

2nd chance project



PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE SPRING 2010 FOOTBALL ACADEMY AT PORTLAND YOI

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Illustration by Matt Stubbs

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the preliminary findings from an evaluation study examining the impact of the 2nd Chance Project's Football Academy at HMYOI Portland. The Academy consisted of a combination of football training with team skills and intensive resettlement casework. Pre- and post-Academy psychometric measurements and interviews were carried out in order to assess the effectiveness of the Academy. Positive changes were observed for each of the 17 psychometric measures, with statistically significant changes to the constructs of impulsivity with aggression, conflict resolution, attitudes towards offending, evaluation of offending, perceived problems, and self esteem. The quantitative findings are strongly supported by the qualitative interview data, with interviews revealing the positive impact that participating in the Academy had on the participants, as well as suggestions for improving and expanding the Academy. The research is ongoing and this report marks the publication of the first stage of the data, the integrity of which has been further improved through follow-up assessments with each of the Academy graduates who have been released to date. These preliminary findings provide compelling evidence supporting the short-term effectiveness of the 2nd Chance Project's Football Academy and recommendations are made for continuing and extending the model.

The evaluation research of the 2nd Chance Project Academy at Portland is managed and carried out by Dr Rosie Meek, a chartered psychologist at the University of Southampton. The evaluation is currently in its first year and will conclude in September 2011 with the publication of a full evaluation report to follow. This interim report provides a summary of the evaluation of the first football Academy delivered in HMYOI Portland from the perspective of the young men participating in the Academy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With thanks to all of the staff involved in designing and delivering the Football Academy for co-operating in the research process so willingly, especially James Mapstone and Justin Coleman at the 2nd Chance Project, Ian Jordan at Chelsea FC and the staff at HMYOI Portland. Particular thanks to Alex Browne for facilitating the research interviews. Thanks to Gwen Lewis and Stacey Trimble for research assistance. Above all, thank you to the young men who participated in the Football Academy and who were willing to share their experiences with me so openly. Without their time, honesty and enthusiasm this report would not have been possible.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2nd Chance Project was established at Ashfield Young Offender Institution, Gloucestershire, as a result of a custodial programme designed to engage offenders and improve behaviour, achievement, skills and attitudes. The model draws on sport as one of several methods of engaging with, educating and training young people in custody as well as after returning to the community. The project provides mentoring, offers training and work experience placements and draws on strong links with national sporting organisations, as well as regional community-based clubs. Funding from the Football Foundation has enabled the 2nd Chance Project to expand their delivery to HM Young Offender Institute Portland, a Prison Service establishment in Dorset holding 18-21 year-old males.

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

In recent years, increased attention has been paid to the benefits of using sport in engaging with hard-to-reach young people and tackling social exclusion. However, despite widespread recognition from those involved in delivering sports programmes that they can improve behaviour and reduce youth crime, little academic evidence exists and evaluations of such programmes tend to be small scale and rely on retrospective accounts of the impact of the programme. The current research aims to explore the impact of the 2nd Chance Project Sports Academy at Portland on a range of indicators, with a particular focus on factors that contribute to desistance from crime and the effectiveness of drawing on sporting partnerships in reducing re-offending among young people released from custody.

A total of twelve young men between the ages of 18-21 (mean age = 20 years) took part in the initial Football Academy at Portland YOI in Spring 2010. The Academy concluded in May 2010 and by August 2010 six of the Academy graduates had subsequently been released from prison custody.

Individual semi-structured qualitative interviews were carried out with each of the participants during the Academy. Contact was also subsequently made with each of the Academy graduates who had been released by August 2010 and all six participated in an individual follow-up interview and questionnaire completion session. In addition to the interview data, pre- and post- participation quantitative measures have been taken on a wide range of psychological constructs.

Psychometric measurements

Beliefs about Aggression

This scale measures individuals' beliefs about the use of aggression to hypothetical situations. A high score on the Beliefs about Aggression scale indicates more favourable beliefs supporting the use of aggression.

Use of Non Violent Strategies

This scale measures individuals' endorsement of non-violent responses to hypothetical situations. Higher scores indicate higher levels of support for using non violent strategies.



Self Esteem

The Weinberger and Schwartz (1990) adjustment inventory measures an individual's perception of their self value. Participants are asked to rate the extent of their agreement with statements on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Answers are then combined to create a self esteem score ranging between 7 and 35, with a high score indicating low self esteem.

Self Conflict

A composite measure of self concept, created to assess an individual's sense of self-concept and self-confidence. Respondents are asked to rate their extent of agreement with statements on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Responses are combined to create a self concept score, with the maximum score of 48 indicating a strong self concept.

Impulsivity

Questions pertaining to impulsivity measure frequency of impulsive behaviours such as lack of self control and difficulty finishing things. Answers on a range of statements are combined to create an impulsivity score ranging from 4 to 20, with high scores indicating higher self reported impulsivity.

Overall Impulsivity, Impulsivity without Aggression, Impulsivity with aggression, Problems in Conflict Resolution, Aggression in Conflict Resolution, Physical Violence in Conflict Resolution and Lack of Compromise in Conflict Resolution. On all seven scales a higher score indicates a greater identification with that particular mode of operating.

General Attitude Towards Offending

A low score indicates that an individual believes a offending lifestyle is not desirable; a high score suggests that an individual sees offending as positive.

Anticipation of Re-Offending

A low score indicates that the individual does not anticipate re-offending; a high score indicates that re-offending is considered likely.

Attitude Towards Victims

A low score indicates that the individual recognises that their actions impact on the victim.

Evaluation of Crime

A low score indicates that the individual perceives the cost of crime as being greater than its rewards.

Problem Inventory

Requires participants to indicate the extent to which they perceive they have problems with money, relationships, employment, controlling temper, sensation seeking, family, health, boredom, housing, substance use, gambling, depression, self esteem, confidence and anxiety. Answers to the problem inventory are numerically coded and combined to create a scale measuring the perceptions of current problems. The higher the score the greater the number and gravity of problems identified.

Further information on the quantitative measures appears in Appendix 1

The second stage of data collection has allowed further conclusions to be made regarding the sustained impact of participating in the Football Academy at Portland YOI. The longitudinal data is particularly valuable in identifying the impact of the Academy on the crucial transition from custody to community, and each of the participants will continue to be monitored during the period of research.

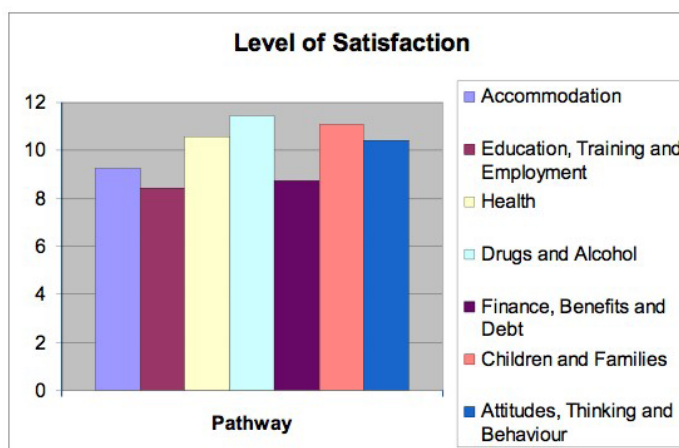
MODEL OF DELIVERY

Partnership working lies at the heart of the Academy, with the 2nd Chance project caseworker, Justin Coleman, delivering the core resettlement programme, while working in partnership with prison staff (particularly those from the PE and resettlement departments) and sports organisations (Chelsea FC and Cricket 4 Change). The caseworker is also in a position to make referrals to other organisations (for example those providing specialist mentoring services), where relevant for the Academy participants. The twelve week programme of delivery incorporates football skills, training and matches (overseen by PE staff within the prison, supported by visiting coaches and specialist support), supplemented with an educational/resettlement component of team skills training, group work and one-to-one sessions. All Academy

participants obtained their FA Level 1 coaching qualification, the FA Junior Football award and the FA Coaching Disabled Footballers award whilst participating in the Academy.

Early on in the Football Academy, the perceived problems and concerns with each resettlement ‘pathway’ are explored by the 2nd Chance Project caseworker in conjunction with each of the Academy participants, revealing levels of satisfaction with accommodation, education, training and employment, health, drugs and alcohol, finance, benefits and debt, children and families, attitudes, thinking and behaviour. As illustrated in Table 1, the participants of the Academy reported most satisfaction with drugs and alcohol (mean rating of 11.42/12) and least satisfaction with education, training and employment (mean rating of 8.42/12). Although the pathway ratings suggest reasonable self-reported levels of satisfaction with issues such as housing, employment and health, the in-depth method of engagement allows the caseworker to develop a positive and mutually trusting relationship with each of the Academy participants, thus allowing him to explore resettlement needs in more depth on a case-by-case basis.

Self reported resettlement needs



PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS OF THE ACADEMY

Participant perceptions and experiences of the Academy were explored through a process of qualitative analysis. Following individual interviews with each Academy participant and a series of observation sessions, interviews were transcribed verbatim and transcripts were subjected to a thematic analysis. The prominent themes are outlined below, accompanied by illustrative quotes from the participants of the Academy (in order to protect anonymity, names have been removed).

Motivations and Expectations of the Academy

In describing their **motivations** for signing up to the Academy in the first place, all participants referred to a love of football, with a typical response being:

“I like football and I like to keep fit” (Participant 5).

“I love playing football. That’s the reason that I joined” (Participant 1).

Several of the participants had tried out for Ian Wright’s original Football Behind Bars project and all had heard of it, which appeared to increase motivation to participate: “I just thought it was a good thing that he was doing, you know, giving people opportunities to change and not be judgemental about the fact that we’re in prison and that. So I thought it was a good thing” (Participant 1).

In describing their **expectations** of the Academy, the participants were largely positive:

“That I can be part of a team... The value of achievement, you know, being welcomed on a team, I’ve always wanted to play football like professionally or semi professionally, so being part of a team is a good way to start” (Participant 4).

Largely, the participants reported that their expectations had been met, although a few expressed disappointment:

“I was expecting a lot of intense training, very committed peers, sort of thing”.

Q: Was that what you discovered?

Err, I have to say not” (Participant 3).

However, others expressed being pleasantly surprised at what the Academy could offer:

“I thought jail football was a kick-about but it’s more serious than what I thought it would be. People take it more serious than what I thought it would be. I thought it wouldn’t be as big as what it would be because it’s just jail. I liked it, I didn’t expect to do anything like this. I thought it was just going to be shit but it’s all right” (Participant 2).

Strengths of the Academy

Fitness and ability

Many participants cited the opportunity to improve general physical fitness as a beneficial aspect of the Academy:

“My fitness has improved loads. Like before I started the Academy – when I started the Academy I did a bleep test and I was struggling and now I can get to like level 13 quite comfortably” (Participant 12).

“Fitness, I would definitely say fitness” (Participant 6).

In addition to improving general fitness, the Academy offered the opportunity to improve specific football related skills:

“Football, just playing games really, playing games and training and being able to sharpen up your skills I guess” (Participant 3).

Coaching

Participants valued the chance to gain coaching qualifications, clearly valuing the opportunities this could afford them on release:

“I’m learning to coach kids and think obviously it could help me. Like all my little brothers play football and everything, they’re all playing for football teams, so I obviously train them when I was out there, but now that I’m in here I don’t feel like I can give anything to them. So obviously by coaching I can actually help them properly this time” (Participant 6).



Others highlighted the wider implications of the qualification in terms of developing transferable skills:

“I want to use this coaching badge I got out of this to help communities and organise tournaments for young kids and that. And not just about football, about life skills and that” (Participant 8).

Skills of staff

Participants highlighted the expertise and commitment of staff as a key strength of the Academy, illustrated in comments such as:

“Its strengths – having a good mentor, Mr Brown, he’s a good coach, he’s understanding I suppose, anything you’ve got a problem he’s the best to help you with that. The team, I had a great team to work with, they were – what’s that word – encouraging. And again, just playing football, fitness and all that, more to understand how your body works, what you should eat, what you shouldn’t eat...Recognising that prison is not just negative, it’s got some positives as well” (Participant 4).

In addition to the positive attitudes of the staff, their professionalism was also perceived to be important:

“I mean Mr Brown is a very very good coach. I mean he’s got his [coaching] badge and everything, so he’s good, which is an advantage, cos a lot of people tend to think they know what they’re doing, but he knows what he’s doing so it’s quite good” (Participant 10).

Being valued as a player: the ‘brand’

When asked about the strengths of the Academy, respondents regularly referred to the brand endorsement and input from independent professional sporting organisations. For instance, when asked at the start of the Academy which aspect they were most looking forward to, a typical response was:

“Getting trained by the Chelsea coaches” (Participant 12).

The contribution from the various different independent organisations was clearly valued by the participants:

“Yeah, it’s good because it inspires some people to do better things in life and it gives them that hope that they might have something for them outside and that...Just the fact that they’re coming out, you know, they’re professional and they’re coming from the outside to take the time and that, you know, and do things for us” (Participant 1).

Endorsement from external organisations also served to empower the participants and gave the Academy an important sense of professionalism:

“Best bit was when we walked into the gym in the changing room and all our kit was there, like our new kit, my top and that, my name and number on the back, all hung up like the proper thing. That’s probably the best bit” (Participant 8).



The experience of being part of team

A key strength to emerge from discussions with participants was the team nature of the Academy, which challenged participants and developed their conflict resolution and communication skills:

“It’s a good team bonding and team building experience. Obviously challenging... Really different personalities, you’ve just got a lot of different people there that really they could teach you a lot about yourself...I’d say communication now, at the start communication was abysmal like – it was like everyone was playing in a cemetery, but now you find everyone basically talking, everyone talks, shouts, however they can get the information across to you they’ll find the best way to do it still” (Participant 6).

“It’s been good to have been a part of it. We all get on and that. Good team spirit. Not bad. We’ve had our ups and downs and that but you know, it’s all good in the end” (Participant 8).

The opportunity to develop individually, create friendships and empathise with team members was also highlighted as a strength of the Academy:

“Kind of like team building, just bringing out all the team together, not just on the football pitch but making us develop as friends and bring us all closer and that” (Participant 7).

“I think it’s helped in having to be self-disciplined and to also understand situations in terms of the fact that not everyone’s here for the same reason. Understanding other people basically” (Participant 3).

“We have gelled – we didn’t know – well, we knew each other but we didn’t know each other like that and we’ve gelled together like glue put on paper” (Participant 5).

Football as a resettlement tool

Combining football training and skills with resettlement activities was highlighted as an effective way of delivering resettlement support, particularly for those who had previously given limited consideration to their situation upon release:

“When I first came into jail my attitude was like, do my time and get out and carry on what I was doing, but like, I mean I’ve been in for a long time, well I’ve seen guys been in for longer but I can consider two years of my life a long time and I seen things in jail like, that I don’t want to be here for another five...Like I know the next one’s not gonna be two years. Especially if the Conservatives come back. The next one’s gonna be more than five years, so I don’t need that and I don’t particularly want that you know what I mean? So, it’s a good thing that I learnt it from here cos if I carried on how I was and just thought, sod it I don’t give a damn, then I would have came back in a couple of months” (Participant 10).

“I was surprised cos I didn’t really wanna do it but I knew if I didn’t do it I wouldn’t be able to play football” (Participant 9).

For others, the chance to focus on life beyond prison and develop life skills whilst taking part in a sport they enjoyed was seen as a positive experience:

“The chance to play football. I mean, I’m coming nearer to the end of my sentence....just to keep my head down and do something that I really like was cool. So basically a win win situation” (Participant 10).

“It’s been a good experience because I’ve learnt a lot of new things, you know, how to be a team player and how to think before a situation, you know, keeping myself calm if anything was to happen. So yeah, it’s been a good experience” (Participant 1).

In addition to skills it was expressed that the Academy offered the opportunity to create new contacts and an ongoing support network that many of the participants had not previously experienced:

“Best parts? I’d say overall getting to know people that can help, like these are opened up opportunities you know, that I never had before” (Participant 3).

The future potential benefit of the Academy was also highlighted by participants as a way of developing positive change in perspectives and creating additional opportunities:

“I got better at football, I got a better understanding of how football works and how you can be part of something and how you know – how prison has helped me get this qualification as well... Turn stuff around and all that... And you think more positive” (Participant 4).

“It’s like a good opportunity. I can’t really remember what that word is. Privilege. Privilege...Yeah I think it’s a privilege to be doing it. You get a lot out of it” (Participant 2).

Weaknesses of the Academy

All participants referred to the fact that the winter weather conditions contributed to a flooded pitch and subsequent cancellation of games, although it was acknowledged that this was out of the control of those planning and delivering the Academy sessions. Overall, any criticisms of the Academy were accompanied by an acknowledgement that, given the time and other limitations, the Academy was a success:

“We ain’t done as much as what there was meant to be, but it was good for what was done in the space that we done it in” (Participant 5).

Lack of games

“Lack of games, lack of games and let downs...Getting told there’s a match on this day and then we go to this day and then ‘ah, the pitch ain’t done’ or something, there’s always an excuse. Friday was our first game, it was a good game though” (Participant 4).

“Well we train every day anyway so that’s all right but they will tell us we’re playing matches and then it will get cancelled at the last minute, all the time” (Participant 12).

Diverse / negative attitudes of Academy members

Some participants pointed to the diverse attitudes and levels of commitment of fellow Academy members as a weakness, although this had previously also been mentioned as a challenge that enabled individual to develop improved skills such as communication:

“The different levels of enthusiasm and attitude towards the football” (Participant 3).

“People’s attitude... sometimes the pitch would be flooded and we had to play on the atroturf and people just say they’re injured cos they don’t want to play on the atro turf” (Participant 9).

“You’re having to deal with other people’s tantrums and that, having to deal with sometimes you know it’s not always going to work, like for example, you know sometimes you might miss a match because of certain things or something... Maybe on the outside you have high expectations, but in here you know you have to be realistic, do you know what I mean?” (Participant 4).

“I think after the Academy we’re all going to go our separate ways and it’s just going to be how it was before” (Participant 4).

Reflections on the Resettlement / Education Aspect

There was a general consensus that the resettlement aspects of the Academy had raised participants’ awareness of their future goals and how to achieve them whilst encouraging reflection on prioritising goals:

“It was good to actually look at what I’m doing wrong and how I can improve myself and obviously what I want, because most of my life I’ve just been basically what everyone else wants me to do. So it was basically looking at what I want to do myself and how I can like take smaller steps to reach the bigger goals in my life” (Participant 6).

For some participants the resettlement support had also equipped them with coping mechanisms for dealing with potential problems:

“Well, that’s made me a bit more aware about how I think and how you know where football could take me and stuff and doing football in here you know it’s taken a lot of stress off my life and working with Justin has made me see certain things

in a different perspective... Like he's made me think more in depth, he's made me think about stuff that really touches home, do you know what I mean, it really – it gets me when I think about it, but now the way he's talked to me I've kind of got a way to deal with stuff, so if I get stressed about being away from home, it's made me think about being stressed is natural and it's going to happen, but how I can go beyond that, do you know what I mean, how I can get over it. So yeah, he's made me think" (Participant 4).

Moreover, the offer of ongoing support upon release was especially welcomed, although some expressed doubts about whether or not such support would materialise:

"It has encouraged me to think about it and obviously they say that they're going to help me when I get out, but I'm not sure because obviously I'm not out yet" (Participant 5).

The added value of working with the 2nd Chance Project

A key theme to emerge from discussions with participants was the highly regarded level of support and advice provided by the case worker. The commitment of the case worker and their specialised independent role was clearly valued:

"Basically helping me look into my future. They said – I basically came to them with a couple of views of where I wanted to go when I left and they would research it for me, basically. For example, I wanted to start a business and Justin gave me business information and uni information about what you need, the course that I wanted to start. So obviously just advice and guidance really. Better than advice I get from prison staff because I reckon he [Justin] goes a bit further to bring me advice about something that will actually help" (Participant 3).

"He's [Justin] been – first of all he sat down with me for like an hour and a half and asked me what I wanted to do and I told him and he goes away and finds out information and that and brings information in for you. He asked me about my family life, what's that like and where I want to be when I get out and stuff like that. I'd say he does more work than my personal officer because he can go out and source information and he knows pretty much the stuff already. Everything that I'd want to know Justin's found out for me already... Justin helps you and he finds out information and when he says he's going to do something, he will do it and you know that he's going to do it. You don't have to keep pestering him about it and stuff like that" (Participant 12).

Participants clearly recognised and valued the way in which engaging with the 2nd Chance Project enabled ongoing support following release, as well as creating further contacts with community-based organisations:

Yeah, they done a one-to-one thing where they asked me a load of questions, which I done, I found it alright because...it's not like this football Academy when it finishes they leave you – they're trying so that when you get out to keep you on the straight and narrow isn't it, so it's good" (Participant 5).

"Justin came and chatted and he put me in contact so I got involved with the Princes Trust now. I got a mentor, he comes in and helps me and that so that's one good thing. When I eventually get out, I'm gonna still keep in contact with Justin and



that, maybe go up and see him, or lan up in Chelsea... Yeah definitely keep contact with people” (Participant 8).

Moreover, the fact that guidance was provided by an independent individual was seen to increase the quality, personalisation and extent of support available, thus allowing for personal relationships to be built which inspired motivation amongst participants:

“Well it feels good because of the fact that, you know, they’re taking the time out to come and work with us and give us options and opportunities...You know, Justin, he’s been talking to me, taking time out to like hear what I want to do and he’s given me options and different things that he could help with...Advice and information about other things on the outside...I mean now I’m a bit more driven like to do things but sometimes I still kind of slack on, you know, certain things so I’d rather have someone to guide me and help me out whenever I need it. Someone I could talk to and go to for help, you know, so it would be a good thing to keep in contact with people” (Participant 1).

“Just the fact that they’re coming out, you know, they’re professional and they’re coming from the outside to take the time and that, you know, and do things for us...It’s good because it inspires like some people to do better things in life and it gives them that hope that they might have something for them outside and that” (Participant 1).

Suggested Improvements for Future Academies

When asked to suggest how future academies could be improved, responses were based on the following themes:

Number of Academy members

In reflecting on how the Academy could be improved, every single participant referred to having more people on the Academy (the general consensus was enough players for two sides to play against each other, to allow for drop-out and also to encourage people to have to ‘compete’ for their position in the squad).

Weather / pitch

Most of the participants referred to the state of the pitch and disruptions caused by the weather:

“Have it on certain months because we started out obviously in the winter where the weather was raining all the time and everything, so like all the outside matches we couldn’t get and everyone was – obviously it upsets everyone when you get to – when you’re looking forward to your first game and you don’t get to play it at all” (Participant 6).

Academy members on the same wing

A substantial number suggested that those in the Academy should be on the same wing, a typical response being: “Everyone on the same wing so we build better relationships with all the players” (Participant 9).



Increased hours

As well as suggestions that the Academy members reside on the same wing, others suggested that a more structured regime would contribute to increased social bonds within the Academy:

“I would do it more on a full time – obviously I know you’re restricted in prison, but I would do it on a more full time basis because I don’t think this team personally gelled from the start, even though we’ve been working 4 times a week, which is more than some, I still don’t think this team gelled enough. I think it’s improved people’s fitness and people’s determination to be a footballer, but I don’t think it’s improved us to be a team” (Participant 4).

Others suggested that hours should be increased, not just in terms of the football element, but also in terms of the independent resettlement support:

“Spend a bit more time with other people from outside, like talking on a one-to-one basis about what we can do on the outside” (Participant 1).

Diverse activities

Diversification of activities was suggested as a way of improving future academies:

“Not just football, football everyday or fitness everyday – we could have done some other activities which may have helped us bond as a group you know” (Participant 4).

Improved training kit

“There’s not enough kits and we’re wearing all different colours and stuff like that really” (Participant 5).

Recruitment process

Some participants suggested that a more vigorous recruitment process and criteria would be an improvement:

“I’d give them an interview. I would interview them before they allowed them in the Academy...Just to see how their mental attitudes are towards the whole process” (Participant 3).

“Another issue I’d say was the time that people have got left on their sentence because some people have got years left and they’re doing a course now and obviously they’ll probably lose contact with Justin and Ian and all that in a couple of years time. So all of this now might be – it’s probably useful now but in time it might not be. So I’d say people should have a maximum of time left on their sentence” (Participant 12).

Key Recommendations from the Interview Data:

- Increase the number of Academy participants
- House Academy members on the same wing to encourage team integration and better focus
- Arrange regular, additional matches
- Introduce alternative (indoor) activities during the winter months and offer alternative sports
- Improve the quality and quantity of training kit
- Consider targeting those nearing the end of their sentence or develop more inclusivity in delivery
- Maintain regular involvement of respected clubs / professionals from outside
- Maintain a strong resettlement element
- Maintain sponsorship to allow presentation of own kit (this was highly valued by all players and led to increased pride, motivation and esteem)

ASSESSING THE LONGER-TERM IMPACT OF THE ACADEMY: FOLLOW-UP ASSESSMENT

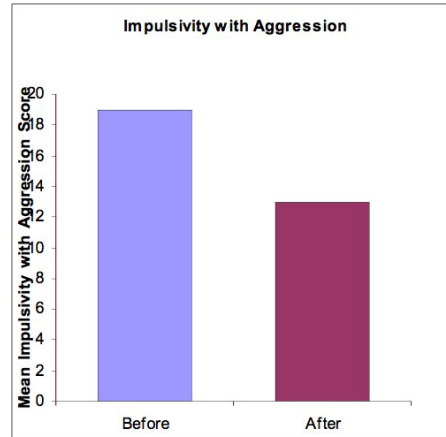
A crucial aspect of this evaluation refers to the longitudinal nature of the research, whereby Academy participants are tracked after their release from prison in order to monitor their progress. All participants gave consent to participate in follow-up research and as of August 2010, six of the participants had completed their custodial sentences and returned to the community. Contact was successfully made with each of these Academy graduates in the community in order to carry out a follow-up assessment. At the time of follow-up:

- Four Academy graduates were in full-time employment
- One Academy graduate was in full time vocational training and was playing for Chichester City FC.
- One Academy graduate was seeking employment and playing for Hackney Albion FC in the Hackney & Leyton Sunday League.
- None had re-offended
- All spoke enthusiastically of their participation in the Football Academy
- One of the Academy graduates who remained in custody had a coaching assistant role within the subsequent Academy, thus providing a form of peer coaching.

Longitudinal research with ex-offenders is notoriously challenging to conduct, but the fact that each released Academy graduate was willing to participate in the follow-up research is further testimony to the positive impact of the 2nd Chance Project Football Academy at Portland.

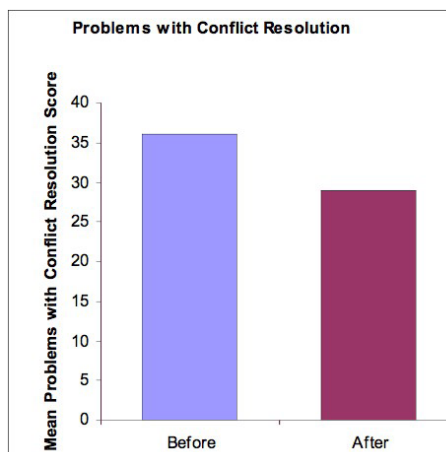
At the time of post-release follow-up, positive changes were observed in each of the psychometric measurements taken, with the most significant changes observed in constructs relating to impulsivity with aggression, conflict resolution, attitudes towards offending, evaluation of offending, perceived problems, and self esteem.

There was a significant reduction in Impulsivity with Aggression, whereby the average score changed from 18.7 to 12.7, demonstrating a dramatic five-point reduction. Participants were significantly less likely to identify with impulsivity with

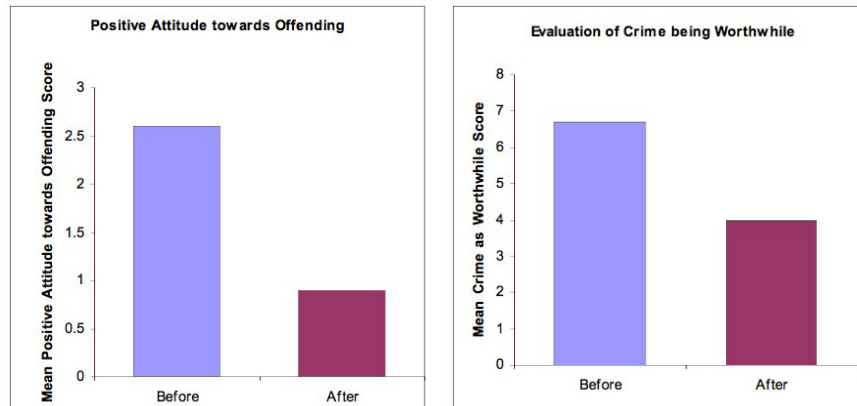


aggression following the football academy ($t(6) = 4.94, p < .01$).

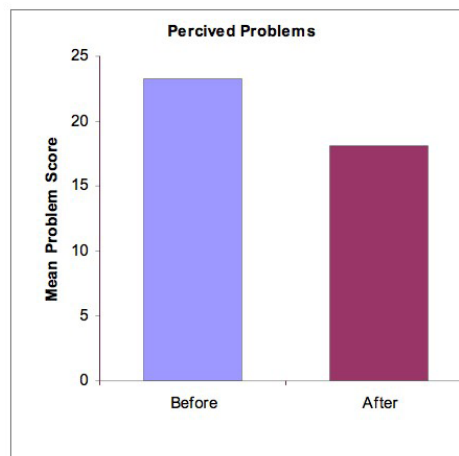
Conflict Resolution reduced dramatically from 36.3 to 29.1, demonstrating that participants had significantly lower scores



for overall problems in conflict resolution after the football academy ($t(6) = 2.61, p < .05$). Positive changes in General Attitudes towards Offending (CRIME-PICS G), and Evaluation of Crime being Worthwhile (CRIME-PICS E), were both observed ($t(6) = 2.66, p < .05$; $t(6) = 3.40, p < .05$). Following the football academy, individuals expressed significantly stronger beliefs that an offending lifestyle is not desirable, and were significantly more likely to



identify with the belief that the cost of crime is greater than its rewards. Finally, perceived problems (associated with finances, relationships, employment, health, substance use, mental health, etc.) also significantly reduced. The self-reported Problems Scale of Academy graduates reduced from a mean of 23.3 to 18.1 ($t(6) = 3.46, p < .05$). The number and gravity of problems identified significantly reduced following completion of the Academy.



Finally, Self Esteem significantly increased after completing the Academy ($t(6) = 4.50, p < .01$).



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES OF ACADEMY GRADUATES AFTER RELEASE

Mark lives in the South East with his parents, and was released two weeks ago following an 11 month sentence. He was released on electronic tag and has already secured full time employment. In describing his experiences of the Academy, Mark is especially positive about the skills and opportunities developed as a result of participating:

“Everything about it was good. It got us out of our cells more. Got us working together so we could communicate with people, because some of us weren’t that good at that... Getting to know everyone, team building, playing the matches. I didn’t expect to go in and do something like that, it was good. I’m more confident. I’ve got my shirt upstairs on my wall... I’d like to join a team. I want to play and I might help out at the weekends with my neighbour as he teaches his son’s team. I’m going for a trial too”.

Mark’s parents were both also interviewed and were keen to highlight the positive transformations they’ve witnessed in their son since taking part in the Academy:

“It has been fantastic, a huge change. We noticed the difference, obviously it is difficult at the start, but once he got settled and into the routine, the Football Academy just saved him. He’s always been good at football so to be able to focus on that - it made the time go and it gave something to put in the letters, the games and training. Now he’s come out he’s so positive”.

Thomas has been out of prison for two months. He lives in London, and as a result of a referral from the 2nd Chance Project has been volunteering with Cricket 4 Change since his release:

“I enjoyed yesterday. I was working with blind kids, playing cricket. If I don’t get employment [with Cricket 4 Change] then at least a bit more experience, build up trust”.

Illustrating a theme common in research with offenders after release from prison, Thomas already identifies himself as being very different to the person he was in custody, even though only two months had passed since release (“I can’t remember much, it’s a different world man! It was good at the time but now it is just a memory. Leave that in Portland”). Despite this, Thomas acknowledges the positive impact of participating in the Academy and engaging with the 2nd Chance Project caseworker:

“Justin gave me the link to Adam [at Cricket 4 Change], so I thank him for that. Without Justin there would be no Adam. Justin played a key role”.

Jordan was released from custody four months ago, lives in London and, after a short period as a voluntary worker, has now secured employment as a housing assistant. In reflecting on his experience of the Academy, Jordan is positive about the changes in himself:



“It felt good to be picked for it and be in the actual academy. A lot of people trialled for it, I must have shown some kind of talent. It gives you inspiration for yourself to believe in yourself”.

Jordan describes how being near to release enabled him to make the most of the experience: “The academy did help me and has helped me in terms of how I am now because at the time, through support from people like Justin, Mr Brown, they made you realise that you can do it. For me it was a perfect timing because I was just about to come out. Justin has supported me, he’s been liaising with my probation officer and he gives me good references”.

Describing the Academy, Jordan is clear about the benefits of participating, both while in custody and after release:

“I think being able to play football every day and just being out of your cell. And being with the lads, you know, that team effort. Even though there were team arguments, and some people didn’t really like each other, it was good, it’s good to look back and think of it. I think it works well, it should continue”.

Since his release, **Jason** has married and is living with his partner and their child in the South East. He is playing semi-professionally for his local football team, and has embarked on a full time plumbing training course. Jason is particularly positive about the impact of participating in the Academy on his self-esteem and improved attitude towards life:

“It has made me realise that there is more to life... Being a part of a team and working together as a team to you can achieve anything”.

Leon lives in London and is currently staying with his mother while arranging his own housing. Leon enthusiastically describes the Academy achievements:

“I can remember at the start there was no team chemistry at all. Apart from probably one or two players who’d played together before. Everyone just came together in the end, everyone responding to questions, reacting to other people’s reactions. It was good to see in action, all coming together. I feel like it’s a good experience and I feel accomplished at the same time. I’ve learnt to respect people. My shirt is framed on my mum’s wall. I’m proud. Not of being in that situation but proud of actually taking something out while being there and changing my mentality”.

Since his release, Leon has continued to play football regularly:

“It’s like a brand new world for me. Right now I’m playing Sunday league but hopefully one day soon with a bit of luck I’ll get a scout come along to one of the matches. The training was fine. I still think about the training to this day. It has helped my fitness”.

Leon highlights the resettlement benefits of participating in the Academy and suggests the development of similar Academies in other establishments:

“Prison makes you feel empty. It is depressing. I don’t show it but I have low confidence. Coming out with low confidence you’re going to go out and go back to crime. It’s better to come out with high expectations of yourself and the way you want your life to be through hard work. They should set up Academies in every jail. It would be much better, the atmosphere would be better. It lifts everyone’s spirits. There would be less problems. It would open up more options for everyone. Not just football, they should send out different questionnaires on the wings to find out what sports they would like to play”.

Leon also highlights the importance of post-release support, further supporting the view that the through-the-gate element of the 2nd Chance casework is so vital:

“I’m sending my CVs everywhere. It’s like a double hit. There is not a lot of jobs around and you’ve got a previous [conviction] on your back. Once you come out here Probation aren’t helping you as they should. I have to rehabilitate myself. Justin was very helpful though”.

Luke was released two months ago, is currently housed in hostel accommodation in London and is working full time in a telemarketing role:

“Things are going well. I wake up about 6am, go to work, finish at 6pm, go to my mum’s house for some food and then go back to the hostel to sleep. It’s alright”.

Luke partially attributes his success to the changes that came about from being part of the Academy:

“If I could go back in time and change things I wouldn’t. I’d take six months off my sentence but I learnt a lot about myself, about other people, about life. The discipline was good, the different activities got us thinking about certain stuff. Being part of a team. I’m normally not very social, I like to be by myself but now obviously I have to work in a team for my job so it has helped me with that. I can listen to people better as well. I wouldn’t express myself so well if it wasn’t for those activities we did”.

Luke suggests that the most significant achievements gained from participating in the Academy relate to his interpersonal skills, but he still acknowledges the sporting element:

“It helped my fitness too. I’m still trying to pursue football. I still intend to. I’d like to go on a trial but it’s an overnight stay and I need to be back at the hostel each night for my curfew. It was nice to be part of it. I’ve got the Academy photos in my room”.

CONCLUSION

The qualitative and quantitative findings reported here provide compelling evidence for the short term success of the Academy, although evidence for the sustained impact will only become available as greater time elapses. The participants were enthusiastic about their experiences – not just during their time in custody, but crucially, after experiencing the transition from custody to community - which is well recognised as being a time at which ex-offenders are particularly vulnerable and at risk of a transgression to re-offending. The interviews provide a vivid account of the participants’ experiences of the Academy and these qualitative findings are further supported by the quantitative data which captures a positive shift for each participant on a wide range of psychometric measures related to offending, criminogenic needs and psychological wellbeing.

As the monitoring of the first cohort of Academy graduates continues, the ongoing assessment of the second cohort is well underway and the planning for the third Academy at Portland is already in progress. It is therefore both appropriate and rewarding that the conclusion of the first year of this initiative is marked with such positive findings from the first publication arising from this important piece of evaluation research.

Appendix 1: PSYCHOMETRICS MEASUREMENTS

Beliefs about Aggression and Alternatives

The beliefs about aggression scale developed by Farrell, Meyer and White (2001) measures individuals’ beliefs about the use of aggression and endorsement of non-violent responses to hypothetical situations. Respondent are asked to rate their extent of agreement with statement on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Responses are then numerically coded and combined to create two subscales; Beliefs about Aggression and Use of Non Violent Strategies.

Farrell, A., Meyer, A., and White, K. (2001). Evaluation of responding in peaceful and positive ways (RIPP): a school-based prevention programme for reducing violence among urban adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 30, 4, 3-463.

Self Esteem

The Weinberger and Schwartz (1990) adjustment inventory measures an individual’s perception of their self value. Participants are asked to rate the extent of their agreement with statements on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Answers were then numerically coded and combined to create a self esteem score ranging between 7-35, with a high score indicating low self esteem.

Weinberger, D. and Schwartz, G. (1990). Distress and restraint as superordinate dimensions of adjustment: a typological perspective. *Journal of Personality*, 2, 381-417.

Self Concept

Drawing on Phillips and Springer’s (1992) scale, a composite measure of self concept was created to assess an individual’s sense of self-concept and self-confidence. Respondents were asked to rate their extent of agreement with statements on

a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Responses were numerically coded and combined to create a self concept score, with the maximum score of 48 indicating a strong self concept.

Phillips, J. and Springer, F. (1992). Extended National Youth Sports Program 1991-1992 Evaluation Highlights, Part Two: Individual Protective Factors Index (IPFI) and Risk Assessment Study. Report prepared for the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Sacramento, CA: EMT Associates.

Impulsivity

Questions pertaining to impulsivity were drawn from Bosworth & Espelage (1995) Teen Conflict Survey and measured frequency of impulsive behaviours such as lack of self control and difficulty finishing things. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with statements on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Answers were then numerically coded and combined to create an impulsivity score ranging from 4 to 20, with high scores indicating higher self reported impulsivity.

Bosworth, K., Espelage, D. (1995). Teen Conflict Survey. Bloomington, IN: Center for Adolescent Studies, Indiana University.

CRIAQ Measures

The CRIAQ questionnaire developed by Honess, Maguire & Vanstone (2001) was designed specifically to measure and monitor changes in aggression among offenders, particularly aspects of aggression targeted by prison/probation interventions such as impulsivity and conflict resolution. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with statements on a 5 point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, these were then numerically coded. Part one of the CRIAQ questionnaire relates to impulsivity and responses to this section were combined to create three impulsivity scores: IS - an overall impulsivity score, IN - impulsivity without aggression and IA impulsivity with aggression. Part two of the CRIAQ questionnaire focuses on conflict resolution with responses being combined to create a further four conflict resolution scores; CS - a overall score for problems in conflict resolution, CA - a aggression in conflict resolution score, CP - a physical violence in conflict resolution score and CC - a lack of compromise in conflict resolution score. On all seven scales a higher score indicates a greater identification with that particular mode of operating.

Honess, T., Maguire, M. & Vanstone, M. (2001) CRIAQ. M&A Research.

CRIME – PICS II Measures

The 35 item structured Crime Pics questionnaire was designed to measure individuals' attitudes towards offending on five distinct scales (Frude, Hones & Maguire, 2009). In the first section of the Crime-Pics II questionnaire participants rate their level of agreement with statements on a five point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Answers are numerically coded and combined to create four scales; G Scale - a measure of the offenders general attitude towards offending with a low score indicating that a individual believes a offending lifestyle is not desirable; A Scale - a measure of the offenders anticipation of re-offending with a low score indicating that the individual does not anticipate re-offending; V scale - a measure of the offenders attitude towards his/her victims, such as whether they believed they caused harm, with a low score indicating the individual recognises their actions impact on the victim; E Scale - a measure of the offenders evaluation of crime being worthwhile, with a low score indicating that the individual perceives the cost of crime as being greater than its rewards. The second section of the Crime-Pics II questionnaire, the problem inventory, requires participants to indicate the extent to which they perceive something to be a problem on a four point scale ranging from big problem to no problem at all. Answers to the problem inventory are numerically coded and combined to create a P scale measuring the individual's perceptions of their current problems: the higher the score the greater the number and gravity of problems identified.

Frude, N., Hones, T. & Maguire, M. (2009). CRIME-PICS II. M&A Research.



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