same new unique identifier will be required in each row with an identical PRISONER_NUMBER.

Suggested next steps

- NIPS to liaise with PAF on the suggested proposal
- Arrange meetings to set plan and conduct the methodology as outlined

Table 1

Risk	Risk reduction/removal actions and contingencies

Inappropriate access to data leading to unauthorised visibility or disclosure	• Only a NIPS authorised user will have access to the data prior to it being desensitised (made generic) and effectively made safe (hereafter called masked data)
	• Only the most minimal number of fields required will be extracted e.g.
	   o Prisoner_number (masked/anonymised)
	   o Participation details
	   o Completion details
	   o Other (to be discussed)

Release of data into public domain (accidental or otherwise)	• Access by anyone external to NIPS (researcher) will only be to the masked data • The masked data file will be stored on a secure area of the NIPS network and will at no point be removed from the NIPS site or network • The data will be accessed on site by the researcher • Only summary information will be reproduced and the form of the reproduction will be agreed in advance and on completion with NIPS

APPENDIX 3: DATA MAP (OVERVIEW OF DATA FIELDS COLLECTED)

Prisoner personal profile	In custody profile and history	Offence and sentencing details	Intervention and attendance details
INMATE_ID	INMATE_ID	INMATE ID	INMATE_ID
SEX	CUSTODIAL_CATEGORY	REGIME	ACTIVITY_ID
AGE	COMMITTAL_DATE	REGIME_FROM_DATE	ACTIVITY_TYPE
POST_CODE	FINAL_RELEASE_DATE	REGIME_TO_DATE	ACTIVITY_DESCRIPTION
RACE	CHARGE_ID	REGIME_CHANGE_REASON	ACTIVITY_START_DATETIME
RELIGION	SEQ_NUMBER	REGIME_PROMOTION_DEMOTION	ACTIVITY_END_DATETIME
OCCUPATION	SEQ_STATUS	ADJUDICATION_DATE	ACTIVITY_APPOINTMENT_ATTENDED
MEDICAL_MARKER	EARLIEST_DATE_RELEASE	ADJ_OFF_DATE	NON_ATTENDANCE_REASON
DATE_MEDICAL_MARKER_SET	LONGEST_DATE_RELEASE	ADJ_RULE38	SESSION_ID
FIRST_LANGUAGE	TOTAL_EFF_SENT_YRS	ADJ_AWARD_CAT	SESSION_NAME
FOREIGN_NATIONAL	TOTAL_EFF_SENT_MTHS	ADJ_VERDICT	TOTAL_SCHEDULED_ATTENDANCE
NATIONALITY	TOTAL_EFF_SENT_DAYS	AWARD_QUANTITY	SESSION_START_DATE
MARITAL_STATUS	DATE_SENT_COMMENCED	AWARD_CODE	SESSION_END_DATE
	WARRANT_LODGED_DATE	AWARD_DESCRIPTION	ACTUAL_ATTENDANCE
	TARIFF_EXPIRY_DATE	DRUG_TEST_DATE	SESSION_CAPACITY
	CUSTODY_YRS	DRUG_TYPE	
	CUSTODY_MTHS	DRUG_SUBSTANCE	
	CUSTODY_DAYS	DRUG_RESULT	
	LICENCE_YRS		
	LICENCE_MTHS		
	LICENCE_DAYS		
	OFF_COUNT_NUM		
	MAIN_OFFENCE		
	DATE_OF_OFFENCE		
	FIRST_COURT_DATE		
	OFFENCE_ID		
	OFFENCE_DETAILS		
	OFFENCE_TYPE		
	OFFENCE_STATUS		
	SENTENCE_COUNT_NO		
	SENTENCE_YEARS		
	SENTENCE_MONTHS		
	SENTENCE_DAYS		
	DATE_SENTENCE_COMMENCED		
	CONSEC_SEN_COUNT		
	CONSEC_SEQ_NO		
	LICENCE_YRS		
	LICENCE_MTHS		
	LICENCE_DAYS		

APPENDIX 4: ARTIST QUESTIONNAIRE

About the questionnaire

This questionnaire is one element of a wider research project intended to better understand 'whether; 'why' and 'how' arts interventions 'work' within a custodial setting. The survey is structured in two parts – Part A collects some general profile information from you, the artist, and Part B attempts to collect your insights on the benefits or outcomes of arts programmes, and 'how' or 'why' these benefits occur.

In recognition that this is a very fluid, dynamic and often complex environment, I apologise in advance for the necessary rigidity of a questionnaire approach. Please note however that the text boxes below are 'open', so you are free to write as much or as little as you like in your responses. Feel free to skip any questions you do not know how to answer. Any insights and experiences you can share are very much appreciated.

I anticipate that the questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes of your time and would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to complete.

Responses to the questionnaire will generally only be included at a summary level, although some quotes may be used from individual responses. However, all responses (whether summarised at group level or included from individual responses) will be included only on an anonymous basis. No material will be attributed to any individual and no names will be included in the research paper. All responses will be sent directly to the QUB researcher (Rosemarie Mc Hugh) at rmchugh11@qub.ac.uk) where they will be anonymised. All individual emails and responses will be deleted following completion of the research paper.

In addition, if you **are**willing to discuss these topics further via telephone, please indicate this in your return email, with the following contact details:

Name:

Contact details:

Availability (e.g. days or hours when contactable):

Part A: General profile information – You, the artist

1.   Please indicate the length of time you have been facilitating arts interventions within a custodial setting:

< 1 year	1-3 years	3-5 years	>5 years

Questions 2 – 5 may be based on current levels of facilitation

2.   Please indicate the approximate number of hours spent per week providing services within the prison context

Approximate hours per week

3.   How many prisoners are you currently working with?

Approximate number per week

4.   Of these prisoners (as per question 3) please indicate how many are facilitated in groups and how many are facilitated on a one to one basis:

	In groups	One to one
Approximate number per week		

5.   For these prisoners (as per question 3) please provide some basic profile information by age, gender and sentence length:

	<20	20-25	25-35	35+
No. by age				

	Male	Female
No. by gender		

	Remand	Life sentenced	All other
No. by sentence length			

6.   Please list art forms delivered (e.g. drama, creative writing etc.)

7.   If appropriate, please feel free to provide any additional information or explanation relevant to the above

Part B: Your views on arts interventions within custodial settings

1. What would you say is the main purpose of delivering arts interventions in a custodial context?

2. What are your mains aims/objectives when facilitating programmes or interventions (if you facilitate various art forms, or adopt various delivery methods, please distinguish as appropriate)?

3. Which of the following best describes the AIMS AND OBJECTIVES of the programmes you deliver (please select (✓) as appropriate:

    A   Prescribed in advance on your behalf:

    B   Left to your own experience /discretion:

    C   A combination of A and B

    D   If other, please explain in text box below:

4. How do you feel such interventions make a difference to participants?

5. What changes, impacts or benefits have you observed for arts programmes?

    A.   During the programme

    B.   At end of programme

    C.   Subsequent to programme (if applicable)

6. What type of feedback or views have participants themselves expressed about the programmes?

    A. At commencement of the programme

    B. During the programme

[   ]

C. At end of the programme

[   ]

D. Subsequent to the programme (if applicable)

[   ]

7. What elements of the process or delivery method do you believe are critical to success?

[   ]

8. What, if any, are the key drawbacks to delivering interventions within the criminal justice custodial setting?

[   ]

9. How would you describe the role of an artist/expert/facilitator like yourself and what do you believe are the key elements of that role which are critical for success?

[   ]

10. How would you compare arts interventions to other provision for prisoners such as education (numeracy, literacy etc.) e.g. what if any are the unique attributes or benefits of arts programmes?

11. How do you think arts interventions can build a stronger evidence base to convince policy makers and funders that it makes sense to continue to support and fund them?

12. What do you believe are the key impediments to participation in, and completion of arts programmes within a custodial setting?

13. Please include any additional comments which you would like to include in the text box below:

Prisoner interview questionnaire

Interviews with intervention participants

Note: Interviews will be semi-structured i.e. following the basic aims below but more fluid.

Understanding participation and motivation (also looking at potential of displacement e.g. would they be doing something anyway)

- What made you choose the course? (Were you looking to do something of this nature, did you just come across it by chance/how did you end up here?)
- What types of classes/courses have you undertaken so far? (Try to establish whether any educational classes as well or perhaps following this. What came first?)
- Did you have any other sort of external encouragement? What motivated you to do this
- If you didn't do this would you do something else and if so what?
- Would you/will you continue with classes/courses of this nature or do something else? (also potentially outcome focussed)

Looking at process

Understanding the process, dynamics and critical ingredients for success from a participant perspective

- What keeps you coming to the class? Do you enjoy the course/class?
- Would you recommend the class to someone else? Follow – up - How would you describe the classes/courses to them?
- What is it about the class that is important to you? Prompt only where no responses - (the form, the subject matter, the group/team interaction, relationship with tutor/facilitator, the delivery format etc.? …and why?
- What aspects of the class are most important to you – doing something to further skills etc. (personal development), doing it as part of a group (the social aspect), etc.
- [If positive feedback] – Why do you think this type of class is successful/what is it about it that appeals to you?
- What do you believe could be done to improve the classes or the overall programmes
    - o   On an overall basis – scope/range of activities, number and timing
    - o   For this individual topic e.g. how it is delivered, additional supports, etc.
- Is it hard to stay involved/stay committed or any other things that get in the way/barriers?

Looking at outcomes for participants

(identify whether any changes in confidence, hope for the future, perceptions of self and others, self-efficacy and competence etc.)

- What did you want to achieve from this class/activity? (e.g. just to pass time, learn a new skill, other personal, family or social reasons etc.)
- What do you think you have gained so far?
- Do you think this class (other classes attended) will impact any further/ future decisions – continue with skill, do more classes, advance education, any other impacts?
- Will you continue with this type of class/any other interests/plans?
- If so why would you continue e.g. you realised you are good at it/always knew you had interest/skill etc.
- If you were encouraging someone else to do something of this nature, how would you encourage them e.g. if they said "what's the point?"
- Has this in any way changed your prison experience – getting to know people, relationships with other inmates, interactions/relationships with staff etc.

Staff interview questionnaire

Interviews with staff
Note: Interviews will be semi-structured i.e. following the basic aims below but more fluid.

Participation
- What are your views about service provision for inmates (education, arts etc.)
- What are your observations in relation to participation and ongoing perseverance etc. – can you predict participation, is it the same groups/profile of prisoners who engage/participate/persevere?
- Have you ever been surprised by someone?
- What do you think are the key motivators – something to pass the time, eager to develop skills, motivation to interact socially etc.

Process
- What type of classes/provision do you think "work" and why?
- What do you believe works best with inmates (wider question than first – interventions, discipline/authority or encouragement/support etc.)?
- What are the most important factors – tutor, subject matter, delivery format etc.
- Do you believe it is important to encourage individuals to participate?
- Have you ever encouraged a specific individual/group of individuals to participate and if so, why?
- If you believe provision (education and arts but treat separately) "works" how do you believe it works
- What do you believe could be done to improve provision
    - On an overall basis – scope/range of activities, number and timing
    - For this individual topic e.g. how it is delivered, additional supports, etc.
- What do you see as the major opportunities and barriers for progress, if any?

Outcomes
- Do you think provision (arts and education) is important within the prison setting – does it improve the environment, relationships between staff and inmates etc.
- Do you notice any changes in behaviour – motivated prisoners easier to handle, behavioural changes (formal (adjudications) or informal (easier to interact with etc.)
- Do you observe any other impacts – increased motivation, changes in relationships (familial, between inmates etc.), improved engagement in other activities, general personal development etc.
- What type of feedback, if any, have you had from individual participants (also – would this be an exception or the norm or varies considerably)
- Do you think the benefits are in any way predetermined e.g. continued engagement in music, painting etc. because of underlying talents/skills
- Do you think any benefits are sustained beyond the period of engagement e.g. do they affect future decisions etc.?

APPENDIX 6

NIPS STUDY INTO THE REHABILITATIVE EFFECTS OF THE ARTS IN PRISON

Summary

The Northern Ireland Prison Service wishes to commission some limited scale research into the rehabilitative effects of the arts in prison. Proportionately NIPS has one of the largest ranges of the arts taught and facilitated within its three prison establishments, of any Prison Service. This is largely facilitated through or delivered by the Prison Arts Foundation, with whom this specification has been drawn up. (The annual budget is of the order of one third of a million pounds.) In part, as this is seen as "discretionary expenditure", NIPS wishes to gain a better understanding of the "value for money" that this represents in terms of its rehabilitative and restorative impact, i.e. the value that it provides to make individuals on release less likely to reoffend and make a positive contribution to the community.

The full list of the arts supplied within NIPS establishments will be made available to the researcher, but it includes:

- art and art therapy,
- drama and film production,
- ceramics,
- creative writing,
- music and dance.

While no previous research of this kind has been carried out in the Northern Ireland context, the study should look at material available in Great Britain, including a literature survey. Contact should be made with the Prison Arts Foundation and the Arts Alliance.

Detail

The Northern Ireland Prison Service has been actively involved in using the arts as an intervention for 20 years, and has been working in partnership with the Prison Arts Foundation (NI) since 1997. The activities which are paid for out of public funds include permanent posts such as art and music teachers, part-time input such as Writers in Residence, seasonal courses, and one-off interventions such as specific drama or film productions. The services are available in all three establishments, at Hydebank Wood covering both young offenders and women prisoners. Some of the services lead directly or indirectly to external academic accreditation or other recognition, for example individuals who are supported to complete academic assignments and post graduate degrees, the gaining of citizenship awards or modules, or NVQs/AQAs. In addition, the Northern Ireland Prison Service participates each year in the annual Koestler awards with a record in recent years of disproportionate success. On occasion, arts interventions have been targeted at "difficult to reach" groupings within the establishments, for example longer serving prisoners with convictions for serious violent or sexual crimes.

It is said that there is evidence from both anecdotal and evaluative research which demonstrates the benefits for inmates engaged in creative activity; that would point to more positive participation with sentence plans, a reduction in aggressive and violent behaviour within establishments, and improved communication skills. There is also empirical evidence, particularly in the Northern Ireland setting, of the value for those engaged in time-bound projects such as plays or films, in working together with persons from the other community with whom they would not otherwise have done so, and in developing an understanding of a team ethos. There is also specific evidence in Northern Ireland of individuals who have developed existing talent or acquired new skills in prison who have gone on to make direct use of that on their release, for example being able to sustain themselves and their families financially in ways that would not otherwise have been possible.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service can provide the researcher with information about the full range of current activities, as well as recent interventions; Prison Arts Foundation will also wish to participate in the exercise, providing further information and their own perspective. A good deal of the research project would need to be carried out through interviews with individual participants, topped up with, where possible, interviews with some individuals now in the community who have "graduated" from arts interventions while in prison.

The study will both assess the particular contribution in Northern Ireland, and test it against evaluations made in Great Britain and if helpful elsewhere. While it is accepted that it may prove difficult to demonstrate a direct linkage between involvement in arts programmes while in custody and reduced recidivism with more positive contributions to the community on release, such a focus would be of particular interest to the Northern Ireland Prison Service.

Arrangements

It is envisaged that this work would be undertaken by a PhD or Masters student, with the output being the dissertation/thesis which would be made available to NIPS and the PAF. No additional funding would be available from NIPS for this project, but a range of practical assistance, including management information would be provided. Appropriate security clearance would be required for the individual (i.e. Access NI approval and the standard Counter Terrorist Check obtained through the Defence Vetting Agency.)