

Play is Training for the Unexpected

**An Independent Evaluation of 3 Pillars Delivery in
Cookham Wood HMYOI – February – April 2018**



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Introduction

The 3 Pillars Project, founded in 2016, works within the UK criminal justice system to develop excellence, integrity and respect through the use of sport, mentors and role models in order to promote rehabilitation. The organisation works with cohorts of offenders while they are in custody, bringing together exercise, education and vocational support to create positive change in the lives of participants. Their work is delivered by a range of trained mentors, rugby coaches, external speakers and support staff.

The 3 Pillars of the name form the crux of the theory behind the programme:

- **Exercise** – participants learn how to play and coach rugby through drills and games;
- **Education** – participants are helped to re-engage with education, preparing them for employment beyond prison; and
- **Ethos** – participants are supported to change their negative attitudes and behaviours, and to develop a personal ethos that takes them away from offending.

The use of contact sports within the justice system has been widely debated over the last decade, with worries about the correlation between them and incidences of violence. However recent studies have shown that programmes utilising contact sports, predominantly rugby, partnered with structured, positive support based on the needs of the participants can generate real outcomes for both individuals and the wider system (Williams, 2015). Therefore, the middle pillar of ethos is the crucial underpinning of both the exercise and education aspects of the programme delivery.

The full Theory of Change detailing the activities, outputs and outcomes of the project can be found in Appendix 1.

Having previously trialled and iterated the programme in the adult estate through their work in HMP Wormwood Scrubs, in 2017 the organisation was commissioned to conduct a pilot in Cookham Wood HMYOI. As this was the first time the programme had been delivered in a young offender setting, this independent evaluation was commissioned.

Cookham Wood HMYOI, Rochester, provides specialist custodial places for young people aged 15-18, housing, at the time of this evaluation, 182 boys with a staff of 142.

Delivery in Cookham Wood YOI initially began in February 2018 and was completed in late March 2018, with 14 participants starting the course, of which two dropped out and two were released before the end of the course.

Participants

Age: 8% were 15, 23% were 16, 46% were 17 and 23% were 18.

Ethnicity: 8% were Black British, 31% white British, 31% Black, 8% Black African, 15% Mixed Race and 8% White Irish.

Education: 36% have GCSES, 27% have some secondary schooling and 36% have trade apprenticeships or other qualifications.

Due to their age, the nature of the participants' offences are not included in this evaluation, and no identifying factors will be included.

Aims of the Evaluation

The aims of this evaluation are to understand the impact of the course on the participants, the staff and the facility as a whole, through understanding the degree of change seen that the course could be argued as contributing towards.

Three main research questions were established:

1. What role does playing and coaching rugby play in reducing incidences of violence, improving self-esteem and presenting young people with a new outlook on their world?
2. Does the course have any impact on the future aspirations of participants?
3. What more can the organisation do to support positive change in the lives of the participants?

The findings of the evaluation and the answers to these questions will be detailed in this report, looked at through the three lenses of 3 Pillars work: exercise, ethos and education.

The organisation itself seeks to promote change throughout the justice system through sharing practice, advocating for new approaches to entrenched challenges and a commitment to learning. This evaluation serves as part of this wider strategy.

Evaluation Design

In December 2017 a Theory of Change was developed for the Cookham Wood programme and based on this a mixed method study design was established. Qualitative and quantitative evidence was collected from the participants at four points through the course of the programme: prior to the start of the course; at a mid-point during course; a week before the end and following the end of the course. The majority of this data was collected through the use of questionnaires, augmented with semi-structured interviews as the course drew to an end. Evidence was collected from the staff through semi-structured interviews towards the end of the course and a questionnaire following the completion of the course.

There were four questionnaires for participants, two of which were mirrored on each other to collect data on degree of change through baseline and end line data collection. The questionnaires utilised a range of externally validated tools and scales to collect evidence on various constructs including:

- Mental wellbeing – Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale;
- Team work and impulse control – Individual Protective Factors Index cooperation scale;
- Aspirations – Longitudinal Study of Young People in England;
- Communication – California Healthy Kids Survey communication and cooperation scale; and
- Self-esteem – Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale.

These tools were used both as they were reflective of the constructs the evaluation is attempting to prove but also due to the comparable nature of subsequent data collected with others who use the same tools and scales.

The participant questionnaires which did not utilise pre and post data collection or scales were administered at the mid and end points of the course to collect on process and satisfaction. The staff questionnaire was administered at the end of the course to a range of individuals who interact with the participants including education team, residential staff and PE instructors.

The semi-structured interview scripts were based on initial data analysis to understand some of the trends and anomalies within the data.

Limitations of the Evaluation

As this was the first time the programme was being delivered within the youth estate and it was initially planned to be delivered as a stand-alone course, the decision was made to not look at the programme's effect on re-offending within the cohort group. It was felt that the course was not intensive or long enough to have any potential impact on this. Instead shorter-term outcomes based on day to day life and aspirations for the future were focused on.

Typically 3 Pillars follows up their course with employment and transition support, tracking the participants, however as this was not initially possible in Cookham Wood YOI, this evaluation was not able to collect longitudinal data.

The participants were not selected to be representative of the wider prison population and put themselves forward for the course, through existing engagement with education and PE staff. As this creates a level of self-selection and a desire to change, this has been addressed by looking at the behaviour change of the individuals and speaking to staff about any change in attitudes and actions.

Due to the limited resource of the evaluation a control group was not established.

Due to the small sample size, the data from the four participants who did not complete the course may be included where relevant, however it is not included in any calculations of change. This report heavily relies on qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews; this is due to the small sample size, challenges of collecting data from young people meaning that often there are anomalies within the quantitative data that cannot be explained and the positive nature of many of the statements.

Pillar 1: Exercise

Improved fitness levels, physical and mental wellbeing benefits young men in prison; we develop knowledge of how to maintain those levels. We use rugby as an effective way to channel aggression, increase impulse control and emotional regulation; by facilitating learning new skills, providing positive mental stimulation and developing teamwork we increase self-esteem and confidence.

3 Pillars Proposal to Cookham Wood HMYOI

The eight-week course is split into two sessions per week, with the first pillar, exercise, providing the structure for the whole course, with sessions focusing on various aspects of healthy living, playing rugby and sportsmanship. In the first session the participants take part in a fitness test comprised of a Bleep Test and timed press ups and sits up for one minute to assess their fitness levels, with them tested again at the end of the course to measure improvement. In this session they are also given their [team] training shirt provided through a sponsorship deal with Samurai.

As the weeks progress participants learn the rules of rugby through drills and games, including rucking, mauling and the offside rule, learning to work as a team and to positively channel aggression. Through on pitch individual feedback from the coaches and communication with their peers, participants constantly practice skills learnt, improving as the course goes on.

The course culminates in a touch rugby match against prison staff as the penultimate match and an internal match, coaching demonstration and certificate presentation in front of families on the final day. Through this the participants have the chance to showcase the skills they have learnt and practice in a live game environment.

Fitness

Fitness was very important to the large majority of the participants with 85% of the starting 14 giving the improvement of it as one of the key reasons for signing up to the programme. One participant went as far to say *“Prison is the best place to get fit. You’ve got to take advantage of the opportunity – you have to pay for the gym on the outside.”* Within the prison the inmates get limited access to the gym and a select number get to do additional sports activity twice a week, so it seemed any opportunity to exercise was welcomed – *“...we rarely get exercise”*.

The importance of fitness in relation with body image was also cited by staff as being a factor with the boys signing up to the course – *“Body image is important here but also the ability to protect yourself”*. However, the role of the course in changing perceptions about body image was interesting:

They are mainly focused on athletic toned footballers so this is showing them different angles to size and speed and that rugby isn’t about image. They are learning about

relationship between size and strength and getting involved in the team and realising their potential.

Only six of the original 14 participants listed learning to play rugby as a motivating factor, however all ten of the final participants mentioned their enjoyment in learning to play and their desire to do more in the interviews and 60% said that the learning to play aspect had exceeded their expectations. 80% of those who completed the course plan to continue playing and 100% planned to make changes to their general fitness regime as a result of the course, with all 10 saying that the course had had a positive impact on their physical wellbeing.

The enjoyment of rugby appeared to surprise many of those who hadn't played before:

[The course] was better than I thought it would be. I wasn't into rugby before but I might play now. I learnt the rules and it's a fun game.

I really like it [the course]. I didn't used to like rugby but now I have an understanding.

When asked what one thing they would change, 70% wished the course was longer, with suggestions ranging from a couple more weeks to a year long programme:

I want to learn more and get more skills.

I would want to do it for longer, maybe a couple more weeks as I'm enjoying it.

I want to be a more diverse rugby player and get better.

It would be permanent. I've learnt rugby and now I will probably never do it again so seems like a waste. I've asked if we can rugby on a Saturday instead of football so we have a chance to use the skills we have learnt.

Participants improved an average of 19% across the fitness tests, with a 12% increase in the number of press-ups, 18% increase in the number of sit-ups and 27% increase in Bleep test scores:



The body of evidence on the positive impact of aerobic and anaerobic fitness is vast (Public Health England, 2015) and is particularly useful for young people in custody, as incarceration

has been shown to have a negative impact on overall health and wellbeing (Prison Reform Trust, 2016). As the 3 Pillars programme is designed to use sport to create positive change in young offenders, more evidence on the impact of this will be presented throughout this evaluation report.

Behaviour

The use of sport to engage hard to reach groups has been well documented within literature (Meek, 2014), particularly those focusing on young men, with its effectiveness at breaking down barriers and being a tool for change key for initiating positive change. And while the use of a contact sport in this area is less well researched, emerging evidence indicates that contact sports paired with strong positive support can be very impactful (Williams, 2015).

The contact aspect of rugby came up frequently during the course of this evaluation, with four of the final ten participants explicitly saying it was the best part of the course (with a further 3 mentioning the games and the physicality of the course). When asked further about why this was, participants said the following:

I know on a Thursday I can release all my anger. You get to release a lot of anger. It's the only contact sport here.

It's the real experience – no touch like the kid's version.

I'm a boxer normally and have always been physical and like to stay fit. I'm less stressed and agitated, I'm now more calm and get into [bad] situations less. It gets rid of peoples' tension. People are building relationships while playing. We're not being violent but doing it through sport.

It's a good thing for getting out aggression with the confinement (especially on basic), your head is all over the place and the anger builds up in the four walls.

Allows you to release all the aggression from the week.

It's a chance to channel emotion and anger. It can be quite brutal but you have to calm down after a tackle and work out how to take it back on the field, how to get the ball back.

You can get your anger out in a positive way. You channel your emotions into performing better.

The staff agreed that this was an important aspect:

Boys do like to get stuck in. Badminton just isn't going to cut it.

Some of them are very hot headed, they can channel their anger and get it out. It also brings out their competitive streak, they want to better their friends and get bragging rights.

Based on the Individual Protective Factors Index self-control scale, the course saw an 8% increase in mean impulse control ability, with four of the ten having improvements of over 20%. This is reflected in the comments participants made above regarding the links between the contact, aggression and impulse control.

When asked whether they thought that the course had had any direct impact on their impulse control aside from the release of aggression detailed above, the responses were mixed, with some

saying they thought it might, but this might have also been maturing, others saying they controlled themselves because they were worried about getting kicked off the course and four saying that the skills they had learnt through the course had helped them manage their behaviour better:

[You] get taught discipline and right from wrong and how to respond.

I learnt to ignore people as you got used to ignoring people in rugby.

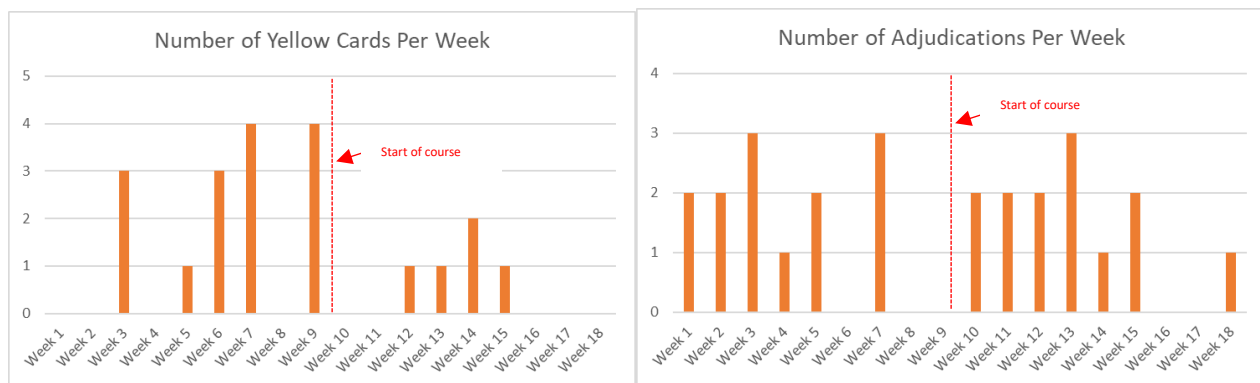
I can get angry and frustrated. They help you understand and calm down. The coaches aren't like the staff who would just put you in a room for 2-3 days.

I react differently as I'm less stressed.

One staff member said:

They are removing themselves from situations and calming themselves and managing anger better.

Overall the behaviour of the participants improved over the duration of the course, though due to the short time frame, the variations between yellow card and adjudications and small number of participants, anecdotal evidence from participants and staff has to be relied upon to make correlations between participation on the course and impact on behaviour:



There is a question as to whether behaviour changed as a result of the participants have something to lose [i.e. they would miss a course session due to being in Segregation] versus an internal shift in thinking and approach to life. From further discussions with staff, while having something to lose may have been a contributing factor, this appears to be more related to the fact that participants had been rewarded for good behaviour through attendance on the course and that as the course focused on the expectation of good behaviour, none of them wanted to disappoint and risk removal.

Further, the residential and education staff interviewed considered the impact on behaviour to be significant:

I'm not sure what its impact is in addressing their offences, however their behaviour in prison and as humans has improved dramatically.

The trajectory for improvement has been massive.

Team work and Communication

The issue of identity, as with many prisons (Phillips, 2007), is incredibly important to the inmates of Cookham Wood, with allegiances coming from gang membership (both on the inside and outside), race and accommodation within the YOI. The inmates of the two main accommodation blocks, Block A and Block B, despite the allocation of a cell on either being to a certain extent random, hold their block identities dear, making the mixing of the two groups challenging.

Participants of the 3 Pillars programme were selected from both blocks (though a few severe “keep apart” kept a couple of participants from the course) in order to build a team from as diverse a group as possible. Participants learnt to work with individuals from very different backgrounds to themselves and the staff observed some significant changes occur in the boys and a few unlikely friendships:

One boy was very paranoid about his weight and was very quiet – he found a place for himself where he feels like he fits in. I saw him fist bump another boy in the corridor the other day – they would never have been friends before.

There was a mean improvement of 4% and 5% for self-reported team work and communication skills through the course (using the Individual Protective Factors Index cooperation scale and the California Healthy Kids Survey communication and cooperation scale), however these aspects were less referenced by participants in the qualitative data collection with only two referencing related concepts:

[I] have a better understanding of other inmates.

Gained more friends and learnt more about my friends I'd met before the course.

This could be as a result of the data collection tools not being suitably nuanced to collect further on this, or could be that the participants were not as cognizant of positive changes in their personal interactions and how these had changed, as the staff said the following:

Communications has improved greatly – both with the staff and between the boys. I have seen their communication with each other improve – the boys are praising each other and I've seen leaders emerge.

We've seen a team developing and boys realising their potential...they are very chatty when they all come together.

However, there was staff feedback about the need to be more ambitious with who the course brought together and the use of it to settle challenges:

We need to mix it up and potentially use it as a mediation tool and get the conflict resolution team engaged.

Relationships

The course relies on the support and engagement with key staff within the prison, including PE and education staff, as well as residential managers. Understanding how their interactions with the participants have changed was deemed important in order to understand how the findings created a more positive environment for all and created an impact within the YOI more widely.

During the quantitative data collection, eight participants thought the course had had an impact on their relationships with prison staff, however during the qualitative data collection only five felt it had had some impact saying:

I get along with them better now, particularly after the game. I didn't used to talk to the staff but now I do.

They still think the same of me; some of them are cool...nothing can change what they think of me.

I already had a pretty good relationship with the gym staff but it's a lot better now. They put me forward for things now as they know I try and we have mutual respect. Particularly for the 6pm sports, they take me forward more.

[I] interacted with them more and understand them better.

We played against the staff and it felt very positive.

The other five did not think it had had any impact.

The evaluation found that staff thought relationships had improved, taking on more positive angles, particularly with non-residential staff:

[It's] very different now. They are asking me about the course every day now. They are more focused. It's an open topic to start a conversation about and with the Six Nations on at the same time its opening up different avenues of conversation.

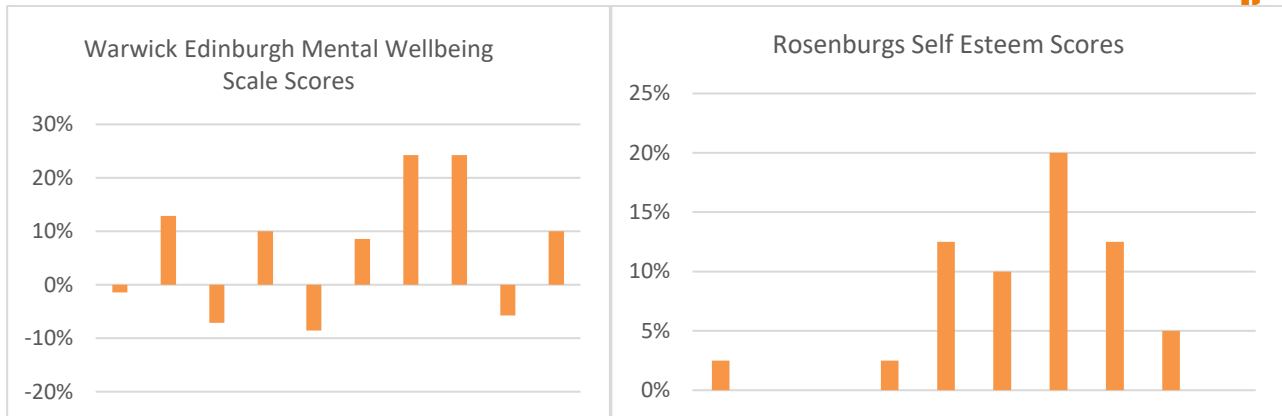
This has helped improve awareness that staff want good outcomes and want it to work. They know we are looking out for them.

The evaluation also looked at the impact of the course on relationships with the participants family members, with 43% of participants agreeing it had a positive impact. The corroborating evidence around this is limited, particularly as 29% disagreed that it had had any positive impact, however one participant asked the coaches to tell his mother how he was doing on the course and others spoke during sessions about how they wanted to be role models for their family members. One created an action plan for improving relationships with his family, the first step of which was to document their birthdays and make sure they were acknowledged.

Mental Wellbeing

The course places a strong emphasis on the role of sport and exercise in strengthening mental health and mental wellbeing, which while incredibly important in all young men, is particularly crucial for young men within the justice system. Evidence suggests that the rates of mental health problems are at least three times as high for those within the criminal justice system as within the general population (Centre for Mental Health).

Using the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, participants were assessed at the start and the end of the programme, and the participants were found to have a mean improvement of 7%. Participants were also measured on their self-esteem using Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale and were found to have had a mean improvement of 7% again. However, due to the small numbers within the sample these numbers do not represent the true range of change within the two concepts over the eight weeks seen in the tables below:



Other factors within the participants' lives were not controlled for (including impending fatherhood, trials and existing mental health conditions), which may explain some of the more extreme changes within the WEMWBS results, however the qualitative evidence collected indicates that there is correlation between positive changes within the two concepts, associated concepts and participation on the course.

During the interviews the boys were asked to reflect on their mental health and wellbeing, as well as confidence, and while the majority focused on happiness and self-confidence, there were multiple inferences to their mental health and the impact of the course within their answers:

Its helped with my self-confidence – being able to stand up and talk in front of a group people would usually make me very anxious.

I'm happier – I have something to look forward to. I didn't think I was able and then I played better than I thought I would.

I speak out and address things now.

They make you feel better about yourself. They help you learn to deal with it by saying things like better luck next time.

I'm already pretty confident and stable. It has made me happier though.

I'm much happier now.

I'm more positive and I think more clearly about life. It's something to enjoy.

Self-confidence – yes – I don't really do a lot, I don't get on with new people and don't like talking but helping run the sessions changed that. I'm a lot happier.

My mental willpower has increased remarkably

Boosted confidence through leading sessions.

One member of residential staff mentioned that the course has decreased incidences of self-harm, as they didn't feel the need to.

Two of the participants did not think it had any impact on any aspect of their mental wellbeing or confidence:

Didn't affect my mental wellbeing.

My self-confidence has stayed the same.

Pillar 2: Education

Learning to play rugby and working towards a CSLA coaching qualification enhances CVs and employability, as well as increasing self-esteem and mental stimulation. Additionally, participants will gain increased knowledge and understanding of fitness; goal setting, personal values, health and wellbeing (inc. mental health).

3 Pillars Proposal to Cookham Wood HMYOI

All 3 Pillars programme participants are enrolled in a Community Sports Leader Award (CSLA) Level 1 at the outset of the course, with the activities designed to fulfil the requirements to ensure all the boys:

- Know the skills and behaviours needed to lead others.
- Be able to use leadership skills and behaviours effectively.
- Be able to take on the roles and responsibilities of an official in sport/physical activity.
- Know the leadership opportunities available to them.
- Make sure to follow schedule of work and session plans for each session.

Each session has a CSLA component including:

- Communication skills for leading basic games.
- Structuring planning and leading sports activities.
- Organisation skills.
- Understanding fair play in sport.
- Promoting fair play in sports.
- Planning a sports specific activity.
- Leading a sports activity.
- Factors affecting healthy lifestyles.
- Minimum of 1 hour demonstration of leadership.
- The role of the official, self-review and planning for demonstration of leadership.

All ten of the participants who completed the course were awarded their CSLA Level 1 and a small number have been marked out for additional leadership skills training and as future assistant coaches. These are typically for those serving longer sentences as the training can be used within the adult estate once the young person moves on from Cookham Wood.

Although there was limited qualitative evidence on the impact of the CSLA, several participants mentioned the demonstration of leadership and its impact on their confidence:

[It] boosted my confidence through leading sessions.

Its helped with my self-confidence – being able to stand up and talk in front of a group people would usually make me very anxious.

At the beginning of the course 3 Pillars staff reviewed the educational attainment of all participants in order to identify the level at which to pitch the course and establish clear pathways for encouraging participants into further education following on from what had already been achieved. Any special educational need requirements were also reviewed in order to ensure that any participants who required extra support were identified early on and provided with this.

100% of the participants felt that the balance between the physical and educational sides of the programme was right and 100% enjoyed the workshop elements of the course.

During the course as part of the one-to-one sessions, coaches identified participants who had specific ambitions for the future e.g. opening a gym or being a plumber, as well as identifying those with particular skills e.g. an aptitude for maths and encouraging them to consider what career they would like to work towards. Action plans were drawn up by the participants who then took responsibility for moving them forward by writing to the education department in the prison themselves and engaging in discussions to take these actions further. 80% of the participants set themselves goals through the course, with 50% rating their goal setting ability as good, 25% as average and 13% as very poor.

I've been more focused and I've had something to keep me on track.

I learned how to juggle after setting it as a personal goal to learn

While there is some qualitative data about the impact of this on the participants, due to the limited amount, this evaluation was unable to establish a strong correlation that the course supported the development of goal setting skills among a majority of participants.

The evaluation also looked at whether the course had had any impact on participants engagement with other education and work activities, within the YOI, and any impact on their future aspirations or plans, however aside from the above the results were inconclusive around whether there was any correlation.

As this course was commissioned as a standalone pilot, the team were only able to engage with the participants for the eight weeks of the programme and were not able to offer any formal follow on advice, signposting or training as they have previously done in the adult estate. This may have played a role in the lack of conclusive evidence and limited impact on the longer-term outcomes as staff members said of the course:

They've got something to lose and they see some of their error of their ways, however some it will stick, others will revert as they have years of complexity to overcome.

You can't blitz consequential thinking in 8 weeks but this complements other work.

3 Pillars will continue to track the education outcomes of participants to try and understand destinations, correlations with outcomes from the course and understand where they can further support the young people they work with.

Pillar 3: Ethos

Role modelling on the pitch, inspired by the values of the British Army, of Rugby Union and of young men who have reformed their lives. Coaches support participants to develop an ethos that moves beyond offending behaviour.

3 Pillars Proposal to Cookham Wood HMYOI

3 Pillars was founded within the ethos of the British Army, international rugby and the rehabilitation of ex-offenders; designing a programme that is effective in supporting young offenders to change their lives and move away from criminal behaviour. The coaches delivering the course are all RFU trained level 2 rugby coaches and come from a variety of backgrounds including army, ex-offenders and individuals from the 3 Pillars programmes in the adult estate on ROTL.

Through the practical side of the course, the coaches used various opportunities to model and showcase good behaviour and to highlight negative behaviours in order to encourage participants to think more clearly about their actions both on and off the course. These included blind trust games and encouraging participants to help out their team mates in classroom sessions, recognising people's different strengths and how these can be utilised.

There is limited quantitative evidence on the impact of the ethos aspect of the course, partly due to the long-term nature of the change and shortness of the course, and partly due to the complexity of creating change in the participants ethos. Therefore, the evaluation looks at qualitative and anecdotal evidence to demonstrate change.

At one point during the course, two of the coaches began disrespectfully shouting at each other, at which point the boys stopped their activity and two attempted to intervene. After this was revealed to be a role play to demonstrate negative forms of communication, the participants were asked how they felt. An open and honest debate ensued about how they felt awkward and what more effective means of communication might look like.

The coaches maintained the commitment to ethos throughout, positioning it as the need to behave in a certain way as a representative of the 3PP course within the prison and culminating in the opportunity for one participant to represent the course externally through a visit to Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The visit was as a reward for good behaviour, exemplary progress on the course and positive responses to the lessons, however it was also possible because the participant qualified for ROTL, which would not be possible for those on remand or those serving longer sentences. Through the visit he gained exposure to a completely different world and saw first-hand examples of the ethos 3 Pillars promotes through demonstrations of the high level of respect shown between officers and soldiers, something he had not experienced previously. He noted that many of the boys would benefit from the visit.

The coaches ran regular one to one sessions with all participants and also conducted specific follow up with those assigned to Segregation following demonstrations of poor behaviour between courses, establishing what the trigger was and how they could have behaved differently:

I can get angry and frustrated. They help you understand and calm down. The coaches aren't like the staff who would just put you in a room for 2-3 days.

You get taught discipline and right from wrong and how to respond.

The coaches also supported those participants who had ambitions to be role models for siblings, friends, children and worked with them to develop action plans to achieve this.

3 Pillars coaches are hired based on their ability to support young people to change their mindset and attitudes, whether that's through their own career or from their own lived experiences. Coaches come from a range of backgrounds: ex-military, working professionals and reformed prisoners. This diversity allows different coaches to relate to participants on different levels and the delivery team is designed to have maximum impact on the participants.

The offender or ex-offender background of two of the coaches on the Cookham Wood delivery team seems to have had a particularly significant impact and was frequently referenced:

...they particularly engage with Steve and Kazeem as it helps them think about the future.

I really like that they've been there [Steve and Kazeem]. They shared their experiences, they know what they are going through.

[Kazeem] can relate to us and comes from a similar background.

[Kazeem] relates to us. Gives good advice. Helps people to see consequences of certain actions.

[Kazeem is] easy to talk to because he has been in the same position.

The other coaches seemed popular as well as other general feedback about the team included:

[Trevor is a] very good coach. Made everyone smile and always kept my spirits up. He did 1:1s when someone struggled.

[Will is an] amazing fitness coach. He was always pushing us and made sure you never gave up.

[Steve was] really understanding. He was quiet at times but when he did speak he made everyone listen.

[Mike is a] very good coach. Strict at times but always showed fairness.

I felt most able to speak to Kaz. I don't know why but he was very relatable and understanding.

[Will] is very motivational, upbeat. Interacts well with us and gives good feedback. Also taught me the importance of stretching and other ways to keep the body fit.

[Steve] is quite quiet, but is fun when interacting with YPs in matches. Also relates to us YPs. And helps well with our CSLA work. Gives good advice on what educational roots to take.

All of the coaches are male, a fact that staff thought was important:

I think the boys benefitted from positive male role modelling – there are a lot of women in education.

At the end of the course, the participants were asked what the most valuable lesson was that they had learnt from the course:

To never give up.

To respect people and working in a team.

That exercise helps a lot.

Respect others.

It is not too late to change my life.

Never give up. If you fail, try and try again.

It's never too late to redeem yourself and fix those burnt bridges.

Self-control.

These responses indicate a certain level of positive change, as while all the participants joined the course understanding that they would learn to play rugby, by the end of the course they all cited that the most valuable lessons they learnt were something far more than rugby skills. The course, instilling these lessons through mentoring and positive role modelling, envisages that these are the foundations for self-reflection and self-improvement beyond the course.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this evaluation finds that the 3 Pillars programme has generated significant impact among the ten pilot participants, supporting them with the development of skills, aspirations and a positive ethos about life. This proof of concept is based on the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from the participants and staff, augmented by observations from the 3 Pillars coaches.

The evaluation found that the impact of Pillar 1: Exercise was the strongest, with the participants showing positive changes within behaviour, mental wellbeing, relationships and communication, as well as improvements in their aerobic and anaerobic fitness. Through qualitative data collection, the improvements shown within the quantitative data were supported and built upon by positive statements from both the participants and the staff.

Due to the longer-term nature of change within Pillar 2: Education, the narrative of impact is less definite and relies on outputs and qualitative evidence to build a picture of change. What we see from the data is indicative of the start of positive changes within participants, however due to the fact that this evaluation only considered data from the initial eight-week course and follow on support has not yet been provided, this will need augmenting with longitudinal data to draw further conclusions. It is hoped that 3 Pillars will be able to continue to track the outcomes of their course participants to establish whether there is positive change around their goal setting, education aspirations and educational achievements.

Measuring change within Pillar 3: Ethos was challenging as this is focused on intrinsic factors within the participants and their outlook on life and therefore had to rely more heavily upon qualitative and observational evidence. However, the qualitative data collected indicates participants were open to change, learning from the coaches through strong role modelling and starting to look inwards at their behaviour and actions, and how this played into their own personal ethos. As with Pillar 2, changes in this area are long-term and the complexity of change should not be underestimated, so the collection of more longitudinal data on these areas will give a clearer picture in the coming months.

As a previous evaluation of a project working with the same demographic acknowledges:

“The roots of social disaffection are complex, and seldom uni-causal. Trying to establish a simple relationship between any intervention and reductions in anti-social behaviour is notoriously difficult.” (Williams, 2015)

No programme can stand alone in affecting change within the lives of often very complex young people; tailored programming needs to sit within a wider support ecosystem designed to promote rehabilitation. And the system needs to acknowledge in its design the realities of the young people it is working with, the long-term nature of their needs and the difficulty of a pathway to change.

Ongoing data collection will enable us to establish whether the changes seen or implied within this report are long-term and sustainable for the young people involved. Additional research should start to draw conclusions about the value of the programme between different offence types, lengths of sentences and various demographic factors to allow more targeted selection of participants. Further conclusions of these type and understanding the true impact of the project

will however require a larger set of participant data and more longitudinal data to allow a stronger understanding and level of certainty.

In the meantime, 3 Pillars will continue to iterate their work based on the findings of this evaluation, building both their programme, but also their data collection capabilities to ensure their mission is achieved.

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Appendix 1: 3 Pillars Theory of Change

