

An Evaluation of

The Prison Radio
Association's Activity
Year 3:

The Way Forward

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Executive Summary

The Prison Radio Association (PRA) was set up in 2005 and achieved charitable status in 2006. The PRA is a charitable organisation that aims to provide specialist support, guidance and expertise to existing prison radio stations and advise prisons interested in setting up radio projects and / or radio training facilities. The PRA is committed to the ways in which prison radio can provide a unique and innovative way to engage offenders (regardless of age, ethnic origin, gender or faith) in education; particularly those hard to reach offenders disenfranchised by the educational system.

The PRA developed a strategic three year activity plan (2007- 2009) which has been evaluated annually by the Hallam Centre for Community Justice at Sheffield Hallam University. In 2009, key PRA objectives were to continue to provide prisons with support to set up their own radio projects, to host the Second Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony, to develop a National Prison Radio Service (NPRS) and to develop a sustainable funding strategy and press strategy. The findings of the evaluation of these three activity areas are contained within the main body of this report.

Key Findings

The PRA has successfully met and exceeded its objectives for 2009 activity, and indeed throughout the three year evaluation period. It is important for the PRA to acknowledge and celebrate these significant achievements. The key findings from the evaluation of the third year of PRA activities are identified as follows:

- The PRA has continued to work effectively with prisons wanting to set up radio projects and / or radio training facilities. The PRA is currently in contact with 25 prisons who are actively running radio station projects, and a further 37 who have either expressed an interest or have a project in development¹
- The PRA's Second Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony was hosted in Warwick in November 2009, which fifty delegates attended and provided excellent feedback on the event
- The PRA has been successfully awarded a three year Ministry of Justice contract to manage the NPRS in partnership with NOMS and is currently developing the NPRS schedule
- The PRA has been experiencing high rates of success, up to 60% successful returns on its funding applications and is currently developing a sustainable funding strategy
- The PRA has developed an effective partnership with the Ministry of Justice press office to develop a press strategy

Good Practice Examples

The evaluation identified the following best practice examples of PRA activity over the 12 month time scale:

¹ These figures reflect projects that PRA are aware of. There may very well be other projects running.

- The PRA has utilised its own brand of distinct and specialised support, advice and guidance involving prison radio, built directly from its own experience
- This has been fed into the PRA's 2009 conference, where delegates reported feeling the event was successful in providing an opportunity for the sharing of best practice within the prison radio community
- The PRA has had unimagined success in gaining national and internal award recognition of its work, having been awarded two gold and two bronze Sony Radio Academy Awards
- The PRA has developed an effective press strategy in partnership with the Ministry of Justice press office
- An excellent working relationship has been developed between the NOMS Head of Prison Radio and the PRA

Recommendations

A number of recommendations are made here in relation to the future strategic development of the PRA. The following recommendations are put forward by the evaluation team:

- The successful installation of the NPRS satellite radio reception equipment across the prison estate is key to the PRA's future development. The PRA has no control over this, as responsibility for the installations lies with NOMS, however this needs to be monitored carefully
- Given the forthcoming access of the whole of the prison estate to the NPRS, the PRA needs to recruit more staff in order to be able to produce an increased quantity of high quality, nationally relevant speech radio programming
- Securing appropriate premises in which the radio producers can operate is becoming more urgent. The recommendation is that the PRA begin making enquiries with regard to securing appropriate premises
- Given the importance of identifying monitoring and evaluation data collection tools for the future development of the PRA activities, the recommendation is made for the PRA to consider commissioning an external feasibility study

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Section 1: Introduction

1.0 The Prison Radio Association

The Prison Radio Association was set up in 2005 as an educational charity for offenders in custody and in the community. It achieved charitable status in 2006 and continues to contribute to the reduction of re-offending by capitalising on the opportunity prison provides to stop people offending for good. The Association is committed to the ways in which prison radio can provide a unique and innovative way to engage offenders (regardless of age, ethnic origin, gender or faith) in education; particularly those hard to reach offenders disenfranchised by the educational system.

The PRA also works to help offenders tackle the barriers they face on release, equipping them with the social skills and qualifications they need to access education, training and employment opportunities. The PRA currently works with over 60 prisons across England and Wales.

1.1 PRA's overall aims and objectives

PRA's overall aims and objectives as outlined in the PRA business plan are:

- To provide support, guidance and expertise to existing prison radio projects
- To offer innovative solutions to help establish new prison radio projects
- To establish a National Prison Radio Service
- To organise an annual conference and awards ceremony

In order to assure these activities were monitored, the PRA commissioned the Hallam Centre for Community Justice at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) to carry out a three year evaluation.

1.2 Previous evaluation reports

1.2.1 The first year evaluation: The West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project

During year one of PRA activity, the Prison Radio Association and partners² developed a two week taster course in radio production for delivery to 30 prisoners, at prisons across the West Midlands, entitled, The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project³. The objectives of this project were firstly, overall project delivery, which consisted of the recruitment of a radio trainer, developing a radio training course which embeds basic skills and the delivery of the taster courses in six prisons. The wider objectives concerned raising awareness of the potential of radio training to embed basic skills and to examine sustainability within prison service education. The findings of the external evaluation of this first year of activity was conducted by the Hallam Centre for Community Justice, at Sheffield Hallam University, and presented in a final report in January 2008⁴.

² Skills Funding Agency, Carter and Carter, Community Service Volunteers and the BBC.

³ The funding came from the West Midland's Equal Partnership, Equal European Structural Funding.

⁴ Wilkinson, K and Davidson, J (2008) An Evaluation of the Prison Radio Association's Activity, Final Report Year 1: The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project: http://www.prisonradioassociation.org/library/documents/PRA_Exec_Summary.pdf

The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project was delivered between June 2007 and March 2008, providing training sessions at four prisons in the West Midlands to 29 prisoners. Three of the four establishments in which the project ran are also taking radio training forward within their existing educational provision. The evaluation of this activity illustrated that the first year PRA activity fitted appropriately into PRA aims, as it provided the organisation with the opportunity to:

- Build on established PRA contacts in the Midlands
- Enthuse people about the potential of prison radio
- Pilot different delivery methods
- Raise awareness of the potential of prison radio for engaging educationally hard to reach offenders

1.2.2 The second year evaluation: A Model of Support

Of the three years of activity planned by the PRA, in the second year, additional key PRA objectives were to:

- Provide prisons with support to set up their own radio projects
- Develop the PRA website as an educational resource
- Host the PRA's First Annual National Conference and Awards Ceremony
- Develop and trial curriculum / education material for the radio

The evaluation team found that the PRA had met and indeed exceeded all of its 2008 activity objectives effectively. The key findings from the evaluation of the second year of PRA activities were identified as follows:

- The PRA had been working effectively with prisons wanting to set up radio projects and / or radio training facilities
- In 2008, the PRA conducted a consultation activity regarding the content of its website
- The first PRA Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony was hosted in September 2008 and received excellent feedback
- The PRA had been involved in the successful trialling of audio curriculum / education material to support existing prison education courses

1.3 The third and final year evaluation: The Way Forward

The PRA activities in the third and final year of this evaluation process were as follows:

- Raising the PRA's national and international profile and developing a press strategy
- Developing a sustainable funding strategy
- Managing and developing the National Prison Radio Service (NPRS)
- Hosting the PRA's Second Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony

The following section outlines how the evaluation team approached evaluating these activities.

Section 2: The Evaluation

2.0 Context of the Three Year Evaluation

The Hallam Centre for Community Justice was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of Prison Radio Association activities over a three year period (2007-2009). The three year evaluation was designed to:

- Provide a rigorous and 'user friendly' assessment of the extent to which PRA has met its objectives in order to show the potential benefits of the service to prison staff and other stakeholders
- Identify what worked well and what did not in terms of both what was done (outputs) and how it was done (processes)
- Provide information on the progress made towards PRA objectives with a specific focus upon the potential for training opportunities in radio to develop offenders' key skills
- Provide information on the extent to which the work of the PRA has met the needs of key stakeholders (including prison staff and offenders)
- Recommend improvements to working practices within PRA and outline models of good practice thus assisting with mainstreaming and dissemination of the work of the organisation

As previously mentioned, the year one evaluation report, was produced in January 2008, the year two report in January 2009. This current report forms the second assessment output in the overall three-year evaluation activity and has been extended to publication in April 2009 by agreement between the PRA and HCCJ staff.

2.1 Evaluation Aims and Objectives

During 2009, the PRA has focussed on five main activities, which have been evaluated by the team from the HCCJ:

- Raising the PRA's profile – development of a press strategy
- Developing a sustainable funding strategy
- Roll-out of the National Prison Radio Service
- Hosting the PRA's Second Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony

Therefore the evaluation aimed to provide data from which each of these four activities could be evaluated.

2.2 Fieldwork Conducted

Wide ranging, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, some were conducted over the telephone, others on a one-to-one basis and interviews were conducted with:

- PRA Chief Executive
- PRA Director of Operations
- PRA Trustee
- PRA Special Advisor

- NOMS Head of Prison Radio
- Manager, National Prison Radio Service
- Manager, Electric Radio Brixton
- Six prisoners studying radio production at HMP Brixton
- Two radio listeners at HMP Brixton
- Two prisoners employed at Electric Radio Brixton as radio producers

All interviews were taped and transcribed with the express permission of all interviewed.

Two evaluation visits were conducted; one to the PRA conference and another to the PRA's local radio station at HMP Brixton, Electric Radio Brixton.

2.2.1 Evaluating the PRA's Second Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony

The aims of the conference and awards ceremony were to:

- Provide learning opportunities for all staff involved in developing or managing prison radio projects
- Provide a forum for the development of a 'prison radio community' and to share best practice
- Provide a range of practical radio training to participants
- Host an evening celebration and awards ceremony

In order to evaluate this activity the evaluation team designed an evaluation sheet for inclusion delegate packs to ascertain delegates' views on the value of this event. A member of the evaluation team also attended the event.

Evaluation forms were distributed to all delegates and twenty-two forms were returned, providing the basis for this evaluation of the event. Delegates were asked to circle a number on a scale of one to five, as detailed below:

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Partial		Completely

2.3 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation activities described above used predominantly qualitative research methods; however quantitative research methods were also employed. One-to-one interviews were undertaken with a range of stakeholders. The quantitative data included in this report was generated using scale data gained through evaluation forms designed to illicit views of various events and activities.

2.4 Data collection

In line with SHU's commitment to co-operative inquiry and empowering evaluation methods, the following approach was adopted towards data collection. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewee. The recordings were transcribed and then erased from the digital voice recorder. Interviewees

were given the opportunity to reflect on the evaluation process at the end of the interview and were asked if they had anything to add and / or they felt the interviewer had left out any important questions.

Quantitative data were collected from evaluation forms used at the PRA conference. This methodology was adopted to ensure quantifiable information regarding the impact of conference and awards ceremony could be collected.

2.5 Documentary analysis

A variety of documentation and information resources were used / analysed for evaluation purposes:

- PRA conference and awards ceremony documentation (delegate packs)
- PRA conference and awards ceremony evaluation forms
- PRA website

2.6 Qualitative data analysis

The raw case study data was analysed using many interpretations in order to find linkages between the research object and the outcomes with reference to the original research questions.

2.7 Quantitative data analysis

All evaluation form scale data were inputted into an Excel spread sheet. These scores were converted into graphs to illustrate conference delegates' evaluation of the event.

2.8 Ensuring offender input in the evaluation process

The HCCJ and the PRA are both organisations committed to ensuring offenders' voices, views and opinions are included in all activities undertaken. As this year's report was more focussed on strategic organisational development activity, the PRA and HCCJ agreed to conduct a visit to talk to offenders engaged in prison radio (and listeners of prison radio) at HMP Brixton. The offenders are the ultimate audience for prison radio and their views are important. This data is included in this report in the section entitled 'The Power and Potential of Prison Radio'.

Section 3: The Power and Potential of Prison Radio

3.0 Introduction

The HCCJ and the PRA are both organisations committed to ensuring offenders voices, views and opinions are included in all activities undertaken. This section presents evaluation interview participant's views on the potential of prison radio and why, prison staff, PRA Trustees, those involved in running prison radio projects, and serving prisoners are so committed to its successful integration into mainstream prison life.

3.1 The potential of prison radio

One of PRA's Special Advisors is a former prison governor who, when working for the Prison Service, experienced the challenge of providing purposeful activity for prisoners in an inner city prison. He saw the potential of prison radio immediately in terms of:

- increasing levels of prisoner engagement in education and training
- an opportunity to enhance Prison Service targets for purposeful activity
- a way of engaging with every prisoner in the establishment through the broadcasts

As a prison governor he saw the provision of a small space in the prison for radio training and broadcasting as benefitting the whole prison community:

'If you've got limited choices, limited resources and poor buildings, you've got to try and do things that are a bit out of the box and innovative. The principles are clear- you need to do something which hooks people in, engages them and their peers. There's a bit of entertainment and there's this big chunk of information provision and to a degree education, then actually this is a win-win situation' (Chief Executive of NACRO, former prison governor, and PRA Special Advisor).

For Prison Radio Managers, this view is reinforced as they see their learners picking up a myriad of work based and social skills in a supportive learning environment:

'I get to see most radio learner's change; some of them have really come along way. It's the transferable skills they pick up. One guy I'm working with on a presentation - for him that's improved his communication skills. He knows how to sit in an interview and talk appropriately and knows how to present himself. He has written the script - that's literacy, research and organisation skills he's now got. When we're doing a programme, there is always a discussion - that's learning to listen to other people and it's teamwork and getting their work done on time and being in a working environment. Some of the people that we have here have never worked before - so it's given them a sense of how they can achieve so much - I find that very rewarding' (Manager, Electric Radio Brixton).

Prisoners studying radio production reflected that being involved in radio training offered them a different way of looking at what they previously considered an easy medium with few rules:

'You're not allowed to have no swearing; nothing to do with violence, gangs or anything like that. It's like a different aspect that we all listen to now we are making radio' (prisoner studying radio production)

Joining the radio courses also got the prisoners thinking about their education and employment career opportunities:

'this one it's like I don't even feel like I'm on a course, I feel like I'm doing something that I enjoy ' (prisoner studying radio production).

'I don't think it matters so much if you've got a criminal record for most media type jobs' (prisoner studying radio production).

3.2 Reaching out to prisoners

Prisoners studying radio production and the prisoner audience saw prison radio as operating in three important areas of the welfare of prisoners. First, that prison radio was an excellent opportunity to communicate information to the whole of the prison population:

'There's loads in here that just don't like reading, if you put a letter through their door they're just going to chuck it in the bin, but with the radio when you listen to something it's easier to send a message out to people' (prisoner studying radio production).

'It gives information about the rules and about things you're entitled to inside the prison' (radio listener).

'I listen to the radio in Brixton because it's informative, it's good to know what's going on around the prison, what services are available' (radio listener).

Second, that being able to listen to radio programmes produced by prisoners, for prisoners eases the often isolating experience of a custodial sentence:

'I can tell you it can be very, very powerful because you've got some people who are depressed and when you've got the radio on, it relaxes people. When there's nothing, they're going to think about bad things that have happened to them in their life and they're going to be sitting there bored and become even more suicidal' (prisoner studying radio production).

'We are always encouraging prisoners to write to their families, cause contact with your family outside is important and if it isn't by talking over a pay phone it's by writing letters and letters is a very good way, 'cause you can talk over the phone and go in one ear and out the other but with a letter it's more personal' (radio producer / prisoner)

Third, that prison radio had a learning / reflecting effect on prisoners. At Electric Radio Brixton, prisoners employed as radio producers produce a weekly programme called True Stories, which often inspires its audience:

'We bring in a different prisoner in every week, we ask them about their lives, what they do etc, what's brought them to prison, what changes they're going to be making' (radio producer / prisoner).

Prisoners involved in studying and producing radio at HMP Brixton reflected that these stories from their peers impacted positively on prisoners serving a custodial sentence and often became the inspiration behind making changes in their lives:

'It can motivate you and make you want to change and it just makes you feel like there's another way in life when you hear other people's stories and stuff' (radio listener).

'You appreciate that it's coming from your peers then and you're more prone to listen, the fact is that it's produced by prisoners for me, it inspires another people who see themselves in your same shoes and inspires them and they can relate a lot more to you simply because you've been there' (radio producer / prisoner).

3.3 Audience views on the National Prison Radio Service

All the prisoners interviewed for the evaluation felt that the NPRS was an excellent idea, for a variety of reasons. Prisoners studying radio production and the prisoner audience felt that it would provide the opportunity to involve and include prisoner's families more effectively:

'I've told people on the out about this prison radio and they're like 'Oh can I listen?', I have to say no it's just for prisoners, but our families would love to hear what's going on in here' (radio listener).

'If your families outside could make some sort of connection through the medium of the radio, that would be really good' (radio listener).

The overriding view was that the NPRS was important for all prisoners, simply because it gave them a voice:

'It would feel as though this is a voice, acts as a voice and that's really, really important to a prisoner, to have something inside an institution that acts as a voice' (prisoner studying radio production).

The overall feeling expressed by prisoners that the move towards the NPRS was a positive one, with great benefits for all concerned.

3.4 Suggestions for future National Prison Radio Service programming

Prison radio students and audience members were enthusiastic about submitting their ideas for programmes that would be appropriate in the prison environment. They are included here for information:

- 'a radio version of 8 out of 10 cats sort of thing, where people are getting together and go through the current affairs with comical points of view towards them so people get the news with a laugh' (radio listener)
- 'some talk shows like with these controversial subjects that would get you thinking: what you'd do with prisoners if you was running the government?' (radio learner)
- 'stuff in different languages at same time each day would be good for those that don't speak English so well' (radio listener)
- 'different faith programmes would be good, different each Sunday- then we all could learn about other cultures too' (radio listener).

The prisoners involved in the evaluation interviews were in no doubt that their engagement was assured by the ethos of prison radio - radio made by prisoners for prisoners:

'The cutting edge thing about this is that it is run by prisoners for prisoners' (radio listener).

This section has outlined the significance of prison radio for its audience, from the prisoner perspective and in their own words. As mentioned previously, the PRA is an organisation that operates with the aims and objectives of:

- providing support, guidance and expertise to existing prison radio stations
- offering innovative solutions to help establish new prison radio stations
- establishing a National Prison Radio Service
- organising an annual conference and awards ceremony for the prison radio community

The remainder of this report focuses on an evaluation of the PRA's activities over the last year with regard to the extent to which they have operated to support the continued success of prison radio, ultimately for the benefit of the audience.

Section 4: Raising the PRA's Profile – Development of a Press Strategy

4.0 Introduction

The PRA has worked strategically to raise its profile and that of its flagship station, Electric Radio Brixton during the run-up to the Ministry of Justice's decision to award the PRA a three-year contract to manage the National Prison Radio Service. This involved the PRA:

- Submitting entries into the Sony Radio Academy Awards 2009 – resulting in two bronze and two gold award
- Establishing a media strategy with the Ministry of Justice Press Office
- Following success at the Sony Radio Academy Awards – managing media interviews including BBC Radio 4, The Guardian and The Times
- Attending the 2009 Radio Festival – presentation of plenary session – with further media coverage
- Submission of two entries into the IVCA Clarion Awards – subsequently the Best Radio Station category
- Hosting a workshop / presentation at the 2009 International Conference on Prisoner Health Protection at the invitation of the UK Department of Health and Birmingham City University (BCU)

The evaluation team interviewed the PRA's Chief Executive and two PRA Trustees to examine the aims and objectives of this strategy and the extent to which these have been achieved.

4.1 Sony Radio Academy Awards 2009

The PRA submitted eight entries to the prestigious Sony Radio Academy Awards in 2009 and subsequently received four nominations. The Sony Radio Academy Awards, the 'Oscars of the radio industry' are and the greatest accolade that anyone working in the radio industry can receive. At the awards ceremony, held in May 2009, the PRA received two bronze and two gold awards.

This achievement has established the PRA as a credible broadcaster, as while the PRA was happy with what its achievements in prison, 'what we really wanted to do, having come from a radio background, was to establish ourselves as credible radio professionals' (PRA Chief Executive). PRA's Board of Trustees was also delighted with this outcome:

'It is incredibly welcome in terms of profile raising and a benchmark of quality which can help build trust and credibility in the whole organisation so I think it is a very valuable hallmark for us' (PRA Trustee).

4.2 Establishing a media strategy with the Ministry of Justice press office

The PRA approaches its relationship with the media very carefully. Following the charity's Sony Radio Academy Award nominations there was a lot of media interest, but the PRA decided to take a proactive approach and contacted individuals at three media outlets (The Guardian, The Times and the BBC) and

gave extensive interviews to each of them at HMP Brixton. All other media enquiries – over 200 in the days following the Sony Radio Academy Awards – were directed to a press pack the PRA had prepared and posted on its website.

This approach was approved by the Ministry of Justice press office and rationalised by the PRA as follows:

‘As long as the prisoners are benefiting, the politicians are happy with what we’re doing and our funders are happy, then I’m doing my job. The Ministry of Justice and PRA sang from the same hymn sheet. I contacted them with the strategy, and they were very, very happy, very supportive of that’ (PRA Chief Executive).

As a result of this approach to their media strategy, there is a feeling of trust between these two organisations, which in future will pay positive dividends to the PRA as an organisation: ‘our relationship with the press office is really crucial to what we’re doing and where we are going’ (PRA Chief Executive). Indeed, this view was reinforced from the prison service perspective:

‘The PRA dealt with that incredibly well and because the PRA understood the relationship, and the importance of keeping the Ministry of Justice on side as far as any publicity was concerned’ (Chief Executive of NACRO, former prison governor, and PRA Special Advisor).

It was also reflected that a key learning point to take from that process is to continue to involve the Ministry of Justice press office, as:

‘If you lose the confidence of the press office you will quickly lose the confidence of the Prison Service and that will be the beginning of the end’ (Chief Executive of NACRO, former prison governor, and PRA Special Advisor).

4.3 2009 Radio Festival

The PRA was invited to produce a plenary session for the 2009 Radio Festival in Nottingham. The session entitled, ‘Prison Radio; Making Waves Behind Bars’ involved a PRA Trustee (who is also an established name in the commercial radio sector) reviewing the history of prison radio and presenting examples of audio produced by prisoners. The BBC’s Richard Bacon then interviewed the Governor of HMP Brixton and a serving prisoner, who was released from prison for the day in order to attend the event.

The session received the highest audience feedback score of the Radio Festival, with a 98% approval rating:

‘It was a very powerful session, it really was, it was hard hitting, the idea of having a prisoner and a prison governor on the stage together at the Radio Festival, that’s something very, very unusual but then to be able to play the audio, to play some very funny and very powerful and very moving audio was fantastic’ (PRA Chief Executive).

The PRA’s Chief Executive has been invited to help to organise the 2010 Radio Festival.

4.4 International Visual Communications Association (IVCA) Clarion Awards

The IVCA is an international corporate communication awarding body and the Clarion Awards are “The world’s only communication awards promoting social inclusion, CSR, sustainable development and ethical debate”. At the September 2009 awards ceremony the PRA, competing with BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio 4, won the Best Radio Station category of this significant international award. The IVCA judges commented that Electric Radio Brixton, run by the PRA is:

'An energetic, professional and compelling radio station, providing an unflinching and therefore engaging service for and by prisoners. An exemplar of the unique way in which radio can help bring about social change'.

4.5 2009 International Conference on Prison Health Protection, Madrid

The PRA was invited to host a workshop / presentation at this annual conference by the UK Department of Health and Birmingham City University (BCU) The event was hosted by the Spanish Ministry of Health in Madrid. The workshop, Using Radio for Health Promotion in Prisons, included a presentation by PRA staff and featured a number of clips of PRA health related programming.

4.6 Royal Society of Arts (RSA) case study of good practice

The PRA's Electric Radio Brixton is featured as a case study in a recent RSA report, 'The Learning Prison'⁵. This report was written to acknowledge that although prison learning and skills have been advancing in recent years, further significant improvements require a fresh approach based on evidence and reason. The report concludes with the recommendation that politicians need to be bold and modernise the prison like every other core public service. According to this report, this needs to include:

- giving practitioners and prisoners a stronger voice
- enabling practitioners and prisoners to drive innovation
- increasing the use of ICT in the prison estate

It is stated that these interventions will impact positively on the experience of custody, purposeful activity targets and aid resettlement by raising aspirations for both prisoners and prison staff across the estate. Electric Radio Brixton is used as a project that illustrates an innovative approach to achieving all of the aims highlighted in the report:

4.7 Electric Radio Brixton

'Broadcasting since 2007 in a prison that had a high level of self-harm and suicide, this radio station won a prestigious national broadcasting award in 2009, even though its audience is limited to 800 prisoners. All programmes are pre-recorded and edited by civilians who run the station. Shows cover religion, poetry and music

⁵ Rachel O'Brien, 2010: <http://www.thersa.org/projects/public-services/prison-learning-network/reports/the-learning-prison> (23/04/10).

but programmes are punctuated with information and public service announcements rather than with advertisements. In the evening the station broadcasts interviews between inmates and a regular slot where the governor responds to prisoners' questions. The aim is to improve communication and build skills in broadcasting and in information and communication technology among inmates. Volunteers undertake full-time production courses, learn how to use editing software as well as the broadcast deck and are taught to work as if they were in a normal job' (O'Brien, 2010: 4⁶).

⁶ Page 4 of the Case Study Section of the report:
http://www.thersa.org/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/278965/The-Learning-Prison-case-studies.pdf (23/04/10).

Section 5: Sustainable Funding Strategy

5.0 Introduction

The PRA has been working to widen its funding base away from its reliance on grant funding. The PRA is looking into the potential of raising revenue through carrying advertising and the sponsorship of programmes by organisations that share the PRA's aim of reducing reoffending. In addition the PRA also intends to become a sub-contractor in a National Offender Management Service / European Social Fund co-financing programme that aims to improve the employability prospects of offenders. This section of the report will identify the PRA's key funding successes in order to inform future income generation strategies.

The PRA has spent a considerable amount of time and energy during 2009 completing funding applications to a range of organisations, a selection of which are listed here:

- Monument Trust
- Wates Foundation
- Impetus Trust
- The Big Lottery Fund – 'Reaching Communities'
- NOMS / ESF

5.1 Developing a sustainable funding strategy

The PRA views its organisational development in three three-year phases, which run parallel to its funding strategy. During the first three year stage of development, or start up phase, the PRA was a brand new charity and its funding strategy reflected this:

'In our first three years it was relatively easy for us because the PR was a brand new charity. We could go to charitable trusts and organisations and request start up funding' (PRA Chief Executive).

Predominantly, in the early stages, the PRA was successful in generating funding from grant giving organisations. The PRA is currently in its second three-year phase of development. Fundraising in during this phase has largely focussed on supporting the development of the emerging National Prison Radio Service.

The PRA is already looking towards its next three year development phase and the charity acknowledges that more sustainable sources of funding are now required to support future development. The PRA is looking at potential statutory funding sources such as:

Department of Health

Department of Work and Pensions

European Social Fund

The PRA intends to also explore the funding potential of operating as a commercial broadcaster. The PRA holds the OFCOM licence to broadcast, and the charity's contract with the Ministry of Justice stipulates that the PRA should do all it can to gain commissions from outside organisations in order to make its work sustainable.

The PRA anticipates carrying advertising for organisations that share its aim of reducing re-offending. Ideally, 'receiving NOMS or Department of Health funding to produce a series of programmes about drugs and alcohol, for example' (PRA Chief Executive). The PRA also feels it has something unique to offer the considerable number of voluntary and statutory organisations in the UK that aim to work with offenders. The PRA can offer a voice to these agencies within prison – enabling them to get their messages to prisoners in their cells.

The PRA is registered as an independent production company with the BBC, who may also be interested in airing certain programmes or documentaries that the PRA produce, with NOMS Ministry of Justice press office approval.

5.2 Key role of the PRA Director of Operations

The PRA's Director of Operations has been in post since October 2007. The main components of this role are:

- developing strategy
- looking after the PRA's Human Resources
- overseeing the PRA's accounting and finance structures and processes
- fundraising

The Director of Operations sees his main role as 'making sure there's enough cash in the organisations bank balance to continue doing what we're doing' (PRA Director of Operations). The Director of Operations spends much of his working week preparing funding applications.

5.3 Grant Funding

The funding application process is a team effort, with all members of PRA providing input. The PRA has been successful in its fundraising efforts:

'We've been successful so far in 16 bids for grants from grant giving organisations and we've still got three pending. We've been unsuccessful in 6 applications' (PRA Director of Operations).

Of the six unsuccessful funding applications, one didn't reply. Another returned to the PRA for more information and later declined to fund. The remaining four specifically replied stating that they felt the PRA's specific application did not quite fit the remit of the objectives of the charity at that precise moment in time:

'It was never about the application itself falling down it was that it didn't specifically fit the purposes or objectives of that charity at that moment in time' (PRA Director of Operations).

However, grant funding has certain restrictions. These funding sources can vary according to the amount of time the funding lasts, however it is unusual to find grant funding that continues for more than three years. Grant funding can be unrestricted, allowing the PRA more flexibility in its budgeting. It can also be restricted to specific areas of work or salaries, for example.

The process of identifying the appropriate grant giving organisations and ensuring applications match the guidelines can be a time consuming process,

with some applications taking up to six months to complete. However, it is felt that the PRA is becoming increasingly proficient in this process and has the mechanisms and experienced staff in place to ensure continued success.

It is also common for an extended period of time between funding bid submission and notification of the eventual outcome which often makes things difficult from a cash flow perspective for the PRA. However, this situation is common for many charities across the UK.

The PRA has identified further grant giving organisations from which they intend to apply for further funding over the next two years:

'We've certainly not exhausted the grant making sector by any means. We've identified at least 20 organisations that welcome applications from small to medium size charities with an innovative approach to addressing difficult issues' (PRA Director of Operations).

5.4 Expanding into statutory funding streams

The longer term success of the PRA will depend on accessing more sustainable sources of funding, such as statutory budgets. This will involve the PRA shifting from an organisation that 'applies for funding from charitable trusts to an organisation that sustains itself through statutory funding as well' (NPRS Manager). This organisational strategy involves a slight shift in focus for the PRA, in that:

'the next few years it is about attracting different funding streams which are linked more to the radio content that we're putting out rather than the concept of having a radio station' (Chief Executive of NACRO, former prison governor, and PRA Special Advisor).

The potential for the PRA to produce radio content for departments within the Ministry of Justice are seemingly endless, making programmes addressing offender health issues, for example can range from accessing the gym to supporting prisoners to maintain their family relationships. The PRA is very aware that the potential is there as it is are involved in creating a system that can be accessed by the whole prison population, an audience with which many agencies wish to engage with:

'Agencies have funds in order to reach objectives which we will achieve more effectively for them, but in order to do that they have to invest in that and they have to invest in the programme and have to co-fund both the organisation and the specific content' (PRA Trustee).

The PRA feel strongly that this is possible if it can consolidate the work and the experience it has gained over the last three years:

'I would hope that if we continue to do what we do, do it well, build an audience, continue to be recognised as best practice within the communications sector in the prison service, if we continue to win awards we can secure some ongoing statutory funding so we can run ongoing health campaigns for the offender health department, perhaps with the Skills Funding Agency running educational campaigns' (PRA Director of Operations).

By managing a national station, the PRA is in an excellent position to approach statutory funding from a national level:

'Prison healthcare is a classic example of this, by going to the Department of Health on a national basis, not to individual PCTs necessarily, and saying: look these are the health messages we're getting out through this medium, will you help us fund the creation of this content?' (PRA Chief Executive).

The PRA aims to consolidate its experience and expertise, along with expanding its access into prisons through the NPRS to enable it to access statutory funding, which the PRA sees as enabling it to plan its activities more effectively, with

'the safety and security of statutory income, I don't think that it would cover all of the costs of the charity but to get somewhere towards a minimum of 50% of our income coming in from statutory organisations would be really welcome' (PRA Director of Operations).

5.5 Expanding into commercial funding streams

In order for the PRA to become increasingly self sustaining in its activities, it is considering accessing more commercial sources of funding:

'What prison radio's managed to do is work out a way of prisoners telling their own stories, to communicate in a hugely effective manner with their peer group. They get involved, acquire new skills and that's a very strong match and when you've got a powerful medium like that and it's so powerful and so impactful, my experience is you can attract funding for that, my commercial experience is you can sell advertising on it' (PRA Trustee)

The PRA is very clear however that:

'What that doesn't mean is that we'll be carrying adverts for just anybody but it does mean that we will be hopefully becoming self sustaining by selling radio slots to organisations like NACRO and AdFam and the organisations that work in the same area we do- to reduce reoffending' (NPRS Manager).

The PRA will approach commercial funding with a focus on effectiveness, an important element of which is being able to outline exactly what any agency gets for their investment. The PRA needs to consider the most effective way of providing robust information which can demonstrate its service will meet the clients' criteria and objectives:

'So, saying: "here is how we're going to fulfil your objectives within prisons, this is how we're going to do it" I know it seems like a very big step because it crosses that line of objective fulfilment which is slightly more overtly connected to content but for me that's not an issue' (PRA Trustee).

This issue raises questions concerning the PRA's current capacity to collect impact data with which to support any claims it makes to agencies. Collecting monitoring and impact data is often a challenging area of development, particularly in the media (this issue is covered in more detail in the following

section). The PRA has a well developed business plan for 2009 -2011. Given these issues, the PRA has revisited and updated its business plan:

'what we did essentially is scaled back what we thought the PRA could achieve in terms of funding, recruitment of its staff, its objectives, and this was ratified by the Board of Trustees who thought actually this amended business plan was more pragmatic, it was more achievable and more appropriate to the sector that we're in' (PRA Director of Operations).

The PRA's aim of moving away from an over reliance on grant funding, towards a more diverse funding base that includes statutory and commercial sources of income has been well laid out in its business plan, to be in place by 2011.

PRA staff felt that in the meantime they were still learning, needed to consider recruiting more staff and are securing permanent premises to house an expanding team of radio producers for the NPRS. The PRA is however in no doubt that its product is of value to other agencies and therefore of the potential to raise commercial sources of income:

'We are looking at helping bodies which want to improve the quality of work that goes on in prisons, helping them get that work carried out more effectively, so that benefits inmates not benefits businesses' (PRA Trustee).

As this section has demonstrated, the PRA has developed a well thought out strategy regarding widening its funding base and becoming a more financially sustainable organisation.

Section 6: Roll-Out of the National Prison Radio Service (NPRS)

6.0 Introduction

A key objective of the PRA during the second half of 2009 was the development of a National Prison Radio Service. A member of the evaluation team conducted interviews with PRA staff and NOMS Head of Prison radio to assess the progress of the roll-out of the NPRS.

6.1 Working in Partnership

On 1st May 2009 the PRA signed a three-year partnership contract with the Ministry of Justice and NOMS, through which the charity became responsible for the management of the NPRS. The contract detailed the responsibilities of each of the partners, including:

- the provision of a link post, the Head of Prison Radio, between the two agencies (NOMS)
- the installation of reception equipment necessary to receive audio broadcasts (NOMS)
- the day-to-day management of the NPRS (PRA)
- the production of high quality, relevant audio content for the prisoner audience (PRA)

6.2 NOMS activity on the NPRS contract

6.2.1 *The Provision of a Partnership Link Post*

The NOMS Head of Prison radio was appointed in 2008, they operate from the OESS Offender Employment Skills and Services Group (OESS), which manages all elements of offender-facing work in the prison estate, such as P.E., catering and the prison industries. This group operate to enhance prisoner's time in custody and to support purposeful lives following release. The Head of Prison Radio is in regular contact with the PRA's NPRS Manager and is responsible for overseeing all elements of the NPRS and the installation of equipment.

6.2.2 *The Installation of Reception Equipment*

NOMS has procured all the satellite radio reception equipment required by prisons across England and Wales. NOMS outsourced the installation of reception equipment to an independent contractor. To date, April 2010, there are 25 prison establishments that have had the reception equipment installed. NOMS Head of Prison Radio estimates that they are fitting two new establishments each three week period. It is anticipated that the 'bulk of the prison estate will be fitted' with this equipment by 'the end of this financial year, 2011' (NOMS Head of Prison Radio).

While the private prisons are 'more than welcome' to access the NPRS and would receive support from the Head of Prison Radio, they would be required to pay for the equipment and installation themselves. Prisons in the high security establishment are not currently being fitted with the installations, however it is

anticipated they will be in the future. The progress of the installation phase has gained momentum, however it was 'slow to start' (NOMS Head of Prison Radio) for three main reasons:

- due to the impending analogue switch off each prison has had to update its TV in-cell system before the NPRS reception equipment can be fitted, as, there is 'no point installing on an old service' (NOMS Head of Prison Radio).
- a significant number of prisons are located in what is known as the Historic Estate, resulting in the requirement of planning consent on these listed buildings before installation can take place (NOMS Head of Prison Radio).
- working in the Prison Service can be challenging, as if a security breach occurs, the contractors are required to leave the prison, thus slowing up the installation process (NOMS Head of Prison Radio).

As has been illustrated, the installation of reception equipment within prisons is by no means an uncomplicated process. NOMS is responsible for the installation, however is not responsible for tuning in the in-cell televisions. This should be a simple activity that prisoners can do themselves, however, some prisoners do not have access to remote controls for their televisions and these are kept at the wing office. It remains the responsibility of the individual prisons to carry out this task. At HMP Brixton this issue was addressed by employing prisoners to carry out the task:

'a couple of pounds a week, not huge amounts of money and every prison governor can afford that, it's their job. So the prisoners ran around re-tuning TV's all the time' (Chief Executive of NACRO, former prison governor, and PRA Special Advisor).

6.3 PRA's Activity on the NPRS Contract

6.3.1 Day-to-Day management of the NPRS

The PRA has so far recruited two individuals in order to manage and produce content for the NPRS. One of these roles is the manager of the NPRS, who has the key responsibilities of:

- liaising directly with NOMS Head of Prison Radio, regarding operational issues, strategic planning, and specific issues related to audio content
- liaising with prison radio stations around the country to generate audio content for national broadcast
- building the NPRS schedule
- developing and maintaining editorial guidelines and a compliance procedure

The PRA has also recruited its first professional radio producer for the NPRS. It was reflected that there had been a marked improvement in the quality standard of the audio produced since this appointment. This staff member has the ongoing responsibility of producing high quality material for national broadcast, including public service announcements (PSA's). The NPRS producer has already produced two Sony Radio Academy Award winning PSA's:

- an instructional series promoting safe in-cell exercise
- a series aimed at providing information and reassurance to newly arrived first time prisoners

The NPRS Producer is currently working alongside prisoners to produce a regular daily breakfast show entitled; 'Porridge' which it is anticipated will be aired from April 2010.

6.3.2 Production of high quality, relevant audio content

The NPRS Manager previously operated as Manager of Electric Radio Brixton. His experience in the post being essential in this new role as NPRS Manager. Being tasked to develop programming which is relevant to a national prisoner audience is described as 'very different because we can't mention that gym for A wing is on a Thursday afternoon or any information that is specific to Brixton' (NPRS Manager). This brings an added dimension to prison radio audio production as:

'what we're now doing is developing programming which encourages prisoners to engage in rehabilitation and to look after themselves and to turn their lives around, but without mentioning things that are specific to one particular prison' (NPRS Manager).

It also takes a considerable amount of time to plan and produce high quality audio, particularly working within the restrictions of the prison estate. Therefore, in order to complement and enhance the NPRS schedule, the PRA has negotiated rebroadcasting rights with a number of third party broadcasters. The NPRS currently, for example, carries programmes produced for Public Radio International, the British Council and the Redbull Music Academy.

However, as the NPRS is designed to radio for prisoners by prisoners, there is a pressure on the partnership to increase the audio created by prisoners. Both the PRA and the NOMS Head of Prison Radio agree that their ultimate aim is to:

'Get to a position where as much as possible that goes out on the radio station is made by prisoners' (NOMS Head of Prison Radio).

Although the NPRS broadcasts 24 hours per day, seven days per week, the current NPRS audio output of high quality speech-based programming produced by prisoners is estimated to be five hours per week. The NOMS Head of Prison radio also contributes to this aim by producing 'a small amount of content for the national broadcast contributing a daily slot to the breakfast show called Thinking Time which is being made in conjunction with chaplaincy' (NPRS Manager). It is anticipated that the proportion of prisoner-generated content will rise considerably once further funding is secured to employ a larger number of professional producers to work alongside prisoners. However, when the PRA is in a position to recruit more producers, there will be an issue of lack of space at the HMP Brixton site. The PRA is considering adding to the capacity of the HMP Brixton studio by locating additional premises outside of the prison:

'It's not so much to do with splitting it between two prison sites it's just the fact that this space is big enough for some prisoners and a couple of staff,

it's not big enough for a team of seven staff and seven prisoners and frankly Brixton prison wouldn't want this size of space just given over to members of staff of an external organisation' (NPRS Manager).

6.3.3 Developing a programming schedule

The PRA is currently developing the NPRS schedule, this has proved challenging given the restricted amount of prisoner-generated audio they currently have access to, however, the NPRS Manager felt that the development of the schedule was one of the successes of this year:

'the schedule from where it was in September to where it is now I think has been pretty remarkable really, it sounds like a proper radio station now and I think we've made some really, really strong content' (NPRS Manager).

6.4 Partnership Working

6.4.1 Disseminating the NPRS schedule to prisoners

A number of alternatives have been suggested for ensuring the NPRS schedule is disseminated to their audience across the estate:

'We thought about things like having one person based in every prison who's the key contact for prison radio, emailing them a schedule and getting them to print it and distribute it' (PRA Chief Executive).

However, the PRA approached Inside Time⁷ which is a widely read and well respected monthly newspaper for prisoners, with regard to using the publication to distribute the NPRS schedule. NOMS supports this venture and Inside Time has agreed to carry a monthly insert of the NPRS schedule. This insert will only be distributed to those prisons receiving the NPRS.

6.4.2 Local prison radio project opt-out time slots

There are approximately 25 prison establishments that have an existing prison radio project. In order to ensure that there are occasions when local information about a particular establishment can be broadcast, a local opt-out service will be available. Every establishment will have the ability to use the local opt-out service, however there has been no final decision about how long and how often these local opt-outs will be available. A very small number of local prison radio projects are on air for 24 hours a day and may perceive the NPRS as intruding on their local broadcasting. Indeed this subject arose unexpectedly at the PRA Conference in November 2009 (see previous section). It was reflected that what is required is a:

'consensus from each establishment in terms of good local content. They need to think about the radio service as a brand, so we need to ensure quality and add value with local audio' (NOMS Head of Prison Radio).

This issue is still also under consultation with the ultimate decision to be made by NOMS. The PRA is advocating on behalf individual prison radio projects.

⁷ A National Newspaper for Prisoners: <http://www.insidetime.org/>

6.4.3 Radio in Prisons: Guidance Policies

Initially, it was anticipated that there would be a specific Prison Service Instruction (PSI) developed around the use of media which would be sent to each prison establishment. The PRA has developed three specific documents, that it was anticipated would be included in this instruction:

- a compliance form about every programme made
- editorial guidelines document
- consent forms to be completed by all individuals recorded by any prison radio project

These documents were developed with the input of a PRA Trustee who is an expert in broadcast law:

'we were hoping that these documents would be edited to make them appropriate for NOMS incorporated into the PSI. We found out recently that there probably isn't going to be a PSI' (PRA Chief Executive).

However, it was reported that this lack of a PSI may be a positive state of affairs:

'I was at first quite concerned about that, but I've been reassured by a former governor that it's nothing to be concerned about, as PSI's are very rigid, they're a set of rules that are very difficult to change' (PRA Chief Executive).

It has since been proposed that a guidance document is produced and placed on the prison service intranet, however:

'We are still debating if we need a PSI or guidance and only time will tell - different people say they want different things - there will be some form guidance - whether it comes under the auspices of a PSI - we don't know yet' (NOMS Head of Prison Radio).

The matter is still under consultation.

Section 7: Hosting the Second Annual PRA Conference and Awards Ceremony

7.0 Introduction

An objective of PRA in year three was to host the second annual conference and awards ceremony in 2009. As in 2008, the aims of the conference and awards ceremony were to:

- Invite all staff currently involved in prison radio projects
- Provide a forum for the development of a "prison radio community" and to share best practice
- Provide a range of practical radio training to participants
- Host an evening celebration and awards ceremony

The key aims of the conference and awards ceremony were to create an opportunity where a community of prison radio stakeholders could share best practice and to provide a forum where the PRA could provide practical advice and support about appropriate programme making in prison.

7.1 The PRA's Second Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony 2009

The PRA held their second annual conference and awards ceremony entitled, Celebrating Prison Radio 2009 at Scarman House, Warwick University Conference Centre on the 24th and 25th of November 2009. Fifty delegates attended the event from across the country. Over the two day period, delegates listened to presentations and took part in hands-on production techniques workshops. 22 conference evaluation forms were returned, the results of which are presented in this section.

7.1.1 Conference activities

The conference and awards ceremony session titles and the objectives of those sessions are outlined in the table below:

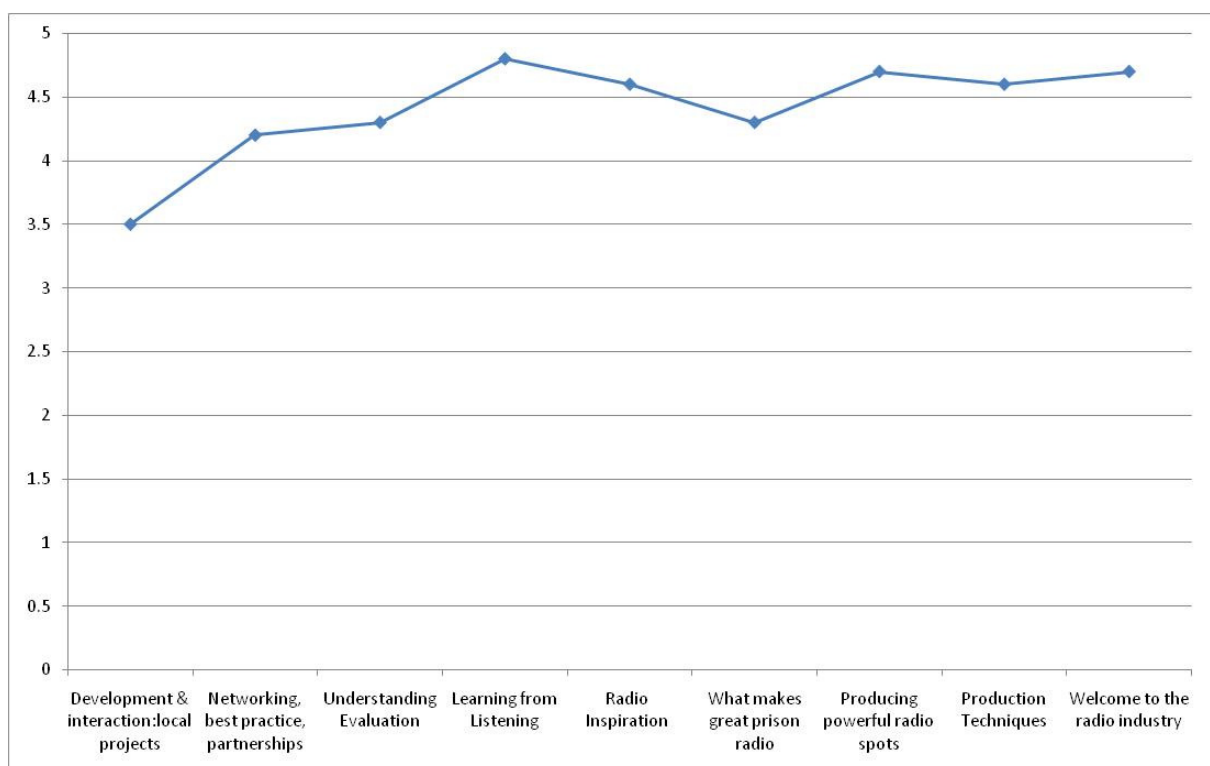
Session Title	Session Objectives
National Prison Radio Service - development and interaction with local projects	Outlining the development of the NPRS, why NOMS is behind this initiative and outline their aims and expectations for the service. Followed by a Q&A session.
Facilitated workshop - networking, sharing best practice and partnership working	Exchanging views and sharing best practice.
Evaluation Toolkit - understanding evaluation	Understanding how to evaluate the effectiveness of your project. A newly designed Prison Radio Evaluation Toolkit is also presented.
Listen Up - learning from listening	Listening to and commenting on a selection of clips of prison radio from around the country.

Special guest interview - radio inspiration	BBC Radio 4's Paddy O'Connell talks about his passion for radio and about why he supports prison radio.
Inside Radio - what makes great prison radio	Providing tips on guiding prisoners through the creative radio production process.
Spot on - how to produce powerful radio spots	Understanding what makes a powerful radio spot.
Group Workshops - production techniques	Groups work with a professional radio producer to produce a short radio spot.
Guest Speaker - welcome to the radio industry (Trevor Dann, Chief Executive of the Radio Academy)	Welcoming prison radio to the radio industry and providing tips for going forward.

7.2 Evaluation of conference sessions

The graph below shows the average scores for nine conference sessions.

Fig 7.2.1: Average scores for nine conference sessions (n=22)

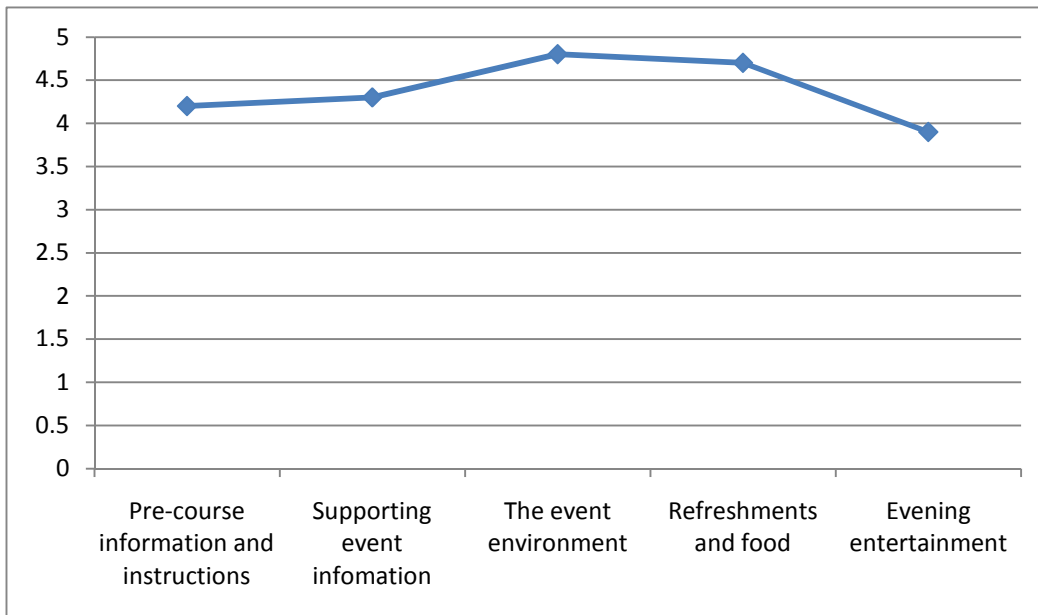


The above graph demonstrates the success of the sessions, showing the extent to which delegates felt the session objectives had been met.

7.3 Evaluation of event arrangements

The graph below shows the average scores for event arrangements.

Fig 7.3.1: Average scores for Event Arrangements (n=22)



The above graph demonstrates the success of the event arrangements as conference delegates recorded overwhelmingly positive response on their evaluation forms.

7.4 Qualitative conference feedback

Delegates at the PRA conference and awards ceremony were asked to complete a range of qualitative questions at the end of the event. These included: what they liked best about the event, what they liked least about the event, suggestions for how the PRA might improve on the event for 2010 and any other comments they would like to make.

7.4.1 Conference highlights

All delegates who responded recorded messages of support, praise and encouragement:

- 'Excellent conference - it gets better and better' (delegate)
- 'Loved it! Thank you!' (delegate)
- 'Well done to you and the team' (delegate)
- 'Really appreciate what you are doing for prison radio' (delegate)
- 'Thoroughly enjoyable and informative - probably the most useful I've been to and obviously the most enjoyable' (delegate)
- 'Highest respect for PRA and what it seeks to do. I'll certainly come back next year and encourage many others to come' (delegate)

In summary, highlights of the 2009 PRA Conference were:

- Interacting and Networking
- 'Sharing passions' and 'meeting like minds'

- 'New ideas and inspiration'
- 'Sharing best practice'

A small number of delegates reported not enjoying the evening entertainment and one delegate commented they would like to see the conference extending to three days.

7.5 Embedding evaluation

The PRA decided to focus on embedding evaluation activity into prison radio during their 2009 conference and worked with the evaluator (HCCJ) to produce a Prison Radio Evaluation Toolkit, to support local prison radio stations to monitor their own activity. The toolkit was launched at the PRA's second annual conference in November 2009. The toolkit contained the following sections with the tools included:

- Introduction to Evaluation Toolkit
- Sample Listener Survey
- Sample Quarterly Listener Survey
- Sample Listener Feedback Focus Group
- Sample Radio Station Data Report
- Sample Agency Feedback – Pre-broadcast
- Sample Agency Feedback – Post-broadcast
- Sample Radio Production Training Evaluation
- Sample Evaluation Report

The evaluation toolkit was well received, with many delegates agreeing they would find it useful. It is anticipated that the tool kit will be loaded onto the PRA website.

7.6 Recommendations on content of PRA's conference 2010

The delegates of the PRA Conference 2009 had lots of ideas about what next years conference could provide in addition to the 2009 conference agenda. These suggestions are outlined below:

7.6.1 Additional resources

- 'Ready-made resources - high quality radio samples, 'how to' kits - to take away' (*delegate*)
- 'I think it would be good to supply people with an audio CD with the years highlights from prison (and community) radio' (*delegate*)

7.6.2 Additional sessions

- 'A slot for a prison governor or other prison staff slightly outside the loop to talk about their impressions and prison radio and how it works in their jail' (*delegate*)
- 'More sessions, maybe on technical stuff, equipment etc' (*delegate*)
- 'Workshops to help those starting out - what you need, support networks, equipments/resources. Technical advice, opportunity to use the equipment' (*delegate*)

7.6.3 Delegate input pre-conference

- 'Asking in advance for any questions, thoughts or problems individuals want answered' (*delegate*)

7.6.4 Clarification of NPRS impact

- 'Announce an established outcome of effects that the PRA will have on local prison stations, so that organisations are aware and could prepare' (*delegate*)
- 'I think the distinction between national and local radio production needs some clearer focus' (*delegate*)

7.6.5 Increasing local prison radio project input

- 'I'd like to listen to more radio work produced by other prisons' (*delegate*)
- 'Obviously get more prisons involved and possibly allow some other prisons to get more of the work and highlights shown' (*delegate*)
- 'More comparing audio' (*delegate*)

As this section has shown, the PRA conference 2009 was extremely well received, with the most common comment from delegates as showing their appreciation for the opportunity to meet and share good practice with their prison radio community.

Section 8: The Way Forward

8.0 Introduction

This report has demonstrated the hugely positive distance the PRA has travelled, over the period of evaluation report year 1⁸, evaluation report year 2⁹ and this final evaluation report year 3. The PRA has proved to be flexible and inventive in what it has achieved over this three year period with a limited budget and a small number of staff members.

8.1 Developing a Realistic PRA Strategy

The PRA has spent a lot of time and energy developing its organisation strategically in order to deal with the significant changes in its activities over the last three years. The PRA Board of Trustees¹⁰ has been important in terms of directing these huge changes and challenges:

'The PRA has come on in leaps and bounds over the last three years, because of the opportunity that opened up. Any organisation that is in a box can only function in a box, when the lids taken off - anything is possible' (NOMS Head of Prison Radio).

'The ability to get to the stage where we can roll out a national prison service is a momentous achievement considering where we were a year, 18 months ago' (PRA Trustee).

'If a prisoner gets a message or information delivered that they didn't know before - that's it that is what the PRA and prison radio are all about' (NOMS Head Of Prison Radio).

One of the most significant decisions made by the PRA was to re-focus its activity on the development of the NPRS:

'I think the major turning point was when the PRA decided, the PRA took its strategic decision to concentrate on a national radio service, that was a big strategic decision made in late 2007' (PRA Director of Operations).

The PRA is concentrating on the development of the NPRS without losing sight of its original remit of offering support and guidance to any prison running, or interested in setting up, a prison radio project. The PRA is still actively committed to supporting and building a prison radio community. The annual conference is a significant way through which the PRA demonstrates this commitment: 'We've now had two annual conferences and that's really how we support and build a community of prison radio projects and in addition we have an open door policy.'

⁸ Wilkinson, K and Davidson, J (2008) An Evaluation of the Prison Radio Association's Activity: The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project.

⁹ Wilkinson, K and Davidson, J (2009) *An Evaluation of the Prison Radio Association's Activity Year 2: A Model for Support*. Occasional Paper Series, Sheffield Hallam University: ISBN 978-1-84387-285-6. Executive Summary available: <http://www.prisonradioassociation.org/?con=eval>

¹⁰ For more detail on break down of PRA Board of Trustees, please see PRA Website or Wilkinson, K and Davidson, J (2009) *An Evaluation of the Prison Radio Association's Activity Year 2: A Model for Support*. Occasional Paper Series, Sheffield Hallam University: ISBN 978-1-84387-285-6.

Any prison with an existing project or not can contact us at any time to talk to us and get advice from us' (PRA Chief Executive).

8.2 Challenges in current economic and political environment

A potential change of government and imminent public spending cuts are currently resulting in an atmosphere of general apprehension in the Prison Service and other public service institutions. This climate may prove challenging to the successful introduction of a NPRS:

'Prison radio isn't a priority and isn't core business for anybody in the Ministry of Justice, in NOMS or in the Prison Service. Their priorities are to keep the public safe, to punish and to rehabilitate. We knew when we set out on this journey that there were going to be huge cuts across the estate so I think we've gone into this with our eyes open. However, these cuts will also mean that prisoners will be spending more time in their cells, we don't think that that's a good thing, but at least what we can do is give them something directly in their cells that makes a positive difference to their lives' (PRA Chief Executive).

The PRA however, remains pragmatic about their position:

'If the role of NOMS Head of Prison Radio disappeared it would present a real challenge for us, but we might then just have a very bureaucratic reporting relationship like an awful lot of contractors do' (PRA Chief Executive).

Given the progress of the installation of reception equipment and the sheer logistics of setting up a fully national service, it may well take the full three year contracted time period to fully establish the NPRS. This situation could potentially leave the PRA in a vulnerable position in 2012, when the NPRS contract comes up for renewal. However the PRA envisage:

'running an award winning, successful, impactful radio service that educates, entertains and informs and that makes a difference over that time period' (PRA Director of Operations).

The PRA are working to safeguarding their position by meeting politicians from all parties and ensuring they know about the work that the PRA do. It was also reflected that Prison Governors should also be approached in a systematic way:

'I think the PRA needs to engage in a continuous process of communication with prison governors. There's a whole raft of things you can do in terms of getting prison governors to recognise the benefits. If a prison governor realises the potential to communicate key messages to everybody in one fell swoop, it won't take very much to get them signed up' (Chief Executive of NACRO, former prison governor, and PRA Special Advisor).

The PRA is confident that once embedded in the prison service, the prison radio project will become less-and-less vulnerable to both political and economic change:

'the more embedded you can get it the quicker and deeper you can get it embedded the more likely it is to survive any future attacks, so if it's up and running and in 30, 40, 50, 60 prisons across the country and it's being used and it's helpful to prison governors in those locations it will be very, very difficult to unpick that' (Chief Executive of NACRO, former prison governor, and PRA Special Advisor).

8.3 Measuring success

As mentioned in previous section, the PRA as an organisation has reached a point where it is becoming crucial to provide robust monitoring and evaluation data in order to build a solid evidence base which would assist the PRA in accessing a wider range of more sustainable funding:

'It keeps coming back to "have we got the reach? Can we show impact?" What we need is a robust way in which we can say "an agency's referrals have gone up since we broadcast their advert on the radio"' (PRA Director of Operations).

'There's a huge piece of the jigsaw missing - we need some kind of effective tracking data about this work' (PRA Trustee).

'I think if we're smart we will commission a study into that, a feasibility study almost' (NPRS Manager).

The PRA and NOMS Head of Prison radio have already begun to discuss this issue however; currently thoughts regarding where to source robust data from have been made in two areas. First, from prisoners encouraged to make contact with the NPRS:

'We've had some letters from a women's prison, and on air we are constantly saying 'get in touch with us we want to hear from you, this is the address you write to' and one issue we thought quite carefully about is how do prisoners contact us 'cause they shouldn't have mobile phones, don't have access to emails, all the normal channels are closed to them and the only way they can get in touch with us is by post so we broadcast the address regularly' (NPRS Manager).

Second, within the area of measuring audience reach, using a tool from the wider radio industry, a Rajar¹¹ diary approach. This is where a research company asks a sample of the public to fill in a diary of their radio listening for one month:

'If it's good enough for Radio 2 its good enough for prison radio' (NOMS Head of Prison Radio).

Where this strategy could be developed, it is generally felt that, given the importance of this type of information for the future development of the PRA

¹¹ Radio Joint Audio Research Limited was established in 1992 to operate a single audience measurement system for the radio industry in the UK and is jointly owned by the BBC and the RadioCentre (http://www.rajar.co.uk/content.php?page=2007_08_intro_new_contract 24/04/10).

activities, considering commissioning some kind of external feasibility study may be appropriate at this stage of development.

8.4 Future areas of strategic development

Having achieved success in securing the contract to manage the NPRS, the PRA are currently focussing on practical, achievable activities that will ensure that once the reception equipment is installed in the majority of prisons, they will be in a position to 'hit the ground running':

'I think in the short to medium term it's really got to be about solidifying the PRA's position, rolling the station out and getting the content right. At the moment we are still getting the kit put into the prisons and getting the content going and getting it listened to and getting sign up from prisoners and prison staff, that's the focus, it's got to be the focus' (Chief Executive of NACRO, former prison governor, and PRA Special Advisor).

'Over the next year or two it's about building this team and going from the skeleton schedule that we've got now to fully operational radio schedule that interacts with other prison radio projects and also with NOMS at a senior level (NPRS Manager).

This section has overviewed the performance of the PRA in terms of their organisational development over the last year. The final section of this report provides a summary of evaluation findings and recommendations for the future development of the PRA activity-base.

Section 9: Summary and Recommendations

9.0 Introduction

The PRA has successfully met and exceeded its objectives for activity in 2009 and indeed throughout the three year evaluation period. It is important for the PRA to acknowledge and celebrate these significant achievements. This final section of the report presents the key findings of the evaluation of PRA activity in year 3, highlights the good practice examples identified during the evaluation and makes recommendations which, it is hoped will inform the future strategic direction of the PRA.

9.1 Key findings

The key findings from the evaluation of the second year of PRA activities are identified as follows:

9.1.1 *Supporting the set up of local prison radio projects*

The PRA has continued to work effectively with prisons wanting to set up radio projects and / or radio training facilities. The PRA is currently in contact with 25 prisons who are actively running radio projects, and a further 37 who have either expressed an interest or have a project in development¹². The PRA's Second Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony was hosted in Warwick in November 2009, which fifty delegates attended and provided excellent feedback on the event. Highlights of the 2009 conference were identified as interacting and networking, being able to share their passion for prison radio with like minded people, as well as being in an environment where they felt they were exposed to a sharing process of ideas, inspiration and best practice.

9.1.2 *The NPRS*

On 1st May 2009 PRA signed a three year partnership contract with the Ministry of Justice to be responsible for the day to day management of the NPRS. The PRA has recruited a NPRS Manager and its first NPRS Radio Producer. This staff team is currently working to produce high quality, relevant audio content for the prisoner audience. The NPRS Manager is currently developing a programming schedule. The working relationship between the PRA and NOMS is excellent. The PRA has developed an excellent partnership with the prisoner newspaper Inside Time¹³ which has agreed to support the dissemination of the NPRS schedule. The arrangements around the local opt-out and the issuing of guidance to regulate the radio production in prisons are still in discussion.

9.1.3 *Sustainable funding strategy*

The PRA has experienced high rates of success in its funding applications. Over 60% of bids submitted have been returned successfully. This is testament to the success of the PRA's bid writing team's approach to identifying and adapting each funding bid to the appropriate guidelines of the grant giving funding agencies.

¹² These figures reflect projects that PRA are aware of. There may very well be other projects running.

¹³ A National Newspaper for Prisoners: <http://www.insidetime.org/>

9.1.4 Development of a press strategy

The PRA's approach to the development of a press strategy, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice press office, has resulted in a more confidence working relationship with the Ministry of Justice. The PRA has had unrivalled success this year, raising the national and international profile of the PRA and reinforcing the PRA as a hallmark of high quality radio. The PRA has delivered plenary sessions at the UK's 2009 radio Festival and the 2009 International Conference on Prison Health Protection in Madrid. The PRA received an International Visual Communications Association (IVCA) Clarion Award and Electric Radio Brixton was featured as a case study in a recent report from the RSA, who used this project as illustration of an innovative way of giving practitioners and prisoners a stronger voice, enabling practitioners and prisoners to drive innovation and as a way of increasing the use of ICT in the prison estate.

9.2 Good practice examples

The evaluation team identified the following best practice examples of PRA activity over the 12 month time scale.

9.2.1 Supporting the prison radio practitioner community

The PRA has utilised its own brand of distinct and specialised support, advice and guidance involving prison radio, built directly from its own experience. This expertise has been fed into the PRA Conference 2009, where delegates provided excellent feedback, describing the event as an opportunity to share best practice within the prison radio community.

9.2.2 Development of effective press strategy

The PRA has had unimagined success in gaining national and internal award recognition for its work, having been awarded two gold and two bronze Sony Awards. The PRA have developed an effective Press Strategy in partnership with the Ministry of Justice press office. This approach has, it is felt, reinforced a trusting relationship between the two partners, which may well pay dividends to the PRA in future.

9.2.3 Effective partnership working

An excellent working relationship has been developed with the NOMS Head of Prison Radio and others within NOMS and the Ministry of Justice.

9.2.4 Informed approach to funding strategy

The governance of the PRA is currently developing forward looking strategies for the organisation, particularly with regard to the possibilities of accessing more sustainable funding streams. Despite their excellent success with regard to accessing grant funding, the PRA is looking into the potential of accessing both statutory and commercial funding.

9.3 Future areas of strategic development: recommendations

This report has demonstrated the hugely positive distance the PRA has travelled, over the period of evaluation report year 1¹⁴, evaluation report year 2¹⁵ and this

¹⁴ Wilkinson, K and Davidson, J (2008) An Evaluation of the Prison Radio Association's Activity: The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project.

final evaluation report year 3. The PRA has proved to be flexible and inventive in what it has achieved over this three year period with a limited budget and a small staff team. The focuser-focussing on the NPRS was a pivotal decision for the PRA, with excellent results. The PRA is effectively and practically dealing with the general unsettling times more generally, within the economic and political climate by working to embed the NPRS as soon as possible. This section highlights four areas of development that require attention from the PRA to ensure the successful application of the third stage of its development and funding strategy, and includes recommendations for both the short and longer term strategic development of the PRA.

9.3.1 Monitoring NPRS reception

It is essential for the numbers of prisons being able to receive the NPRS to rise to ensure the national reach of the station and increase the audience which the station can broadcast to. This issue is however not under the control of the PRA. NOMS is responsible for installing the satellite radio reception equipment, and is doing this systematically by region by region. There are currently (in April 2010) 25 prisons which have had the equipment fitted. It is estimated that the fitting is progressing by 2 establishments every three weeks (NOMS Head of Prison Radio). The PRA must ensure that this situation is monitored carefully.

9.3.2 Securing appropriate premises

As the PRA recruits more producers to work on the NPRS it will become more important to ensure larger premises are secured. It is considered that whilst keeping their office at HMP Brixton, the PRA may consider locating additional space outside of the prison as this will preclude many issues regarding internet access and IT security issues. The recommendation here is that the PRA begin making enquiries with regard to securing appropriate premises.

9.3.3 Increasing PRA staff numbers

Given the forthcoming access of the whole of the prison estate to the NPRS, the PRA needs to recruit more staff to ensure vital elements of this transition to requiring large amounts of audio material is staffed appropriately. The PRA aim to recruit more staff, a Communications and Campaigns Manager for example, which would enable the effective marketing of the national prison radio station, as well as providing the resources to ensure the PRA web site, becomes an effective educational resource to support radio station development in prisons.

9.3.4 Identifying monitoring and evaluation data collection tools

It is envisaged that the NPRS will be accessible to the majority of the prison estate by the end of this financial year, 2011. The PRA is going to come under increasing pressure from funders and potential funders (and other agencies) to be able to gauge the audience the service is reaching. This is a further issue that impacts on the financial strategy as the PRA's capacity to identify a methodologically sound tool which they can use to measure the impact of the national radio station becomes more pressing. Given the importance of this type of information for the

¹⁵ Wilkinson, K and Davidson, J (2009) *An Evaluation of the Prison Radio Association's Activity Year 2: A Model for Support*. Occasional Paper Series, Sheffield Hallam University: ISBN 978-1-84387-285-6. Executive Summary available: <http://www.prisonradioassociation.org/?con=eval>

future development of the PRA activities, the recommendation is made for the PRA to consider commissioning an external feasibility study.

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