



what really  
works?  
**arts**  
with offenders



ARTS IN  
THE CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE SYSTEM

# about us

**The Arts Alliance** is the national body for the promotion of arts in Criminal Justice. It represents a coalition of arts practitioners and organisations working in prison and the community to support men, women, and young people to lead crime free lives.

With the support of Arts Council England, the Ministry of Justice and the Monument Trust, the Arts Alliance is highlighting the value of the arts, evidence of its effectiveness, and best practice, making the case that arts and creative activities for all offenders.

We hope that this 'taster' brochure offers a snapshot of the huge variety of arts initiatives taking place in the British Criminal Justice System, together with findings from research and the experiences of participants and staff who know the benefits that art offers offenders in their rehabilitation.

[www.artsalliance.org.uk](http://www.artsalliance.org.uk)

## INSIDE

About us	2
Engagement	4
New skills	6
Responsibility	8
Positive relationships	10
New horizons	12
Value for money	14

## The arts

The arts are often seen as enjoyable and fluffy. But anyone who has tried to play an instrument, perform in a play, paint a watercolour or write a poem knows that the process demands concentration, discipline, co-operation and technical know-how.

It involves an honest expression of feelings, good communication skills, working together well and commitment to finish the job. In other words, the arts produce exactly the skills and the common humanity that offenders need if they are to be rehabilitated back into our communities.

Our members have been consistently commissioned over the last twenty years to deliver projects and programmes that directly contribute to effective rehabilitation.



## Arts Alliance members

Our members know that the arts are an essential means of reducing re-offending. We have the expertise and experience, the skills and track record in working with those people passing through the Criminal Justice System.

The Arts Alliance uses tried and tested models of effective practice that work in engaging, motivating and providing opportunities for people to develop new skills as well as discover new ways of behaving and relating to others.

We work in four main areas:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Community sentences
- Custodial sentences
- Through-the-gate and community services for ex-offenders.

The arts produce exactly the skills and the common humanity that offenders need if they are to be rehabilitated back into our communities.

Momentum at Dance United Academy, London | Photo © Stephanie Stan Smith



# engagement “THE ARTS ENGAGE WHERE OTHER WAYS OFTEN FAIL”



Musical Prisoners | Photo © Lizzie Coombes / lizziecoombes.com/steigogmail.com

**Engagement**, retention, completion and progression are the goals of the majority of constructive activities in prisons. Achievement, enjoyment and motivation underpin the success of those stages and the arts provide accessible ways to achieve those goals for many of those offenders who do not believe they can ever do anything different.

“ We give prisoners a chance to see what they are capable of. Some of them have never been praised. Positive feedback is fantastic for them. We need to do our best to reduce recidivism and I have to justify these programmes to the Director General of the prison service, but if I thought that it was just a jolly for the prisoners, I wouldn't be interested.”

*HMP Wandsworth's Governor, Ian Mulholland, The Guardian, March 2007*



All Ways of Life Art workshop group, HMP Prison, Peterborough | Photo courtesy of Kestrel Trust

“ We came across a number of charities running innovative schemes, such as dance, boxing and vehicle maintenance, that are effective at engaging young people and diverting them from crime.”

*Trial and error: Children and young people in trouble with the law, a guide for charities and funders, NPC, 2010*

## MUSIC IN PRISONS

Music in Prisons specialises in the delivery of week-long intensive creative music projects within prisons, delivered by a core team of professional musicians. During a typical project, the group of participants will work towards a performance for other prisoners, prison staff and friends and family. The new music created is also recorded and copies of the CD are sent to the participants and their families.

## Confidence to participate in programmes

**60%** of participants strongly agreed with the statement that the (music) project had given them more confidence to participate in other educational programmes.

*Beats and Bars, Music in Prisons: an evaluation, Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge, 2008*



Music in Prisons | Photo © Lizzi Combes / lizziawebbs.com@esgjournal.com

Arts organisations have a long track record of working with some of the hardest to reach groups and individuals in engaging them in unusual ways and sometimes in unusual activities.

# new skills “THE ARTS TEACH NEW SKILLS... (AND MORE)”

The arts not only offer ways to learn **new skills** but also new ways to learn key social and life skills.

6 Professional artists bring their talent in music, painting, photography, dance, drama and creative writing to help offenders develop the key social and life skills that they need. Such as improved self-esteem, listening and communication skills, self-awareness, empathy, tolerance and self-control.

## A survey of Koestler Trust entrants in 2007 found that...

- **85%** of the awards entrants had learnt new skills from entering the Koestler awards
- **21%** of entrants identified specific education and training which the awards had helped them towards
- **70%** of staff said that (Koestler Trust) helped increase the number of offenders gaining formal qualifications.

*The Work of the Koestler Trust: A report on a survey of award participants and establishment staff, Billington Associates, August 2007*

## FINE CELL WORK

Fine Cell Work is a social enterprise that teaches needlework to prisoners and sells their products. The prisoners do this work when they are locked in their cells and do Fine Cell Work for an average of 3 years with the earnings giving them hope, skills and independence.

In 2009, prisoners hand-stitched a total of 2011 items and collectively spent roughly 400,000 hours stitching in their cells, spending an average of 18 hours per week doing embroidery. They collectively earned £59,890.

With an average extra earnings per year of £154 from doing Fine Cell Work, prisoners report giving this to families and saving for release, with the high earners stitching for as long as 40 hours per week.



## GOOD VIBRATIONS

Through participation in **Gamelan workshops** and courses (Indonesian bronze percussion), Good Vibrations has worked with more than 2,400 participants in 33 different secure institutions. It works because:

- It is very accessible
- You don't need to have any previous musical experience
- You don't need to be able to read music
- It's a very communal activity
- You have to listen to everyone else to fit your own part in.

“ The response from prisoners was overwhelmingly positive. One man, who won a Volunteering Award, wrote “I love the work I do and it's nice to see the men I've introduced and helped to sew get from Fine Cell Work the same satisfaction, self-belief and pride as I do on a daily basis.”

*Fine Cell Work, 2009*





Good Vibrations Gamelan workshop | Photo © Camilla Panufnik/Good Vibrations

“ I don’t do treats for cheats. If I didn’t believe this [Good Vibrations] was about reducing re-offending, I wouldn’t be doing it.”

*A prison governor*

Clean Break Access 2009 students performing The Barber Shop | Photo © Sabina Brown



Retention and progression rates are excellent with over **70%** of women progressing into higher education, employment or volunteering.

*In-house monitoring and records, Clean Break 2009*

## CLEAN BREAK THEATRE COMPANY

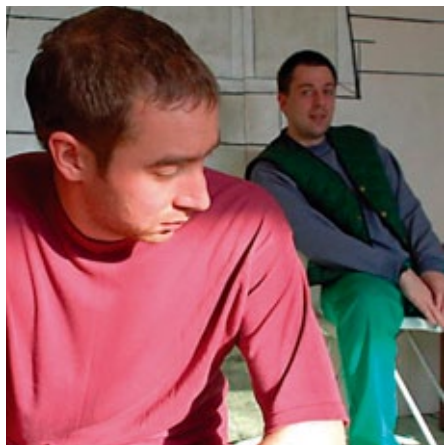
Clean Break delivers a year-round, theatre-based education programme for women offenders and those at risk of offending due to drug or alcohol use, or mental health needs. Up to 17 different courses are on offer, including accredited courses, writing, personal development (self-development and women and anger), short courses (make-up, theatre design, costume design, backstage, group singing, recording and dance) and the year-long access to theatre course. As well as this community-based provision, Clean Break delivers playwriting, theatre productions and theatre education residencies in women’s prisons and YOIs throughout the country.

# responsibility

“THE ARTS HELP OFFENDERS  
TAKE RESPONSIBILITY”

The arts make you take **responsibility** for yourself and others. For example, there is nowhere to hide when you are on a stage or when your work is hanging on the wall at an exhibition. It takes dedication and hard work to create quality art.

Arts Alliance members use all the art forms at their disposal to address offending behaviour, such as supporting service users to talk about their past and express their emotions. Using the arts in this way is powerful and effective, helping people to think through their actions and the consequences of those actions.



Geese Theatre Company in Prison | Photo © Andy Watson

## YOTs offering Summer Arts Colleges in 2009 has shown that...

- **81%** of young people at the Summer Arts College completed the programme
- **75%** went on to further education, training or employment.

*Unitas data collection, 2009*

## TiPP

TiPP work from the belief that theatre and related arts have the power to transform people's lives. Through the summer of 2009, TiPP took the lead on the development and delivery of **Wrexham Summer Arts College**.

The Summer Arts Colleges are a nationwide programme of intensive educational projects designed for young people on Detention and Training Orders (DTOs) and Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programmes (ISSPs). The programme is co-ordinated by Unitas and was an example of the strategic partnership between Youth Justice Board and Arts Council England.

“ We have worked together with the Geese Theatre Company for many years. They are able to engage with offenders in a creative and imaginative way, using drama to recreate experiences and teach new ways of behaving. In this way they encourage responsibility and enable offenders to experience and understand the consequences of their actions, and so add value to the programmes we run.”

*Mark Farmer, Head of the Regional Sex Offender Unit*

## Over the last three years...

Geese Theatre Company has delivered projects, performance and sessions with over **3,800** men and women serving community sentences and with over **3,500** men and women and young people serving custodial sentences. In 2009-10 alone, Geese worked with **1,158** people on Probation programmes and over **800** people in prisons providing a total of **222** sessions.



## GEESE THEATRE COMPANY

Geese Theatre Company has been working for over twenty years in partnerships with a significant number of Probation areas. In partnership they deliver specially designed and highly skilled sessions on offending behaviour treatment groupwork programmes; all underpinned by the themes of choice, change and personal responsibility.

Currently the vast majority of their work is with groups of men on the high risk programmes, such as the Integrated Domestic Abuse Programme and the Community Sex Offender Groupwork Programme. Each of their specialist sessions deliberately tackle notions of responsibility:

- For the offending
- For the choices that the offender makes
- For others safety and well being.

Geese Theatre Company in *Lifting the Weight* [Photo courtesy of Warwickshire County Council]

Being involved in arts activity you have to take responsibility: for your choices; for your decisions; for putting yourself up there to do something – often something you haven't done before.



# positive relationships

“THE ARTS ENABLE OFFENDERS TO RE-BUILD AND MAINTAIN POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS”

10

Family breakdown as a result of a prison sentence is a major stumbling block to successful resettlement. Developing **positive relationship** is vital to making progress.

Taking part in an arts project allows people to behave differently, breaking old patterns of behaviour. Arts organisations provide opportunities for prisoners to communicate with families through performances, poetry, readings, and music. Arts can teach parenting skills that will help keep families together.



Clean Break | Photo © Tracey Anderson

## Arriving at safe ground...

During 2009-10, Safe Ground worked with **620** people and **466** of those completed the entire course. This represents a **75%** completion rate in the **41** programmes they delivered.



“ The programme facilitates rehabilitation and resettlement, reduces the risk of re-offending and also enables the prisoner to discharge his parental responsibilities towards his own children, so that they in turn are less likely to become delinquent.”

*Review of Family Man programme, Professor James Maguire, Department of Clinical Psychology, Liverpool University, 2009*



## WRITERS IN PRISON NETWORK

Established in 1992, The Writers in Prison Network (WIPN) has delivered over 130 residencies, putting writers and creative artists into prisons to deliver creative writing, drama, video, music, oral storytelling, journalism, creative reading and publishing programmes.

The writers are there to enrich the whole prison, available to work with both staff and offenders, where they have created a legacy of magazines, anthologies, audio, video and live drama productions and other projects which have helped project a positive image for the prison.

WIPN promotes Storybook Dad and Storybook Mum programmes in prisons across the UK where fathers and mothers record their own readings of books for their children to listen to. They have also helped develop Men Behaving Dadly, a course which teaches parenting skills, cookery and nutrition through oral storytelling, arts, craft and music.

“ One of the key elements in helping prisoners not to reoffend is ensuring that the family stays intact.”

*Writers in Prison Network, 2010*



## SAFE GROUND

Unique within the prison system, the Safe Ground **Family Man** and **Fathers Inside** programmes use drama as the principal mode of delivery to teach participants the essential social skills to help them to improve their relationships with their peers, staff and more significantly with their family members.

These two programmes provide commissioners with evidence that participants have reached a level of understanding on the subjects of family relationships, parenting, group and teamwork, communication skills and personal development. These programmes are actively supported by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

Family Man is a course about family relationships. It uses drama and group work to enable participants to find new ways of thinking and behaving in prison and on release. Adding up to 140 intensive hours, it teaches prisoners how to work with others, how to reflect and act on their responsibilities as a family member, and how to articulate their own ambitions.



Safe Ground: Good Daddy | Photo © Warwick Sweeney

Taking part in an arts project allows people to behave differently.



The arts offer practical, professional and often innovative ways for offenders and ex-offenders to develop in ways they perhaps had not expected – opening up **new horizons** to participants.

**“Your commitment to changing the lives of young men at Swinfen Hall is impressive. The varied workshops, courses and productions clearly contributed to reducing re-offending, addressing resettlement needs and reducing risk. I would have no hesitation in recommending Rideout.”**

*Pete Knapton, Former Governor, HMPYOI, Swinfen Hall and Brinsford*

## RIDEOUT

Underlying all of Rideout's work is the notion that individuals have the capacity to respond in different ways to pressures from friends, families or environment. Other strategies are always available, however, it often requires the offender to use imagination and to envision alternative behaviours.

**The Creative Prison** was a recent project where Rideout worked with architect Will Alsop and a group of staff and prisoners to rethink prison design from the ground up.

Having looked at design of prison builds, Rideout is now exploring the design of the programmes that actually run within prisons.

**Talent 4** gives prisoners an opportunity to discover their natural abilities and talents, giving focus to learning style, vocational inclination and aptitude for different professions. The programme is currently being run at several prisons in the West Midlands prior to being rolled out more widely.

## KOESTLER TRUST

The Koestler Trust has over 5,500 submissions of art each year from offenders in prison, the community, and those in secure mental health settings. It then has a panel of professional artists and critics judge them and provide awards as well as hosting a public exhibition of this high quality art of various mediums.

Recently the Koestler Trust have developed a mentoring scheme after they recognised that many prisoners find it difficult to continue with their arts activities once they have been released even if they are incredibly talented individuals. They have developed an innovative Arts Mentoring Scheme to aid the transition from custody into the community. Koestler has trained a group of professional artists to support individual offenders continue with their art post-release.



Creative Prison 3 by M | Photo © Rideout





Mentors offer up to 10 mentoring sessions over the course of 12 months, with the first meeting usually taking place whilst the mentee is still in custody.

Mentoring sessions can involve a variety of activities including:

- Giving feedback on the mentee's latest artistic creations and suggesting new forms of inspiration
- Suggesting reading, writing and informing of other resources
- Assistance and support with applications to further education and entries into competitions, publications
- Accompanying mentee to arts events such as exhibitions, readings or performances
- Introducing and orientating the mentee to their local arts community.

Creative Prison Housebooks | Image © Abasp/Ricloud

Self-portrait with Toothache by Michael HMP Prison Grendon | Photo courtesy of Koestler Trust

“The awards and the support reminds us that there are people who have not given up on us.”

*Koestler Trust Mentee*

“I was delighted to receive a letter from D, who was fortunate enough to have the support of a Koestler mentor on release. Thanks to the scheme, he now has employment in a graphic design studio. How fabulous!”

*Art Tutor, HMP Acklington*



# value for money “THE ARTS ARE A GOOD INVESTMENT AND GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY”

The **costs of imprisonment** are high, as are the continuing re-offending rates.

Holding a person in a Young Offender institution (YOI) costs about **£100,000** a year.

*Punishing Costs, NPC, 2010*

The overall cost per adult prisoner per year is **£41,000**.

*Prison Reform Trust, 2009*

The number of women in prison has increased by **44%** over the past decade. **47%** of adults are reconvicted within one year of being released.

*Ministry of Justice, 2009*

“ It costs on average £47,000 to keep someone in prison for a year. It costs only £20,000 to employ a writer in residence in prison. So if one of our writers helps someone to not reoffend for a year that’s £27,000 saved for the taxpayer. With 20 writers in residence at any one time, our writers work with almost 2,000 offenders every year.”

*Writers in Prison Network, 2010*

## The Academy works...

- **77%** of academy participants completed the 12 week programme during 2009
- **79%** (of one cohort of graduates) returned to education, training and employment.

“ An NPC report analysing the most cost effective youth offending programmes estimates that the work of Dance United, by stopping even one person reoffending, saves the public purse about £82,000.”

*Punishing Costs, NPC, 2010*

Mark, Synergy Theatre, performing at the Liberal Democrat Party conference 2005 | Photo © Angus McEwin/angusmcwin@mac.muk

Momentum at Dance United Academy, London | Photo © Stephanie Sam Smith

## DANCE UNITED

Dance United works with those who are marginalised in society and whose potential is often unrecognised or unfulfilled. They deliver work that is tough, tightly-focused and highly disciplined. In mastering the physicality of movement and daring to be creative, learning to trust and be trusted in return, something changes, something shifts.

The Academy was launched in 2002 and began as an intensive, twelve-week programme based on professional contemporary dance training and performance, providing a realistic alternative to custody and mainstream schooling. Originally conceived as an intervention for young people on YOT-based Intensive Supervision and Surveillance programmes (ISSP), its recruitment base has broadened to include young people on different types of community orders, prisoners on day release, and school refusers.

The Academy has run in West Yorkshire and now in London – with its partners, it is committed to finding routes back into education and employment for its participants.



Rehabilitation at Dance United Academy, London | Photo © Nick Gurney



These models are not only value for money and therefore of value to government, but also of value to society in addressing the rehabilitation of offenders.

## **The Arts Alliance is the national body for the promotion of arts in the Criminal Justice Sector.**

With the support of Arts Council England, the Ministry of Justice and the Monument Trust, the Arts Alliance is collaborating to gather and present evidence of its effectiveness, share best practice and make the case for creative activities with offenders.

[www.artsalliance.org.uk](http://www.artsalliance.org.uk) | [artsalliance@clinks.org](mailto:artsalliance@clinks.org)

### **Arts Alliance Steering Group members**

#### **Clean Break**

*Uses theatre, working with women whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system*

020 7482 8600 | [general@cleanbreak.org.uk](mailto:general@cleanbreak.org.uk)  
[www.cleanbreak.org.uk](http://www.cleanbreak.org.uk)

#### **Dance United**

*Developed the award-winning Academy model: a proven alternative to custody*

020 7431 6647 | [info@dance-united.com](mailto:info@dance-united.com)  
[www.dance-united.com](http://www.dance-united.com)

#### **Escape Artists**

*A Creative Approach to Wellbeing*

020 7655 0909 | [admin@escapeartists.co.uk](mailto:admin@escapeartists.co.uk)  
[www.escapeartists.co.uk](http://www.escapeartists.co.uk)

#### **Fine Cell Work**

*A social enterprise that teaches needlework to prisoners and sells their products*

020 7931 9998 | [sophie@finecellwork.co.uk](mailto:sophie@finecellwork.co.uk)  
[www.finecellwork.co.uk](http://www.finecellwork.co.uk)

#### **Good Vibrations**

*Developing life and work skills through music*

020 8673 5367 | [info@good-vibrations.org.uk](mailto:info@good-vibrations.org.uk)  
[www.good-vibrations.org.uk](http://www.good-vibrations.org.uk)

#### **Irene Taylor Trust Music in Prisons**

*Delivering creative music projects to inspire and engage prisoners to achieve their potential*

020 7733 3222 | [victoria@musicinprisons.org.uk](mailto:victoria@musicinprisons.org.uk)  
[www.musicinprisons.org.uk](http://www.musicinprisons.org.uk)

#### **Koestler Trust**

*Awarding, exhibiting and selling artworks by offenders, detainees and secure patients*

020 8740 0333 | [info@koestlertrust.org.uk](mailto:info@koestlertrust.org.uk)  
[www.koestlertrust.org.uk](http://www.koestlertrust.org.uk)

#### **Music in Detention**

*Works through music to give voice to immigration detainees*

020 7014 2810/2811 | [info@musicindetention.org.uk](mailto:info@musicindetention.org.uk)  
[www.musicindetention.org.uk](http://www.musicindetention.org.uk)

#### **Rideout**

*Innovative, arts-based approaches to working with prisoners and staff within UK prisons*

01782 325555 | [admin@rideout.org.uk](mailto:admin@rideout.org.uk)  
[www.rideout.org.uk](http://www.rideout.org.uk)

#### **Safe Ground**

*Uses drama to educate prisoners and young people at risk in the community*

020 7228 3831 | [info@safeground.org.uk](mailto:info@safeground.org.uk)  
[www.safeground.org.uk](http://www.safeground.org.uk)

#### **TIPP**

*Develops and implements participatory arts projects throughout the criminal justice system*

0161 275 3047 | [admin@tipp.org.uk](mailto:admin@tipp.org.uk)  
[www.tipp.org.uk](http://www.tipp.org.uk)

#### **Writers in Prison Network**

*Creative arts are the only legal way to escape*

– Writers in Prison opens the door  
01938 810 402 | [wipn@btinternet.com](mailto:wipn@btinternet.com)  
[www.writersinprisonnetwork.org](http://www.writersinprisonnetwork.org)



[www.artsalliance.org.uk](http://www.artsalliance.org.uk)

Supported and facilitated by



[www.clinks.org](http://www.clinks.org)



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Ministry of  
JUSTICE**

• THE • MONUMENT • TRUST •



FSC  
Wood sources  
managed to  
FSC standards  
www.fsc.org