

<b>Organisation Name</b>	<b>Reference</b>	2019-10-R022
Prison Radio Association		

<b>Visit Date</b>	<b>Visited By</b>
16 March 2022	David Loudon

#### **Grant Summary**

Prison Radio Association uses radio to support the rehabilitation of offenders and ex-offenders in England and Wales through National Prison Radio (NPR). NPR is the first radio station for prisoners and Straightline Radio was planned to be the world's first radio and online digital media channel for prison leavers. However, this has been replaced by the Prison Radio Podcast Network which with funding from the Lottery's Reaching Communities Fund will see the PRA produce two new flagship podcast series to provide support for prison leavers post-release.

A grant will enable PRA to employ a specialist research and evaluation consultant to assess their current broadcasting strategy.

This will assist PRA in improving their understanding of audience needs and the impact the service has on prisoners in the short and long-term. It will build awareness amongst the prison population so that they can tune in after their release and recognise it as a source of information and support. The outcome of the evaluation will enable better communication of impact and increased income generation through advertising and grant funding.

<https://prison.radio>

#### **Visit Details (People met, premises visited etc.)**

I visited HMP Brixton and met Tim Coleman, Director of Development at PRA and his colleague Lachlan Macara who is PRA's Managing Editor. I also met several members of the production team and three prisoners from C-Wing who are working on a variety of programs for the radio station.

I was able to listen in to a broadcast and see the program schedule which regularly features Request shows, news and fitness programs.

#### **Information about the Organisation**

PRA was formed in 2006 based on the concept of community radio and principally to help reduce the high prison suicide rate. It operates from two locations, Brixton and Styal in Cheshire. PRA runs National Prison Radio in over 110 of the 121 prisons in England and Wales and during the pandemic listeners have increased to some 66%

of inmates. It is the only national prison radio station and has plans to develop its model internationally.

The Triangle Trust grant has enabled PRA to revise its evaluation strategy working alongside Art of Regeneration for 18 months. This has included the introduction of a thematic coding log for correspondence from prisoners, their friends and families. These results have been used to formulate questionnaires which enable PRA to tackle the key issues arising in its broadcasts.

It was apparent that Straightline Radio did not resonate and so following Lottery funding the way of communicating with prison leavers is changing. PRA are employing two key staff to develop two Podcasts, one 'Life After Prison' and the second larger podcast will be much more conversational....an arm around the prisoner leaver helping them to prepare for life outside. Both these podcasts will provide PRA with much more incisive data on prisoner groups, numbers of views and steer leavers on the pathway to rehabilitation.

#### **Issues and Comments**

Both Tim and Lachlan were very welcoming and expressed their gratitude for the support from Triangle Trust. The timing of our grant has been most helpful as the MoJ had been asking questions about prisoner profile etc and PRA did not have the information until they were in a financial position to undertake an evaluation study.

Our grant has been put to good use and PRA are seeing clear benefits from the information they have obtained in formulating program schedules to assist the rehabilitation of offenders.

#### **Other Feedback**