

# An Evaluation of The Prison Radio Association's Activity

Final Report Year 1

The West Midlands Prison Radio  
Taster Project

Dr Katherine Wilkinson  
and  
Joanna Davidson

Hallam Centre for Community Justice

March 2008



# **An Evaluation of the Prison Radio Association's Activity**

Final Report Year 1

## **The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project**

Dr Katherine Wilkinson and Joanna Davidson

Hallam Centre for Community Justice  
Sheffield Hallam University

March 2008

## Executive Summary

---

The Prison Radio Association (PRA) was set up in 2005 and achieved charitable status in 2006. The PRA 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 currently works with over 40 prisons across England and Wales.

In 2007, the Prison Radio Association and partners<sup>1</sup> developed a two week taster course in radio production for delivery in six prisons across the West Midlands, entitled: the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project<sup>2</sup>. 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 conducted by the Hallam Centre for Community Justice, at Sheffield Hallam University, are presented in this report.

### Key Findings

The key findings from the evaluation of the West Midland's Prison Radio Taster project are identified as follows:

- Five NCFE Level One Award 'Introduction to Radio Production' courses have been delivered in four prison establishments across the West Midlands
- The course was delivered to 29<sup>3</sup> learners, of whom over 50% had been unemployed for more than 3 years
- This course succeeded in engaging educationally hard-to-reach offenders as over 50% of those recruited had qualifications below NVQ level 1 or had no formal qualifications at all
- A total of 25 of the 29 learners successfully gained the NCFE qualification
- Engagement in the project resulted in learners gaining confidence and increasing their self-esteem
- Learners felt that their basic literacy skills had improved along with their communication and social skills and they reported feeling more confident about their Education, Training and Employment (ETE) pathways post-release
- Engagement in the project provided learners with a positive educational experience that each was keen to repeat

---

<sup>1</sup> Learning and Skills Council, Carter and Carter, Community Service Volunteers and the BBC.

<sup>2</sup> The funding came from the Midland's Equal Partnership, Equal European Structural Funding.

<sup>3</sup> 27 of the 29 learners were supported within the Equal scheme. 2 learners who did not qualify for Equal support were sponsored by PRA funding.

## **Critical Success Factors**

The evaluation identified the following critical success factors of the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster project:

- The project benefited from utilising PRA's existing prison contacts in the West Midlands and their wealth of knowledge and experience of working in the prison sector
- The project benefited from the engagement of key prison staff from Heads of Learning and Skills, Heads of Regimes and Reducing Re-Offending teams who were committed to supporting the project
- The engagement of enthusiastic delivery staff that were committed to motivating learners to fulfil their potential
- A training course that was designed specifically to embed basic skill development and focused on ETE pathways
- A training course that was delivered in a practical and supportive way so that learners felt valued as 'equals' and were 'not spoken down to'

## **Raising Awareness of Radio Training**

The evaluation identified the following key findings with regard to the project's wider objective of raising radio training's profile within the prison service:

- The project successfully raised awareness of and interest in utilising radio training as a resource through which basic skills can be improved
- The project resulted in a debate among prison Senior Management Teams (SMT) who overwhelmingly felt radio training had been shown to improve confidence and communication skills
- Three of the four establishments in which the project ran are taking radio training forward within their existing educational provision

## **Best Practice Learning Points**

The evaluation identified the following best practice learning points from the delivery of the radio training project for dissemination:

- Projects accessing the prison service must be negotiated from the beginning with all the key staff from the prison, which ultimately includes members of security
- Projects working in the prison sector require the support of a named, key prison staff member with whom the radio trainer can liaise
- Different recruitment approaches need to be employed at different institutions which have different ways of working
- Each prison has a different inmate profile, any radio training course needs to be flexible enough to be tailored to these different training needs

## **Mainstreaming Prison Radio Training**

The evaluation identified the following points with regard to the potential of mainstreaming radio training provision in the prison sector:

- Senior prison service staff recognise the potential to embed formal basic skills accreditation through prison radio training programmes

- Strategic senior prison service staff realised the potential of utilising audio for a national audience and welcomes the PRA's intention to work in the prison service on developing a national network
- Strategic prison service staff reported that the future direction of PRA's engagement with the prison service was welcome. The PRA are working towards using radio training to support current prison education provision. This includes creating programmes that deliver basic skills and also create radio content that will be appropriate for a national audience

## Contents

---

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
Key Findings	2
Critical Success Factors	3
Raising Awareness of Radio Training	3
Best Practice Learning Points	3
Mainstreaming Prison Radio Training	3
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 The Equal Midlands Partnership Organisational Structure	7
1.2 The Prison Radio Association	7
1.3 The PRA and West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project Aims	8
1.3.1 Specific West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project Objectives	8
<b>Chapter Two: The Evaluation</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Context of the Three Year Evaluation	10
2.2 Evaluation of the West Midlands Radio Taster Project	10
2.2.1 Aims and Objectives	10
2.2.2 Evaluation Methodology	11
2.2.3 Data Collection	12
2.2.4 Documentary Analysis	12
2.2.5 Fieldwork Conducted	13
2.2.6 Qualitative Data Analysis	13
2.2.7 Quantitative Data Analysis	13
<b>Chapter Three: The West Midland's Prison Radio Project Development Outcomes</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 Project Timescales	14
3.2 PRA Management Structure	14
3.3 Partnership Working and Responsibilities	15
3.4 Negotiating Access to Prison Establishments	15
3.5 Radio Training Course Development	16
<b>Chapter Four: The West Midland's Radio Taster Course Project Delivery Outcomes</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1 West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project Delivery	18
4.2 Demographic Targets and PRA Learners	18
4.2.1 District/ Regions	18
4.2.2 Age	18
4.2.3 Ethnicity	19
4.2.4 Employment Status	19
4.2.5 Educational Attainment	19
4.2.6 ETE Outcomes for PRA Learners	19
4.3 Recruitment to the Radio Training Course	20
4.4 Different Approaches to Recruitment	20
4.4.1 Local Prison Job-Focused Model	21
4.4.2 Strategic SMT Lead Model	21
4.4.3 Integrated Model	21
4.5 Difficulties of Accessing a Prison for a Short Course	21

4.6	Prison Radio Training Course Delivery	22
4.6.1	The Master Classes	22
4.6.2	CD Broadcasts	24
4.7	The Celebration Event	25
4.8	Developing a West Midlands Section on the PRA Web Site	26
<b>Chapter Five: Demonstrating the Skills Outcomes for PRA Learners</b>		<b>27</b>
5.1	Increasing Learner Confidence with Radio Training	27
5.2	Improving Basic Skills with Radio Training	30
5.3	Building Self-Esteem with Radio Training	35
5.4	Radio Training as a Method of Focussing on ETE Pathways	38
<b>Chapter Six: Strategic Prison Radio Training Outcomes and Future Directions</b>		<b>43</b>
6.1	Providing an Innovative and Positive Educational Experience	43
6.2	Increasing Beneficiary Numbers of Prison Radio	45
6.3	Monitoring and Recording Basic Skill Development	45
6.4	Outcomes for the Prison's Hosting the Radio Training	46
<b>Chapter Seven: Critical Success Factors and Mainstreaming Prison Radio Training</b>		<b>47</b>
7.1	Summary	47
7.2	Critical Success Factors	47
7.3	Raising Awareness of Prison Radio Training	48
7.4	Best Practice Learning Points	48
7.5	Mainstreaming Prison Radio Training	48
<b>Appendix 1: PRA West Midlands Project: PRA Staff Interview Schedule</b>		<b>49</b>
<b>Appendix 2: PRA West Midland's Project: Prison-Based Staff Evaluation Interview</b>		<b>50</b>
<b>Appendix 3: West Midlands Project: Evaluation Self-Report Scale</b>		<b>51</b>
<b>Appendix 4: West Midland's Project: Learner Exit Evaluation Interview</b>		<b>54</b>
<b>Appendix 5: PRA Course Feedback Sheet</b>		<b>56</b>
<b>Appendix 6: NCFE Radio Skills Level One Course Outline</b>		<b>57</b>
<b>Appendix 7: Demographic Targets</b>		<b>59</b>

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

---

### **1.1 The Equal Midlands Partnership Organisational Structure**

In 2007, an Equal Partnership in the Midlands was formed, which includes education providers, prisons and colleges in the region. The Learning and Skills Council, the organisation that is the Equal Contract holder, is lead in this partnership. This partnership was awarded £2 million pounds worth of Equal European Structural funding for one years activity in the West Midlands.

A series of education, training and employment (ETE) pilot projects have gone through the tendering process in order to access this funding stream. As one of the Midlands first tier providers, Carter and Carter, along with a number of colleges in the region, invited delivery providers' partners to tender for ETE programmes. Under this arrangement, twenty-seven organisations within the partnership are currently delivering twenty-seven different projects across the West Midlands of which the prison radio project is one.

The Prison Radio Association (PRA), along with Carter and Carter, Community Service Volunteers and the BBC successfully applied for this subsidy arrangement by outlining a vocationally focussed training project entitled: the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project.

### **1.2 The Prison Radio Association**

The Prison Radio Association was set up in 2005 as an educational and resettlement facility 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 work 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 40 prisons across the country. Its overall aims and objectives, outlined in PRA Business Development documentation are:

- To provide support, guidance and expertise to existing prison radio stations
- To offer innovative solutions to help establish new radio stations or training programmes
- To design a best practice prison radio tool-kit
- To establish a National Prison Radio Network
- To design and accredit a National Qualification in Radio Production
- To organise an annual conference and awards ceremony

The PRA have established contacts in the prison sector in the West Midlands area, with a radio training facility at HMP Birmingham. The PRA's Chief Executive



was originally employed by BBC West Midlands to establish a radio-training pilot in the West Midlands in 2005 and made many contacts, which ensured the Equal project would be as successful as possible.

In line with the PRA's long term aims and objectives, being able to utilise existing connections in the area ensured the success of the project within the Equal funding stream. The PRA developed an innovative vocational training project to stimulate interest in prison-based radio, which proved appropriate for the Equal<sup>4</sup> Programme- West Midlands funding stream.

### **1.3 The PRA and West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project Aims**

Under this pilot scheme, the Prison Radio Association and partners aimed to develop a two-week taster course in radio production for delivery in six prisons across the West Midlands. The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project fits appropriately into PRA aims, as it will provide 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
- Evaluate the activity

The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project was designed to be delivered between June and December 2007, with project delivery beginning in September.

#### ***1.3.1 Specific West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project Objectives***

The objectives of the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project can be separated into two components: first, overall project delivery, which consists of recruitment, radio training course development and the delivery of the six courses. The second set of wider objectives concern the potential sustainability and growth of radio training programmes in the Prison Service. Both sets of objectives are outlined below:

Project Delivery Objectives:

- Recruitment of a radio trainer with a professional background and training experience
- Sourcing and purchasing of mobile studio, recording and editing equipment
- Consultation with the Heads of Learning and Skills at prisons in the West Midlands
- Developing course material and teaching resources
- Delivering two week taster sessions in six prisons in the West Midlands
- Hosting a Celebration Event at each prison

---

<sup>4</sup> European Funding stream

Wider Programme Objectives:

- The addition of a West Midlands section into the PRA website
- The identification of prisons in the West Midlands that may be interested in setting up a radio station
- Raising awareness of and interest in utilising radio training as a resource through which basic skills can be improved
- To identify and promote the benefits of attending radio training as a positive educational experience to existing education providers in the Prison Service
- Dissemination of learning points from project delivery
- Commissioning an external evaluation of project to support dissemination

The Hallam Centre for Community Justice at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) was successful during the commissioning process for the evaluation and this document is the evaluation report on the development and delivery of the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project.

## **Chapter Two: The Evaluation**

---

### **2.1 Context of the Three Year Evaluation**

The Hallam Centre for Community Justice has been commissioned to conduct an evaluation of Prison Radio Association activities over a three-year period (2006-2009). The three-year evaluation is designed to:

- Provide a rigorous and 'user friendly' assessment of the extent to which PRA have met their 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

This report forms the first assessment output in the overall three-year evaluation activity. Between 2006 and 2007 the key activity of the Prison Radio Association is the delivery of the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project.

### **2.2 Evaluation of the West Midlands Radio Taster Project**

The objectives of this first year evaluation are taken from the Terms of Reference document formulated between the Hallam Centre for Community Justice and the Prison Radio Association. The following objectives also incorporate project objectives outlined in the Equal Outline Delivery Plan tender documentation:

#### ***2.2.1 Aims and Objectives***

- To provide data on the extent to which the radio training project has met its aims and objectives as laid out in Equal delivery plan tender documentation
- To evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the radio training project as a whole
- To undertake a comparative review of the training sessions as implemented in each of the six prisons and to identify the critical success factors in order to determine a set of key criteria to inform the selection of prisons for future roll-out of the project
- To examine why, if at all, the delivery of training is proving more successful in some prisons than others
- To provide key learning points from the West Midlands Radio Taster Project delivery experience which can be used to inform discussions about the strategic direction and development of Prison Radio Association activities

### **2.2.2 Evaluation Methodology**

PRA delivery staff and the evaluation team worked collaboratively on the design and implementation of methods to ensure a robust evaluation of the value of radio training within current prison education provision. The evaluation used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative approach to data collection was adopted to establish the experiences of radio training learners at the end of their engagement with the course. One to one interviews were also undertaken with delivery staff and key stakeholders, including prison Education Providers and representatives from the prison's Senior Management Team (SMT) to access their perceptions concerning project delivery (see Appendix 1 and 2). All interviewees were asked for their views on the impact of the radio training project and their opinions concerning the development of radio training in prisons in the future. Detailed information regarding the interviews can be found in the 'field work conducted' section of this report. Focus group data collection methods were designed to be delivered at the Award Winning Ceremony, at the end of each radio training session. However, the focus group approach to collecting data proved inappropriate for the Celebration Event and was replaced by one to one interviews with external attendees where possible.

The key research questions addressed by the evaluation are detailed below:

#### **Radio Taster Learners:**

- How were learners recruited to the course?
- What motivated them to apply?
- In what ways, if any, have they engaged in this educational experience as opposed to previous experiences?
- What impact, if any, has involvement in the training had on them personally and affected their views of career choices?
- What do learners see as being the major strengths of training in radio production?
- Do learners feel their basic skills have improved over the course of the training?
- Were there any barriers to engagement with the training? How were these overcome?
- Are there any longer term impacts of attending the radio training on learner views of education, training and employment prospects?

#### **Project delivery and strategic stakeholder staff**

- How was the radio training received in the prisons? Could the approach have been improved?
- What has worked well and what have been the challenges of providing the radio taster courses in prison?
- To what extent do individuals feel there is scope for utilising radio training to embed basic skills in the Prison Service?
- What has been the impact of the project overall?

- What do key stakeholders see as the potential for developing radio training as a way of engaging educationally hard-to-reach offenders and enhancing basic and key skills across the prison sector?

A self-report scale was designed by evaluation staff to collect quantifiable data from radio training learners at entry and exit from the course (see Appendix 3 and 4).

### **2.2.3 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.

Demographic data were extracted from Equal beneficiary forms and inputted into Excel software. The quantitative data from a PRA Course Feedback Sheet (see Appendix 5) were incomplete and therefore not included in this evaluation.

Quantitative data were collected from radio training learners filling in a self-report scale, designed by evaluation staff, at entry and exit from the course (see Appendix 3 and 4). This methodology was adopted to ensure quantifiable information regarding the impact of course attendance on learners' confidence; skills, self-esteem and ETE pathways could be collected. On completion of the exit scale data, evaluation staff repeated the statements, however ensured the learners understood that exit scale levels were based on their engagement with the training course and was thus phrased by the evaluator as: 'Having completed the radio training course....how confident a person are you? This approach was taken to reduce the possible impact on scale data due to other, unspecified variables.

### **2.2.4 Documentary Analysis**

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

- Project tender documents
- Project advertising
- Equal beneficiary forms
- PRA web site
- Carter and Carter web site
- Learner work files and diaries
- The radio session CD from each course

### **2.2.5 Fieldwork Conducted**

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders and radio training learners in each of the five prisons' where the radio training took place. The evaluation team attended each<sup>5</sup> of the Awards Ceremonies held on completion of the taster courses, where interviews were also conducted with prison staff and key stakeholders in attendance.

Between October 2007 and February 2008 interviews were conducted with 24 of the 296 PRA Learners. Additionally, interviews were conducted with Prison Education Providers, Members of the Prison Senior Management Team and representatives from Carter and Carter. Interviews also took place with a Learning and Skills Council Representative, a Prison Officer, a representative from the Sector Skills Council and PRA Delivery Staff.

### **2.2.6 Qualitative Data Analysis**

All semi-structured interview data were analysed using a thematic framework approach. This involves working through a number of distinct; although interconnected research phases (familiarisation, identifying a thematic framework, indexing and coding, mapping and interpretation) in order to make sense of the data. This is the preferred method of data analysis as it is a system that is based entirely in the original accounts of those studied. This qualitative analysis was an interactive process between two members of the evaluation team and involved ongoing discussion and debate throughout all stages, particularly in relation to agreeing key themes. This approach is particularly effective as it provides a 'checking mechanism' for the interpretation of data, thus adding to the validity of the results.

### **2.2.7 Quantitative Data Analysis**

All scale data were inputted into an Excel spread sheet. The entry and exit scores were averaged and graphs were created to illustrate any shifts in the following four areas: Confidence, Key Skills, Self-Esteem and Employment-related skills.

---

<sup>5</sup> Due to a last minute date change, the evaluator was unable to attend the first Celebration Event at HMP Swinfen Hall and HMP Brinsford. The evaluator did however interview key stakeholders the day before their Celebration Event.

<sup>6</sup> 4 PRA learners were early leavers, 1 PRA learner was attending a Health Care appointment and were therefore unavailable for interview. The 24 PRA learners interviewed also completed the scale sheet (see Appendix 3).

## Chapter Three: The West Midland's Prison Radio Project Development Outcomes

---

This chapter of the report presents data relating to the evaluation of the development stage of the West Midland's Prison Radio Course Project.

### 3.1 Project Timescales

The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project was to be delivered from April to December 2007. However, project slippage occurred due to contract delays. Carter and Carter, the main providers, did not receive their contract from the LSC until June 2007. This delay impacted upon the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project as recruitment of the radio Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer was therefore unavoidably delayed.

Purchasing essential project equipment was also delayed 'until we were absolutely sure that the contract was going to happen' (PRA, Director of Education). The knock on effect was that, although project development was on going, project activity did not begin until September 2007. However, the PRA had built in three months development time within the project to ensure time to establish contacts with the prisons in the area. This development decision has therefore resulted in a smaller delay than could have been possible in project delivery:

*'So there was always a kind of slow build up and actually we're only one month out at the moment'* (PRA, Director of Education).

This situation also proved difficult for other project delivery partners in the Equal Partnership. The LSC recommended providers to extend delivery until February 2008. This situation was monitored by strategic PRA staff and ensured that PRA were able to deliver the sessions up until February 2008, in discussion with the Learning and Skills Council.

### 3.2 PRA Management Structure

This section evaluates the effectiveness of partnership arrangements during the development stages of the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project. The PRA created an effective project management structure through which project management, development and delivery objectives could be met:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
PRA Chief Executive	Contract management
PRA Director of Education	Project management, partnership development and project evaluation
PRA West Midlands Prison Radio Trainer	Development, delivery and evaluation of the six two week taster courses

### 3.3 Partnership Working and Responsibilities

As previously stated, the West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project applied for Equal funding in a four way partnership. Carter and Carter is the lead partner. The following table outlines the project's partnership responsibilities:

Partner name	Type of organisation	Role/ responsibilities
Carter and Carter	Information and guidance	Recruitment and initial learner assessment
Prison Radio Association	Prison radio	Delivery of radio training taster courses
BBC	Broadcasting	Master Class provision
Community Service Volunteers	Media production	Production support and potential broadcast

The wider partnership met bi-monthly throughout project development and delivery. The four partners were in regular contact throughout and in addition, monthly PRA Board meetings included the West Midlands Radio Taster Project as a regular agenda item.

*'From the outset we knew we wouldn't have the chance or the luxury in a six month contract to have regular steering group meetings, but we have met with Carter and Carter regularly and we've met with CSV on quite a regular basis as well to discuss their input into individual courses. We've had contact with particular producers or Managing Editors from the BBC, who have been involved in the training delivery'*  
(PRA, Director of Education).

Appropriate contacts were made with individual's working at the BBC and Community Service Volunteers regarding coming into the radio training sessions in order to deliver Master Classes.

### 3.4 Negotiating Access to Prison Establishments

Initially, PRA staff contacted Heads of Learning and Skills in each prison through the West Midland's Prison Service Area Office. Six establishments replied with interest and PRA staff began negotiations for access with the following six prisons:

- HMP/ YOI Swinfen Hall
- HMP Brockhill
- HMP Hewell Grange
- HMP Long Lartin
- HMP Featherstone
- HMP/ YOI Brinsford

Initial meetings were arranged with SMT's at each prison, which were attended by the PRA Director of Education and the PRA Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer. Four of the six prisons agreed to host the Prison Radio Taster training. HMP Hewell Grange withdrew due to their small prison population and the fact that as a working farm, harvesting deadlines were prioritised. In the event however, HMP



Brockhill agreed to host a second two-week training session. HMP Featherstone also declined.

The PRA approached the prisons listed above and have found that ensuring that appropriate staff attending the initial meetings improves the delivery experience:

*‘Very early on we met with Carter and Carter, the Head of Learning and Skills and the Head of Reducing Re-offending and basically set out our stall and said “You let us know how you would like it to work. We can fit around that,” and told them what we needed and because all of those people were in that room they were able to think creatively about how it could work’ (PRA, Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer).*

Indeed, this approach appears to have worked well even in the highest security establishments. During one site visit, three SMT staff visited a training session in another establishment and spoke to the Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer at length, which it was felt, showed their commitment to the project. Ironically, delivery staff felt that the higher the security of the prison, rather than making things more difficult, actually contributed to the setting up of the project, as ‘everyone wants to try and iron out any potential pitfalls before they happen’ (PRA, Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer). As a result, project-working practices have had to be amended, but working practices that highlight the need for extra security for all involved:

*‘We’re not taking the laptops in; we’re using an existing IT suite. We’re having designated officers to escort [Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer] at all times. The mobile studio has to be taken to the prison early, so that it can go through all their x-raying machines and it will appear in situ for the start of the training. [The Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer] will meet the students before she starts too. Because of their high-risk inmates, they just have to think it through in so much more detail’ (PRA, Director of Education).*

The evaluator found that delivery staff successfully ‘honed’ their negotiating skills each time they attempt access discussions:

*‘I mean in terms of the overall project the idea was to test things out and test how they worked and we certainly have learnt a lot in terms of just how different each prison is and how they go about things’ (PRA, Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer).*

PRA staff reported that being flexible and open to individual discussions was the biggest learning point they came away from negotiating access with the four prisons involved.

### **3.5 Radio Training Course Development**

The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer was recruited in August 2007 and she developed the radio-training course (see Appendix 6). The training covers many aspects of the radio production process in an introductory manner. The focus has remained on ‘pitching’ the information at individuals in a way that embeds basic skills. This has been achieved through the

course design and delivery in a variety of ways. Key techniques utilised by the Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer can be summarised as follows:

- Each day a section of time is provided for the learners to work on their written communication, through updating their daily journals
- Learners participate fully in group work, enhancing their spoken communication skills
- Written and spoken communication skills are the focus of writing radio interview questions and conducting interviews
- Learners get the opportunity to enhance their general employment skills as they work together on different themes within the course
- Learners' IT skills form a significant part of the course content
- The 'content' of course themes is produced in such a way which ensures that learners have the opportunity to contemplate their future career pathways
- The Community Service Volunteers and BBC Master Classes and interviews with prison governors ensure that learners are provided with the opportunity to interact with and ask direct questions to a set of experienced professionals. This element has ensured that learners get an opportunity to interact with people they may not previously have had access to, raising their confidence and feelings of capability.

Group Project: 'Keeping it real behind the steel'

Topic: 'Restorative Justice': Workshop Q's:

- Who is the person most affected by your crimes and why?
- If you had 5 minutes with your victim what would you say?
- Do you think RJ could really help re-offending and keep people out of prison?

Group Project: 'ETE A one-way ticket out of HMP'

Topic: ETE Pathways: Workshop Q's:

- What do you want to do when you get out of prison?
- What is your ideal job?
- How do you go about getting your ideal job?
- How do I go about accessing what I need to do?

## Chapter Four: The West Midland's Radio Taster Course Project Delivery Outcomes

---

This chapter of the report presents data relating to the evaluation of the delivery stage of the West Midland's Prison Radio Course.

### 4.1 West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project Delivery

The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project was to be delivered in six prisons across the area. Five West Midlands Prison Radio Taster courses have been delivered in four establishments across the West Midlands:

Prison	Date	Celebration Event
HMP/YOI Swinfen Hall	10 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2007	21 <sup>st</sup> September 2007
HMP Brockhill 1	8 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> October 2007	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2007
HMP Brockhill 2	12 <sup>th</sup> - 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2007	22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2007
HMP Long Lartin	3 <sup>rd</sup> - 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2007	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2007
HMP/ YOI Brinsford	28 <sup>th</sup> January - 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2008	13 <sup>th</sup> February 2008

### 4.2 Demographic Targets and PRA Learners

The West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project was designed to deliver two-week courses to a total of 30 male unemployed prison inmates. The following section summarises project delivery outcomes.

#### 4.2.1 District/Regions

The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project was to be delivered to 30 male inmates in prisons in Staffordshire, the Black Country, Hereford, Worcester and Shropshire. As Figure 4.1 in Appendix 7 shows, the West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project met their objectives concerning the district location in which they aimed to deliver the radio taster sessions.

#### 4.2.2 Age

The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project was delivered to 26 adults between 20 and 49 (Fig. 4.2 in Appendix 7). The aim of providing the course to young people between the ages of 16 and 19 proved more difficult as not all of the prisons accessed had Youth Offending facilities and the CRB checks required were not returned to staff in time for project delivery.

### **4.2.3 Ethnicity**

The West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project delivered their course to learners who identified themselves as being from a range of ethnic backgrounds (Fig. 4.3 in Appendix 7).

### **4.2.4 Employment Status**

All 29 PRA learners have classified themselves as unemployed. However, 62% of the learners have been unemployed for more than three years (see Fig. 4.4 in Appendix 7). As details of sentence length were unavailable, however, it is difficult to ascertain whether the length of their sentence has effected the period of time the learners have been unemployed.

### **4.2.5 Educational Attainment**

This project was aimed at educationally hard to reach offenders with basic skills needs. As Figure 4.5 in Appendix 7 illustrates, over half, 55% (n= 29) entered the PRA radio taster sessions with qualifications below NVQ level or had no formal qualifications at all. This illustrates that the Radio Taster course succeeded in terms of accessing educationally hard-to-reach offenders.

### **4.2.6 ETE Outcomes for PRA Learners**

Twenty-five out of the twenty nine PRA learners who engaged in the radio training course achieved an NCFE Level 1 Award 'Introducing Radio Production', which is equivalent to an NVQ Level One qualification. Of the four PRA learners who did not achieve this qualification, three were early leavers, two were released and one was removed for disciplinary reasons.

As fig. 4.6 in Appendix 7 shows, of the twenty nine men engaging in the radio training, eleven have gone on to other education or training. Three PRA learners have been released; two men have begun or resumed full time employment, while the third has gone into self-employment. Unfortunately, at the time of writing this report, PRA staff are still awaiting details of the follow up outcomes for 15 of the PRA learners.

A further outcome evidencing the success of the project is that the PRA learners own evaluation of the potential for radio training in prison, as they felt:

- The two week taster course would benefit from being extended
- That most would take more radio based courses if they were available
- All the learners reported they would get involved in a prison radio station if one was created
- All the learners reported that they thought that the radio course would work well in other prisons

### **4.3 Recruitment to the Radio Training Course**

The lead provider, Carter and Carter are responsible for recruiting learners. Carter and Carter is an ideal partner in this venture as they have a constant presence throughout the prison sector as they provide information, advice and guidance to inmates.

Carter and Carter have access to prisoners' sentence plans, which provide information about individual educational levels of attainment. The prisoners will also have been assessed for basic skills level; information, which is available in the sentence plan, along with the learners expressed preferences for education. However, in each delivery location, the evaluation team found that these actions had been conducted to different degrees, for a variety of reasons:

- Each prison works differently
- Prison staff have day-to-day work pressures and a one-off two week training event can easily slip down lists of priorities
- The success of recruitment often depends on individual personnel enthusiasm

Delivery staff commented that having previously been responsible for recruitment to projects, they found not being responsible for the recruitment as 'in some ways quite liberating' (PRA, Director of Education). However, the frustrations of relying on other partners to provide learners have proved challenging, as:

*'You turn up on a Monday morning and you don't actually know who or how many you're going to get'* (PRA, Director of Education).

Indeed, during exit interviews, the learners reinforced these issues, as many spoke of not knowing about the course until it was just about to start. Most had seen the poster advertising and applied themselves, which does not allow for adequate assessment to take place. Putting inmates in a learning situation, which they are unprepared for, puts the opportunity of having a positive educational experience at risk.

Carter and Carter were made aware of these difficulties and acknowledged there had been some problems, not least because their careers and advice services in at least three of the prisons where the training ran were very new and not readily established. Carter and Carter representatives also admitted that that they felt they needed 'more time to recruit' (Carter and Carter Representative). There were many practical difficulties to recruiting men onto the radio training course. PRA staff responded to these difficulties by taking different approaches to recruitment:

### **4.4 Different Approaches to Recruitment**

PRA delivery staff tried and tested three different models of approaching recruitment to the two week radio training course:

#### **4.4.1 Local Prison Job-Focused Model**

The Prison Job Club was used as the main contact for recruitment. The Head of Learning and Skills also supported the project by providing the PRA team her own assistant for support. Twelve learners were recruited through this model to two separate sessions of the radio training course. All except one early leaver completed these course sessions.

#### **4.4.2 Strategic SMT Lead Model**

Under this model, the Head of Reducing Re-offending was the main contact, with support from the Head of Reducing Re-offending and/or the Head of Regimes. A small amount of support was received from the Prison's Job Club. This model was used to recruit learners to two separate sessions. Posters were put up across the prisons and 13 learners were recruited, 2 of whom did not fit into the Equal funding stream allocation criteria. A further 2 men were removed after Carter and Carter reported that they did not feel these men were appropriate in one establishment. The finally recruited 11 learners completed the course with PRA funding the two places not supported through Equal.

#### **4.4.3 Integrated Model**

Under this model PRA staff worked along side SMT and Carter and Carter staff. An 'Open Day' session was held one week before course started, which was organised with the help of the Head of Learning and Skills and supported by Carter and Carter who delivered leaflets to cells. There was a good turn out to the Open Day session and many men signed up. An attempt was made by Carter and Carter to recruit PRA learners into a 'pre-employability programme' before attending the radio training, which was designed to ensure the project got the appropriate learners. However post involvement with the pre-employability programme the uptake to the radio training had disappeared. Six learners were recruited through this model the day the training was to be delivered and 2 left as early leavers.

### **4.5 Difficulties of Accessing a Prison for a Short Course**

Delivery staff reported that having a prison staff member from the education department to liaise with has a crucial impact on the ease of project delivery:

*'They know how the prison works so they can short-cut all of your concerns as somebody from the outside just can't'*  
(PRA, Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer).

Further, PRA staff acknowledge that working in the prison sector without a contact can leave delivery staff feeling cut off in that environment:

*'At one prison, that contact was off sick and not having anybody on a practical, day to day level that [the Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer] could liaise with, which left her completely isolated'* (PRA, Director of Education).

PRA delivery staff felt that the biggest barrier to delivering the radio training taster sessions was the difficulties associated with 'parachuting into other people's ways of working and them having to drop everything to deal with recruiting for us' (PRA Education Director). Delivery staff reported that a project like this, being delivered for such a short time, needed to have realistic expectations of their addition to the workload of other partners. Going into a prison for two weeks is difficult for the delivery staff in terms of learning to operate in a completely new environment and without the help and support of other local prison staff it, 'would be almost impossible' (PRA Director of Education). These details need to be clarified at the negotiation stage, which PRA staff felt that the prison staff on the ground should be directly involved in.

#### **4.6 Prison Radio Training Course Delivery**

The evaluation team found that the course design worked well for the learners involved. All reported that they had found the course content new and that although some parts of it were quite challenging, particularly the IT skills, they enjoyed the course. Many PRA learners reflected that they had expected to be taking part in a DJ or music training course:

*'...I wasn't expecting this to be honest. I was just expecting a bit of CD mixing, studio, that's it, but put everything together on the computers gave me a different vision of the course'* (PRA Learner).

Despite not being what the learners expected, the course was a success with all the men interviewed. All learners found the course very enjoyable, they identified the following activities of the course as being the most enjoyable:

- Getting the opportunity to interview key prison staff
- Getting to know other prisoners
- Meeting new and inspirational people (especially the Master Classes)
- Experiencing and learning new things
- The technical aspects of using the equipment, such as editing and producing jingles
- Feeling involved in giving prisoners a voice

Additionally, the majority of learners felt that the radio trainer and her approach was a key benefit of the course. They reported that the Radio Trainers' teaching style was relaxed, motivating and most importantly, they did not feel they were treated as 'kids' (PRA Learner).

##### **4.6.1 The Master Classes**

A successful and popular element of the radio-training course was the Master Class session. The partnership with the BBC and Community Service Volunteers developed effectively as individuals from both

organisations have contributed to the Master Classes that were run during each two week training session. The Master Class series has proved an invaluable opportunity for PRA learners to interview experienced radio personnel.

During each radio training taster individuals who work in radio were invited in, usually from the BBC and Community Service Volunteers, to host a two-hour session. The external professionals invited usually began with an introductory talk, providing details of their professional backgrounds. Learners had the opportunity to ask questions and to interview the 'Master'. At the interim evaluation report stage, six Master Classes had taken place, provided by the following individuals:

<b>'Master' and organisation</b>	<b>Professional background</b>	<b>Activity with learners</b>
Phil Upton, BBC Radio	BBC West Midlands breakfast presenter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in radio presentation</li> <li>• Interviewed by learners about his 20 year career</li> </ul>
Geneviere Tudor, Community Service Volunteers and BBC Radio	Video and radio producer at BBC Radio Shropshire. Hosts a regional BBC radio show.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewed by learners about her career so far</li> <li>• Interviewed by learners about her involvement with radio and her folk singing career</li> </ul>
Sam Coley, Birmingham City University	Professor of Radio at Birmingham City University. Has won numerous high profile awards for his radio work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of audio samples of his work</li> <li>• Interviewed by learners about his career in the industry</li> </ul>
Tracy Ward, BBC Radio	Produces BBC's weekly Jail Mail programme, which offers inmates messages from home via radio.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation on the 10 year history of her programme</li> <li>• Interviewed by learners about music logging, show preparation, prison visiting history and her love of reggae</li> </ul>

These sessions proved invaluable to the learners in providing a wider context to their learning as they were given the opportunity to relate to the role of radio in the outside world. Having radio professionals delivering courses ensures that the subject is taught through people with media industry experience. It is also important to acknowledge the courage of the Prison Sector to accept BBC journalists working inside their establishments.



Learners reported enjoying these sessions immensely and that these discussions fed into their own career choice plans:

*'It was great- getting to talk to people about their jobs- I didn't know so many people worked together to get a radio show up and running. There are writers, researchers, music people, people that do the interviews and edit it and all that- amazing really'* (PRA Learner).

*'Speaking to these people- they'd all started on small local radio stations or hospital radio and worked their way up. They had to work hard to get where they are today and yes, it makes me think maybe as long as I really want to do something- then it is possible'* (PRA Learner).

The PRA have also built up contacts with other learning organisations in the region outside the original funding partnership through their contacts built up through the BBC and Community Service Volunteers. For example, the City of Birmingham University's Radio Course Leader has delivered a Master Class and requested an on-going involvement with the West Midlands' Prison Radio Taster Project.

#### **4.6.2 CD Broadcasts**

The audio material produced by learners at each radio training taster session was edited into a radio broadcast and copied onto a CD. The CD included:

- Learners' personal statements
- A news item
- Group discussion on the realities of prison life
- Weather reports
- Interviews

The learners developed the group exercises included in these broadcasts. Learners were presented with research documents on the topic of their choice and encouraged to work as a team to project manage a 5-minute audio piece. The resulting projects were on the following topic areas:

- Restorative Justice
- ETE Pathways
- Financial Literacy
- Volunteering opportunities outside prison
- Tupac Shakur and charity work

It is important to note that one of the CD's produced is already being used at HMP Brockhill to advise inductees about how prison life is organised. The CD being used includes interviews with all key prison departments, such as Healthcare, the CARAT team, gym staff, canteen operators and issues concerning transferring to a Category D prison. This situation illustrates the potential of radio work as a vehicle by which individual

communication skills can be enhanced, a learning zone where basic employment skills can be built and as a communication tool from which the whole prison population can benefit.

Anecdotally, some of the PRA learners also became involved in the recording of personal statement pieces for use with young men involved in gangs, fire arm offences and drugs. The learners volunteered their statements to the PRA Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer who is involved in a voluntary youth network group based in Wolverhampton named, Engaging Youth Empowerment Service (EYES).

A further important learning point from delivery of this radio training course, it was felt by PRA delivery staff, was being able to adapt the course to the different profile of the prisoners to whom it was provided. The radio trainer reflected that she felt the course had had the biggest impact on the longer term prisoners she had worked with.

The radio rainer also reflected that of the training material she used, the poetry of TuPac Shakur was by far the best material that engaged the learners the most. learners were provided with lyrics to analyse the potential meanings from. As many prisoners feel excluded from identification with much mainstream culture, the poetry written in prison by the rapper TuPac Shakur was used to engage learners in a way that they felt was their own modern history and therefore identified with.

#### **4.7 The Celebration Event**

On completion of the two-week taster sessions, each prison hosted a Celebration Event. Both prison staff and relatives of the radio-training learners attended these events. Each prison has catered for the event, with one being catered for by inmates on a catering course, which involved attendees filling in evaluation forms on the cakes provided.

Up to this stage, the awards day has involved a short speech from the Chief Executive of PRA, who outlines the organisations' broader aims and objectives. The PRA Director of Education then says a few words, followed by the PRA Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer. A member of the prison's SMT then presents the PRA Certificates to learners. Each learner is encouraged to say a few words. Below are some examples of the learner's comments in this formalised, public speaking setting:

*'It's the first time I've ever really done anything in a structured way. I've really enjoyed it and want to do it again please'* (PRA Learner).

*'Bonding with these guys, with the team has been great. We all gelled really, and helped one another and got the job done together'* (PRA Learner).

*'The best bit for me has been working with other people, I'm a bit of a loner and I've not really done it before'* (PRA Learner).

*'[PRA Radio Trainer] has been great and really helped us all'*  
(PRA Learner).

*'It's made me think seriously about what I can do with these skills when I get out'* (PRA Learner).

The CD 'broadcast' was also played at the award day. All the learners enjoyed the experience and felt that they had conducted themselves well in an environment with which they were unfamiliar. The families attending the course also reflected on their own enjoyment of the occasion. Indeed, one family member wrote to the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project Co-ordinator/ Trainer to thank her for the opportunity to get together to celebrate the achievement. The author of the letter also reported that since the radio training, she now felt her loved one was showing more confidence and thinking more seriously about his employment prospects on release. The letter closed with the hope that this project would be made available to others in the prison system.

All of the key stakeholders attending the Celebration Event were extremely impressed by the learners' attitude and confidence at the awards day:

*'What we've seen today is about six guys that are standing up and talking in front of people they don't know and with some of us wearing suits. So it must be daunting for them. And it's breaking down barriers. I mean one guy was saying he just steamed in and didn't stop to think. Well now he's got a voice and he can talk to people and other people will listen'*  
(Learning and Skills Council Representative).

#### **4.8 Developing a West Midlands Section on the PRA Web Site**

A further objective outlined in the Equal tender documentation was the inclusion of a West Midlands section on the PRA website. The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project annex is now on the PRA website and is online at:

[http://www.prisonradioassociation.org/index\\_tpl.php?con=equal&style=\\$style](http://www.prisonradioassociation.org/index_tpl.php?con=equal&style=$style)

The content is currently a summary of the project aims and objectives. As the West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project delivery is complete, PRA intend to add to the site, entitled: 'Making Waves Behind Bars'. It is envisaged that the website will eventually include PRA learner case studies, the audio produced on each taster session and individual outcomes, together with an electronic version of this evaluation report.

## Chapter Five: Demonstrating the Skills Outcomes for PRA Learners

---

This chapter of the evaluation reports directly on the effects of engagement in the West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project on those participating. This chapter outlines the ways in which learners have engaged in this educational experience as opposed to previous experiences. It also provides data which examines the impact engagement has had on them personally and evaluates whether learners felt their basic skills have improved over the course of the training. This chapter also includes data concerning the longer term impacts of attending the radio training on learner views of education, training and employment prospects.

The data included in this chapter was generated through qualitative exit interviews with learners. Other stakeholder comments are included where appropriate. Quantitative scale data (see Appendix 3 and 4) indicating learners' levels of confidence, skills, self-esteem and ETE choices pre and post project engagement is also presented.

### 5.1 Increasing Learner Confidence with Radio Training

Increased confidence levels amongst the PRA learners who participated in the Radio Taster Course were a key indicator of its positive impact (see Fig. 5.1.1 below). In terms of staff and provider comments around the effect of the Radio Taster Course on the PRA learners, many appreciated the ability of the course to improve the men's confidence. A representative from LSC commented on the confidence building quality of the course for the men in terms of being able to express their individuality:

*'It's not sitting in a classroom just reading and writing or listening to people talking. It's a hands-on thing and you've got the opportunity to put your own personality into it. So it's the individual that can grow in confidence'*  
(LSC Representative).

An education provider described the ability of the course to increase the confidence of the men and the fact that they were surprised at its impact on them:

*'It encourages their confidence. Their confidence has definitely gone up. One lad that started had no idea- and he's thinking of going on to the IT course now- he was surprised at what he could do really. Just doing his daily diary- even that surprised him how well he'd done'*  
(Education Provider).

The low confidence of the men when they first enter prison was highlighted by a representative from Carter and Carter who commented on the fact that the course addresses this issue:

*'I think about 80% of the men that come in here are insecure and lacking in confidence. This course has raised the lad's confidence. If you can get them in, it's a great course really good, one that the lads can get a lot out of'*  
(Carter and Carter Representative).

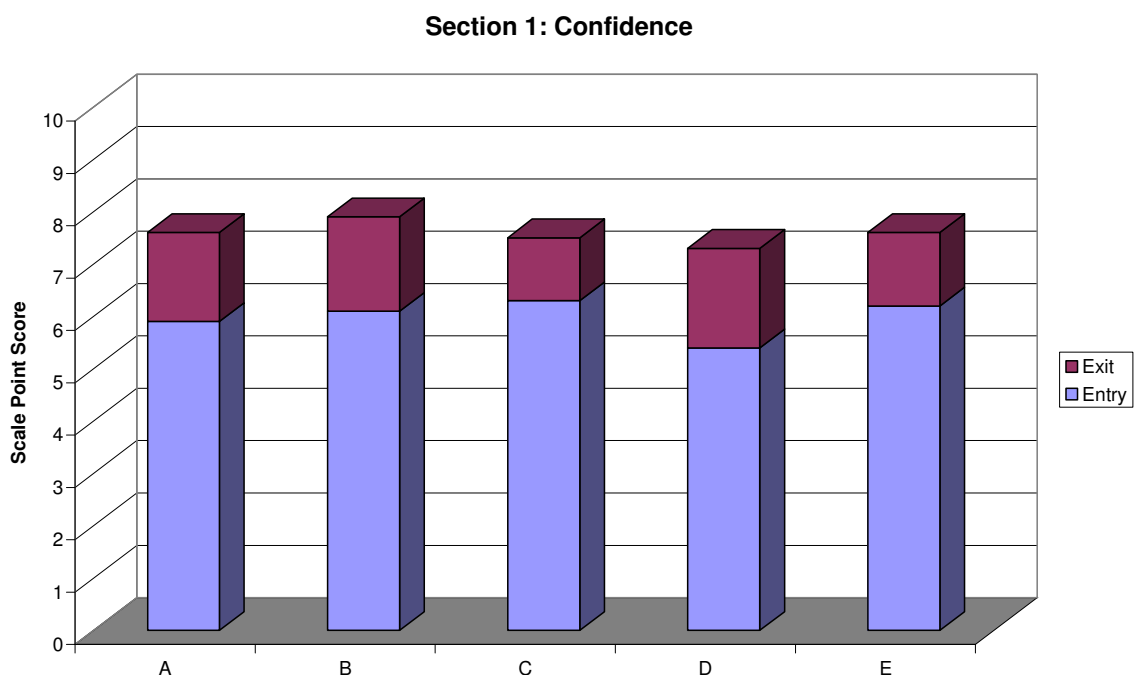
The Head of Reducing Re-Offending reported that testimonies from the PRA learners about increases in their confidence as a result of the course indicated its impact on the men:

*'I mean the best thing was being able to see men that actually wouldn't normally be seen as articulate or confident actually saying it wasn't all about playing music and messing around. Okay, they've enjoyed it and they've had a good laugh and made friends, but to hear [named PRA Learner] saying that normally he wasn't very confident in talking to people and he used to just talk to people on his wing but now he can talk to everybody. That's proof for me that they've all travelled a long way'*  
(Head of Reducing Re-Offending).

The results from the scale data collected at the outset of the course and at its completion are shown in figure 5.1.1 below. The men were asked to rate their general confidence, their confidence within a group situation and also in relation to performing specific tasks which were part of the course (see Appendix 4).

The first question (A) related to general levels of confidence of the men at the outset of the course and when they had completed it. The graph shows that the men's confidence levels increased from starting the course, when they scored 5.9, to completing it, increasing on average by 1.7 points on the scale. Question B was more specific, relating to how confident the men feel about speaking up in a group situation. On average the men scored this question at 6.1 points at the outset of the course and by its completion this had increased by 1.8 points on the scale. The third question (C) asked the men how confident they felt about challenging other people's views in a group situation. Initially, the men scored this question at 6.3 on the scale, which rose by 1.2 points by the end of the course. Question D related to how confident the men felt about doing a presentation in front of other people. At the outset of the course the men scored this question at 5.4 on average and by the end this had increased by 1.9 points on the scale. The final question (E) asked the men how confident they felt about having their voices taped. Initially, the men scored this question at 6.2 on average which increased by 1.4 points on the scale by the end of the course. The data show that the most significant increase in the confidence levels of the men related to their ability to give presentations in front of others. The smallest increment was in relation to the men's confidence in challenging other people's views in a group.

Fig. 5.1.1 Confidence



Qualitative data which highlights the ability of the Radio Taster Course to increase the confidence of the men provides further insight into the impact of the course in this area.

*'It's made me more confident in myself'* (PRA Learner).

*'I found it interesting and it built me up and my confidence especially'*  
(PRA Learner).

Many were surprised at the positive effects on their confidence for a course that was two weeks in duration as learners described their confidence increasing as they progressed through the course:

*'As time went on I got the hang of it and, yeah, I'm getting good at it'*  
(PRA Learner).

Learners' confidence was also reported to have risen given the opportunity to learn new skills and improve or extend existing ones in a training environment:

*'When I was on the out I used to rap and do some tracks but I've never really been one for editing, but since I've been here basically in under two weeks I've learnt how to do loads with the audio and recording and editing'*  
(PRA Learner).

In addition to increases in the learner's confidence in general, several noted that their confidence in terms of being able to speak to others had improved as a result of their engagement with the course. In relation to this aspect, one learner stated that:

*'before I had nothing to do and I didn't speak too much, but now my confidence has built up and my speaking up has improved'* (PRA Learner).

Another said:

*'At first I used to be like "No, you know, I'm not too keen getting up and speaking to people," but now I'm probably a bit more open'* (PRA Learner).

The learners went on to describe the activities they were involved in and how their communication skills were engaged and improved as a direct result of the activities built into the radio training course:

*'I found the interviewing quite difficult, you know, speaking to somebody, interviewing somebody. That was quite difficult, but once I'd started I was alright then'* (PRA Learner).

This section has demonstrated the increased confidence of the PRA learners as a result of their participation in the Radio Taster Course, in relation to their confidence in general and the specific activities involved in engaging with the course.

## **5.2 Improving Basic Skills with Radio Training**

Increased levels of basic skills levels amongst the learners who participated in the Radio Taster Course are a key indicator of its positive impact (see Fig. 5.2.1 below). Evidence indicating learners' self-identified basic skills was explored through their comments. Additionally, staff and provider interviews and the results from the quantitative scale data completed by the learners on entry and exit from the radio training course have also been included (see Appendix 3 and 4).

The radio training course was developed to engage hard-to-reach offenders in an innovative way, as a way into a positive educational experience which would enhance basic skills and encourage the learners back into learning:

*'What we were looking for was something new, a way of engaging with people from the prison who potentially otherwise wouldn't engage and learn'* (LSC Representative).

Stakeholders felt that radio training was an ideal way of embedding the basic skills that inmates would need in the employment sector on release:

*'It's key skills that they need, you know, out there in the work place and if its [the radio training] given them the confidence they need, then that's part of the battle won - if they're confident enough to go to job interviews and to put themselves out there- and if prison radio's providing that, then in my view that's half the battle'* (Carter and Carter Representative).

All the learners attending the radio course felt that their skills had been improved in some way and in some cases all the following areas:

- IT skills
- Literacy
- Spelling
- Communication and Public Speaking
- Working in a group

Many of the learners reported having a difficult experience of education previously and openly acknowledged that they were not interested in going on courses that dealt with basic literacy skills. Having completed the radio training however, all of the learners interviewed acknowledged that their basic literacy skills had improved because of their engagement with the course (see Fig. 5.2.1 below). Prison staff, Education Providers and SMT members who had been directly involved in the delivery of the radio training course stated their belief that radio training was an innovative way of reducing the stigma often attached to learning basic skills:

*'It's skills through the back door really- its embedded and they [the learners] know this, but they don't feel like their learning basic skills and soft skills too' (Education Provider).*

The Learner's reinforced this view, as they talked about the effects of engagement with the course on their skills:

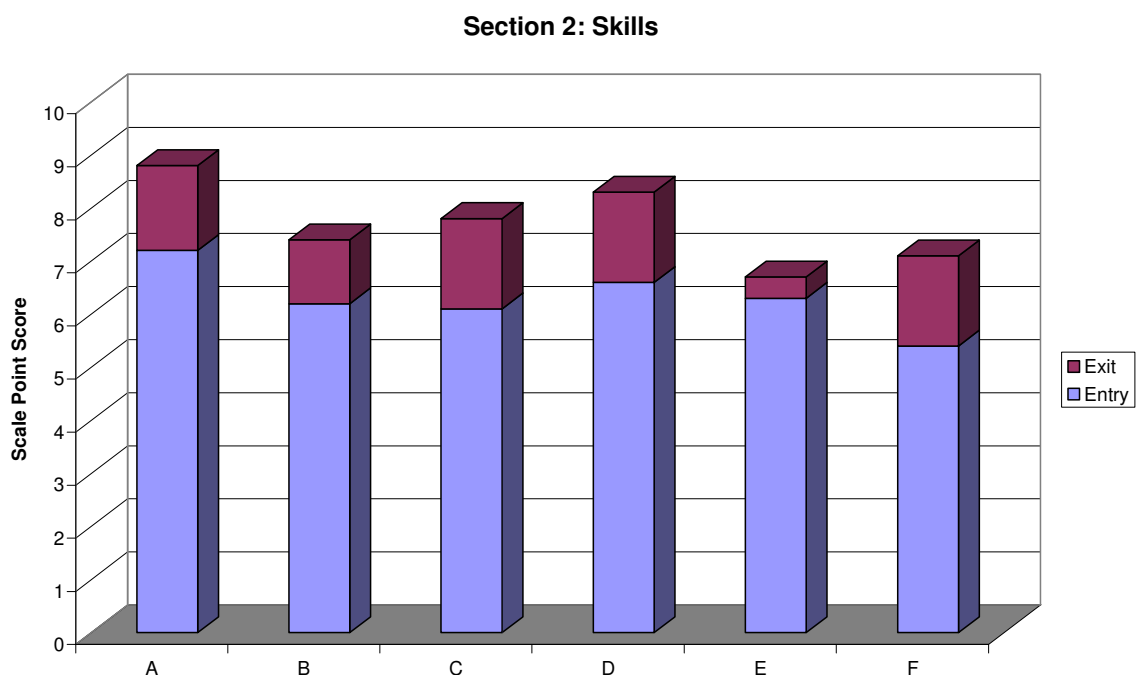
*'I think all my skills have improved its all come together in this course' (PRA Learner).*

*'Radio just seems to have brought all my skills together - this has been the best course I've ever been on' (PRA Learner).*

The results from the scale data collected at the outset of the course and at its completion are shown in figure 5.2.1 below. The men were asked to rate their levels of certain basic skills (see Appendix 4 for detail).



Fig 5.2.1 Skills



The first statement (A) related to the skills required to work in a team. The graph shows that learners felt more confident about working in a team on completion of the course, when their average scores rose by 1.5 scale points. Question B related more specifically to writing skills. On average the learners scored this statement at 6 points at the outset of the course and by its completion this had increased to 8.5 on the scale. The third statement (C) asked learners to score their spoken communication skills, the average score rose by over a scale point on the scale on completion of the course. Statement D asked learners to rate their listening skills, which improved significantly as the graph clearly shows. Statement E, related to confidence with numbers, shows the smallest improvement, an issue which is returned to in more detail in a following section. Statement F asked learners to score their computer skills, which is also shown to have improved as scores rose from just over 5 to just over 7 points on the scale, on completion of the course.

The qualitative data also supports these findings, as all round effective communication was something the learners felt they had learnt through accessing the radio training course. Attendees at the Celebration Event also felt that they had seen the results of learners improving their communication skills:

*'It's all about learning to interact with people and listening; so knowing when to ask the next question and knowing when to pause and let other people talk. It's learning to get information from other people and to give information to other people- that is what communication skills are'*  
(LSC Representative).

It was reported that the skills required for making radio ensured that effective communication skills and basic literacy skills were combined to reinforce each other:

*'With radio- you've got to write your interview questions, listen to what they [the interviewee] is saying, pick out the main things and it has to be on time and it has to be said properly because it's on radio. Listen and thinking all the time that's what we've had to do' (PRA Learner).*

Other components on the course, such as writing journals and conducting homework, reinforced the basic skills element in what was perceived to be a practical course:

*'Writing in my journal everyday- my writings got better writing out stuff and writing questions- you have to think hard about that too' (PRA Learner).*

Learners also reported that on reflection engaging with the radio course had improved their listening skills considerably (see Fig. 5.2.1: D). The learners reported that they had to listen back to the audio they'd created in order to edit it and concentrate on what other people were saying during interviewing. Learners reported that during 'class' debates they had listened to what others in the group had said carefully in order to engage with the discussion. All of these activities had, they felt, impacted positively on their listening abilities and therefore on their ability to receive and incorporate verbal information:

*'I'm more of a listener now than I used to be. I just used to sit there and whatever I was being told, I'd think "Yeah okay, whatever," and not really listen. But now, I definitely take it in more than I used to' (PRA Learner).*

PRA learners also felt their preparation skills had improved since their engagement with the radio training course. The course included short homework based activities that they were asked to conduct, which the learners felt was in their interest to complete as it was always directly relevant to activities they would be conducting the following day:

*'You have to prepare everything for radio and when we got homework I found myself thinking about what I had to get done for the next day. You'd look a fool if you go into an interview with no questions, so you have to plan what questions you're going to ask and things like that' (PRA Learner).*

*'I feel like I've got some experience of having to be organised now, it never seemed to matter before really. I get prepared for it and everything now. I've learnt more to do my homework, my preparation before I interview someone, rather than just launching into questions' (PRA Learner).*

Some of the learners experienced difficulties when having to utilise the computer during the course, however it was reported that the radio trainer provided them with support in this area and indeed the group worked together, as those more confident in computer skills went to the aid of those not so confident:

*'At first it was a bit tricky, but [the radio trainer] was great and the other lads helped me too and the more you get to practice the better you get I think' (PRA Learner).*

*'By using the computer to do what we needed to do for the sound, it's been easier really and has taken that hesitance out of me when I get on the computer' (PRA Learner).*

As Fig. 5.2.1 illustrates, the area where learners felt that had experienced the least improvement was with their numeracy levels. The course did not include any specific coverage of numeracy-focused activities. However learners still maintained they felt more confident with numbers having accessed the course. This surprising finding was explained as:

*'We didn't do sums, but we watched the counter go round when we were editing stuff and that practice made me less worried. I don't do numbers- but that was ok, because it was for a good reason. If we got it wrong- the sound was wrong' (PRA Learner).*

In this way, learners illustrate the potential for opportunities of utilising numeracy for a practical, utilitarian reason and described this 'practising' with numbers as being an un-intimidating way to familiarise themselves with understanding what literacy in numbers can achieve for them.

The course outline contained two group projects, which involved the group working together and having extended discussions on employment pathways and restorative justice. The course also included the learners interviewing a senior member of the prison staff. These activities were reported as being some of the most challenging and yet most of the learners favourite elements of the course:

*'Working in a group and having debates have been my favourite bit, getting other peoples' opinions. We've had some serious debates and having to work through some stuff with everyone in the group has been great. It's been good to have people asking your opinion too' (PRA Learner).*

*'You end up interviewing people you never thought you'd get to interview and asking them questions for everyone else in this place. That was great- we don't get a voice usually and we don't get to get our questions answered most of the time, so that was good' (PRA Learner).*

These activities can both be seen here as being described as proving empowering for the men involved. The radio trainer's reflections on these sections of the course reinforce this view (see previous section). The debating activity turned into an opportunity for learners and their peers to have their opinions aired in a safe environment. The skills required for the work place more often than not include the ability to work with others, a skill not lost on SMT's:

*'Their communication skills need to be good enough to be able to work harmoniously and co-operatively with each other, which is really important because they [prisoners] are generally not good at this stuff'*  
(Head of Learning and Skills).

One learner described how he had enjoyed the debating on the radio training because it was the first time he'd been able to disagree with people without getting in to a fight. In this way, the men's general social skills can also be seen as improving, as one Education Provider commented:

*'It's been a really relaxed atmosphere which has been good for their social skills, it's been relaxed, a good educational experience all round really which has got them thinking about other possibilities for their lives'*  
(Education Provider).

Many prison staff also identified these opportunities as 'giving them something else to draw on rather than going back into crime' (Wing Officer). Indeed, many made the connection between the soft and basic skills the learners were being exposed to as:

*'A very innovative way of delivering skills for life which they actually don't realise that they're learning and they don't realise they're doing all the skills that actually have been identified as the key ones for reducing re-offending'*  
(Education Provider).

This section has demonstrated the increased capacity of PRA learners in a variety of skills as a result of their participation in the Radio Taster Course. The progression of these skills covers a wide range of direct improvements, such as learners feeling more confident about reading, writing and speaking. Learners also reported feeling more confident about more indirect improvements in their spoken communication skills, feel more positive about working in a team and their social skills have also improved.

### **5.3 Building Self-Esteem with Radio Training**

Increased levels of self-esteem amongst the learners who participated in the Radio Taster Course are a key indicator of its positive impact (see Fig. 5.3.1 below). Evidence indicating learners self-esteem levels were also explored through their exit interview comments. Additionally, staff and provider interviews and the results from the quantitative scale data completed by the learners on entry and exit from the radio training course have also been included (see Appendix 3 and 4).

All learners reported that they felt good about themselves having successfully engaged with the radio training course:

*'I was thinking to myself "No, I can't do it." I was a bit nervous about interviewing. I got down to it and it was straightforward. I did it and I'm proud to have my name on it'* (PRA Learner).

*'When you put your mind to you- you feel good for doing it- so I want to do more' (PRA Learner).*

Many of the learners felt that they had not achieved very much in their lives, outside of their families, however, having successfully completed the radio training, they felt that this was a good start:

*'I mean obviously there's a lot more that I want to achieve in my life, but this course is just the start of it now, so yeah bring the rest on' (PRA Learner).*

*'Definitely I respect myself more now I've got this certificate- it's my first one. I've never got anything like this before- no qualifications at all- so this feels real good for me' (PRA Learner).*

Learners reported that the way the course was delivered by the radio trainer had a big impact on their self-esteem as they felt the trainer had treated them as equals and 'not like a kid' and they felt they had been able to engage in a more 'adult to adult kind of relationship', which they liked and appreciated (PRA Learners). Additionally, learners' self-esteem was reported as responding positively to being provided with the opportunity to interview individuals, who they saw as 'holding all the power' (PRA Learner), members of the SMT:

*'I think in here the governors, they're the top of the chain so having them come to us and have to answer our questions- that just makes you feel good- you know' (PRA Learner).*

*'[Interviewing the governor] yeah, it felt good. I felt like I dealt with it well' (PRA Learner).*

Learners reported that their self-esteem was also affected by the Master Classes, where radio professionals visited and delivered work shops with them. Again, learners reported feeling good about the way the external visitors spoke 'to us, with respect- the same as we gave them- not down to us' (PRA Learner).

It was also reported by many learners that their enthusiasm for engaging in something they enjoy was infectious amongst the rest of the prison population:

*'It makes you feel better when you go to the wing because everyone on the wing says "You've come back and you're hyperactive", that's all because I've just been like doing something that I enjoy all day. So yeah, it's made me feel better about myself all round really' (PRA Learner).*

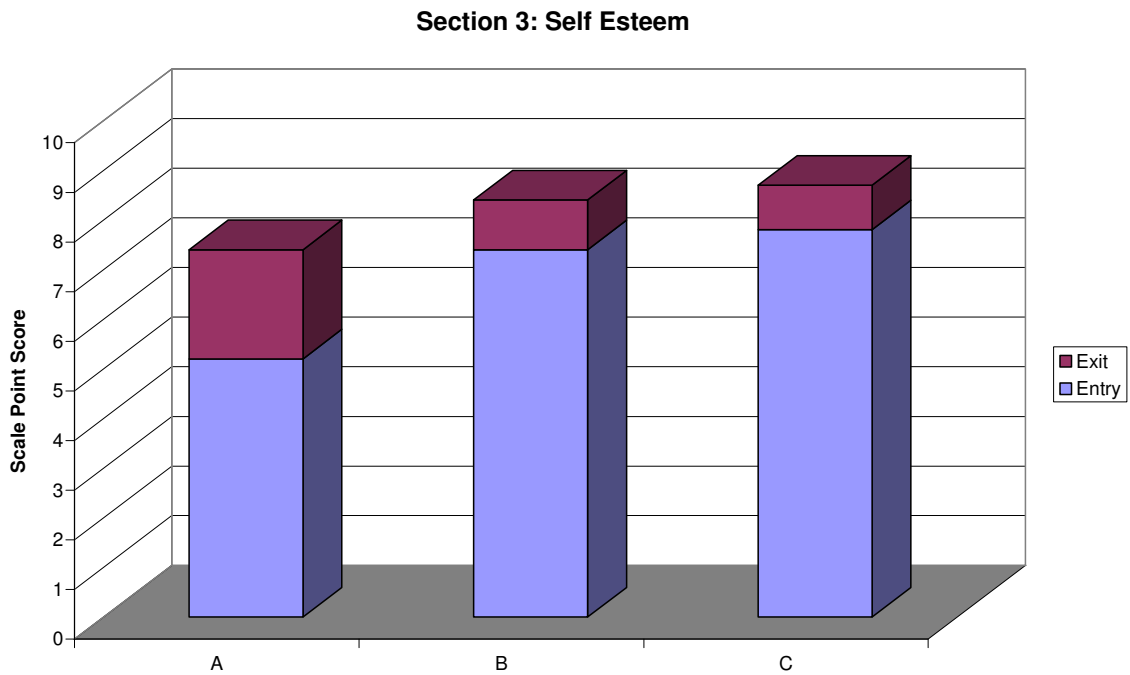
Others felt that the effects were more personal as 'having done this it has raised my self-esteem and I belief in myself that I can do something positive' (PRA Learner). Many felt that accessing the course had opened the doors to their potential:

*'It gives you more strength within yourself to know that you can do better and you know that even in prison it's not like you're down. You know there*

*is someone who will come and help you release that potential that is in yourself' (PRA Learner).*

The results from the scale data collected at the outset of the course and at its completion are shown in figure 5.3.1 below. The men were asked to rate their levels of the following (see Appendix 4 for detail).

Fig 5.3.1 Self-Esteem



The graph illustrates that learners felt pride on their successful completion of the radio training course. The graph shows that the men's pride in their achievements increased from starting the course, when they scored on average 4.5, to completing it, which increased over 2 scale points higher. Question B was more specific, relating to levels of how much they respected themselves. On completion, learners scored themselves on average a score point higher on the scale. The third question (C) asked the men how they scored for respecting others. Initially, on average the learners scored this question at just over 7, which rose by over a point by the end of the course. This data shows that the most significant increase in the self-esteem levels of the learners related to their feelings of pride in their own achievements.

These results illustrate that engaging in the radio training course has affected positive shifts in the learners self esteem. If taken along side the results from the previous confidence section, these findings reinforce the idea that having a positive engagement with education can result in learners feeling more confident in their own abilities and self-perception, thereby increasing self-esteem. As the following comments suggest, the effects of positive shifts in self-esteem can have long lasting and often life changing outcomes beyond the initial project engagement:

*'Hard-to-reach people are often frightened – frightened off by reading, writing, arithmetic, sitting down and taking tests and exams, that sort of thing. This project is about developing the individual and giving the individual confidence, more self-esteem and more awareness of what they are capable of. So its confidence building, it motivates them and their self-esteem comes up and the belief in learning can then extend into other areas'* (LSC Representative).

#### **5.4 Radio Training as a Method of Focussing on ETE Pathways**

Increased levels of confidence regarding future ETE pathways were recorded amongst the learners who participated in the Radio Taster Course and can be taken as a key indicator of its positive impact (see Fig. 5.4.1 below). Evidence indicating learners views on their ETE pathways were explored through their exit interview comments. Additionally, staff and provider interviews and the results from the quantitative scale data completed by the learners on entry and exit from the radio training course have also been included (see Appendix 3 and 4).

Many of the learners identified the transferability of the specific skills they had learned or refreshed on the radio training to any work place setting:

*'In this day and age you need computer skills, no matter how basic they may be'* (PRA Learner).

*'I'd say my reading and my spelling's improved. The computer had helped with that too; I've been learning how to spell a bit better as well on there. That's good for work anywhere'* (PRA Learner).

The radio training was however designed to embed softer skills, along with basic skills to ensure learners were exposed to opportunities which emulated a working environment as much as possible. Learners were expected to turn up on time and complete set tasks to deadlines. These skills are deemed as important in the workplace as qualifications are, a point SMT's were well aware of:

*'To me is that there's an assumption that what that means is giving them qualifications which employers will recognise when in actual fact there's a whole raft of softer skills which employers don't have to see a certificate in but they do surely expect you to have. All of the stuff like punctuality, deadline meeting, being able to accept constructive criticism – that's a huge problem for our population'* (Head of Learning and Skills).

*'Employers are happy to take people who need vocational qualifications because employers can train them vocationally, but what they can't do is train people to turn up on time, be enthusiastic, work as part of a team and just get on with stuff. So if we can accredit those types of softer skills and communication skills I think that would be the way forward really'* (Head of Reducing Re-Offending).

An additional component of the course, the career pathways element, also ensured that learners had the opportunity to examine their own aspirations

regarding ETE prospects. The radio trainer confirmed that many learners had not really given this area much thought previously. The learners responded well to this exercise and the majority reported associating ETE options as a way of remaining out of prison:

*'Actually it's opened my mind up and it's made me think more about a plan, my plan for staying out of here'* (PRA Learner).

This is a connection that many in the prison service have been attempting to make for those they care for:

*'You have to get them to make the link- that improving their skills in employability terms would help them to avoid being brought back'*  
(Head of Learning and Skills).

These views extended to education and training, rather than going directly into employment for many of the learners. In some cases entering education in the prison was due to the length of their sentence, however many interviewed were actively trying to sign up for more education classes as soon as they had finished the taster sessions. Prison staff felt that these learners had had a 'good, positive learning experience' (SMT) which would encourage these learners to continue as:

*'The best thing for me – is seeing the distance travelled in a very short space of time and seeing what you can actually do with people when you've got a small group and something that they're engaged in'*  
(Head of Re-Offending).

Attendees at the Celebration Event were also affected by the enthusiasm they witnessed as learners got up to talk about their experiences of the Radio Taster Course and envisaged that this would encourage them in the future:

*'They've taken a course they knew nothing about or had no experience of working in and have been successful. What that can lead to is "Well I was okay at that. I've done well at that. Now I can try something else that maybe will lead to employment – something I hadn't thought of. I'll take some more skills, gain some more skills in other areas." So I think it ripens the belief that "I can achieve and I can do different and other things that I've never tried before." So I think for education, training and employment-wise it will just make the employment prospects greater. Education-wise it'll make them think that they can achieve and they will look for other courses now'* (LSC Representative).

The learners reinforced this view, as many reported that engaging with the radio training, for them meant that:

*'It opens your views and horizons to other things I'd not thought of before. Education is a good thing, I can see the point of it now'* (PRA Learner).

Further, learners acknowledged that they had begun to think seriously about what to do next, not just about their ETE prospects, but about their lives:



'I think in a certain respect it's widened not just my employment choices, but my life choices too. I've got a chosen career path, I'm moving towards finance, but I'd also love to do something part-time in radio and if that was community radio then I'd feel I was giving some of my spare time to the community too' (PRA Learner).

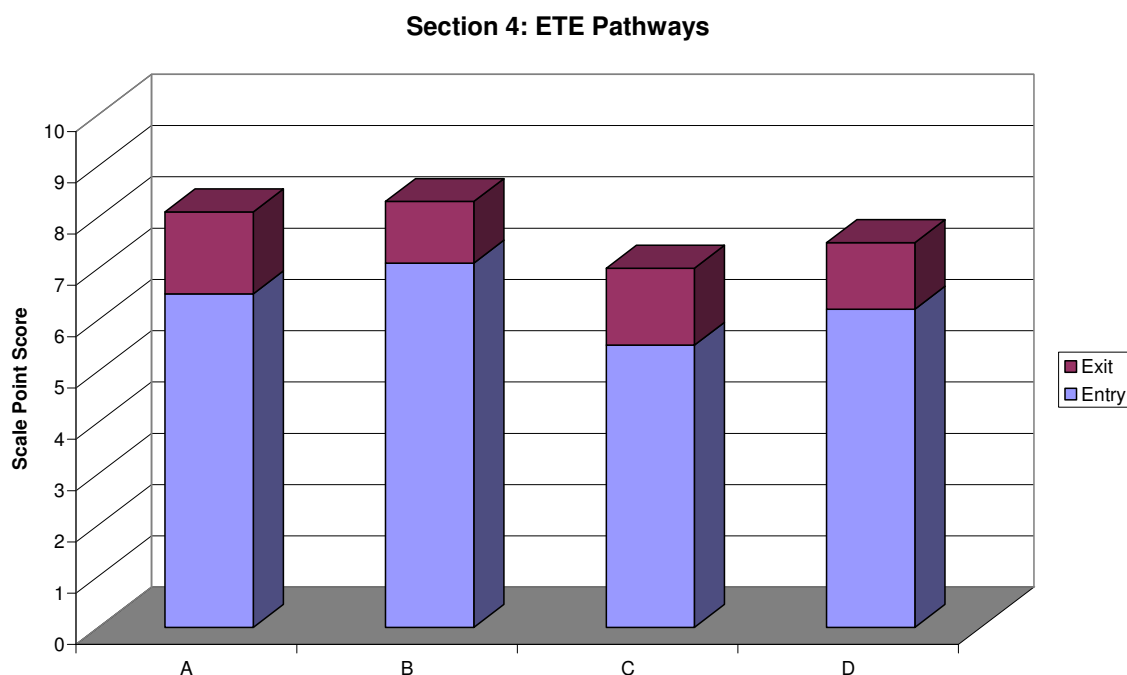
This affect of the course on people engaging with it was also picked up as a theme by attendees at the Celebration event, who pointed out the potential of running radio training in terms of learners feeling more involved and engaged in the society they live in:

*'They've learned to be part of a team, being respectful of other people and their ideas and thoughts and their actions. There is a need to develop lots of different types of skills if you want to interact and become more involved in mainstream society' (LSC Representative).*

The results of the scale data inserted below illustrate that the learners all felt more equipped for their future ETE choices and felt more employable on successful completion of the radio training course. Further, learners felt that despite having a criminal record, their having completed the course also helped them feel more employable post-release. One Learner commented that although he worried about getting a job on release with his record, he felt that employers would be impressed that he had not 'lay around doing nothing whilst inside' (PRA Learner).

The results from the scale data collected at the outset of the course and at its completion are shown in figure 5.4.1 below. The men were asked to rate their levels of employment related skills and potential employability (see Appendix 4 for detail).

Fig 5.4.1 Employment, Education and Training



The first statement (A) related to learners' organisational skills. The graph shows that the learners felt more organised on completion of the course as their average scores rose from just under 6 to just over 8 on the scale points. Statement B related to specific skills needed when performing a specific task. Again, the learner's scores rose over a scale point in this question on completion of the course. The third statement (C) resulted in learners reflecting on how employable they felt. On completion of the course, the learners average score rose from just over 5 to nearly 7 on the scale. Learners responded to statement D, asking about their confidence about engaging with ETE post-release. Here learners scale points went up by over a scale point on average on completion of the course. The data show that learners felt more capable to engage with ETE after they had engaged with the radio training. Learners also demonstrate that they felt more employable and more confident concerning gaining ETE choices post engagement with the radio training project.

This section of the report has illustrated the positive effects of engaging with the West Midlands' Prison Radio Taster Project has had on the learners involved. The learners have been shown to feel more confident, as feeling that their basic skills have improved, their self-esteem has risen and they feel more confident about their ETE pathways post-release.

These findings provide support for radio training as being a successful method for drawing hard-to-reach prisoners into education and as an effective educational tool for embedding basic and employment-related skills. The learners reported positive effects on their social skills as they built up positive relationships within the group and with delivery staff. The radio training has proved to be a model through which successful prisoner engagement can be achieved, along with the potential influence to change people's lives. Learners felt empowered by the ways in which

they communicated effectively for themselves as well as representing the prison community. The radio training course additionally ensured an opportunity was created for learners to focus on employment pathways as well as providing an opportunity for inmates to reflect on their criminal behaviour.

## Chapter Six: Strategic Prison Radio Training Outcomes and Future Directions

---

The findings presented here concern the outcomes and strategic future of radio training in prison and are drawn from the semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders and PRA learners, where appropriate. One of the wider objectives of the West Midlands' radio training initiative was to examine the potential for sustainability of radio training in the Prison Service and raise awareness of and interest in utilising radio training as a resource through which basic skills can be improved.

### 6.1 Providing an Innovative and Positive Educational Experience

The potential for using radio training across the prison estate was a significant theme which came out of the interview data. Many stakeholders felt that radio had huge potential to be utilised within the existing prison education remit:

*'It's about looking at how our radio industries can actually encourage people to come into learning and training, which obviously is key to this kind of project. There's kind of a balance between the kind of social gain element of it, but also actually learning practical industry skills that could potentially be taken forward into the industry'* (Skills Sector Council Representative).

*'I think it's something different for them to get their teeth into. I think an actual prison radio where they have their own prison radio station and prisoners run it would be a good way to go'* (Prison Officer).

Stakeholders from within the prison sector acknowledged the potential that radio training courses could have on engaging hard to reach offenders:

*'The [education] remit here is to make as much as we can both of certificates and gaining employability skills. So radio is both of those and with the added bonus that it is exciting, interesting and something different'* (SMT Representative).

*'I'd say about 80% of our learners – haven't been to school or attended very sporadically, so they haven't had a good educational experience- the radio training- gets them into education in the first place'* (Prison Education Provider Representative).

Indeed, many stakeholders saw radio training as the ideal 'hook' with which to encourage hard-to-reach learners back into ETE:

*'They thought, you know, it was all going to be about music and I think that probably pulls them in for starters and then when you've got them you can actually move them away from the music into the other things'* (Education Provider).

Stakeholders also spoke about radio training as ideal as a discreet way to literacy, numeracy and IT skills that could reduce the stigma attached to learning basic skills:

*'If I was to go round the wings now and said to prisoners "Do you want to engage in a basic IT course?" or would you like to be involved in the prison radio project?" then I would argue then that probably 90% of prisoners would take it up' (SMT).*

*'A lot of the blokes in here maybe like chatting and like music and it's a way of getting them hooked into something and almost they're communicating and raising their communication levels without almost really realising that they're doing education' (Head of Reducing Re-Offending).*

These views were reinforced through the interviews with PRA learners. The majority of PRA learners reported having had a disruptive experience at school, with many experiencing periods of exclusion. Some PRA learners reported that they had left secondary education with few or no qualifications. However, the learners reflected that engaging with the radio training had been a much more positive educational experience on the radio training course. They reported that they had engaged in and enjoyed the course more than the more apparently non-practical subjects taken at school. There was also a feeling amongst the learners that the approach to teaching the radio course was better compared to traditional 'school type' lessons, the key benefits of the radio course delivery were reported as being that the learners:

- felt that they were shown more respect
- preferred the fact that the course is practical based
- felt that the radio trainer treated them like adults and equals

Many prison staff with direct involvement of the delivery of the radio training stated that their belief that the selection of a radio trainer was one of the key critical success factors of the delivery of the West Midland's project:

*'The success of this is down to the personality of the people who've delivered this course because if you didn't get somebody who was innovative and exciting and dynamic it could have all gone a very different way' (Education Provider).*

As further evidence of prison staff commitment to this critical success factor, the radio trainer delivering the West Midland's Radio Taster sessions has been offered radio training posts at three of the prison's in which this project has been delivered.

*'We've got a lot of disengaged learners, we've got a lot of learners who've been arrested in their skill development at actually some quite surprisingly early ages. So naturally anything that enables us to monopolise their interest or capitalise on their interest in things like broadcasting / the making of music through technology and all of that is an absolute gift' (Head of Learning and Skills and Regimes)*

## 6.2 Increasing Beneficiary Numbers of Prison Radio

Many of the stakeholders acknowledged that radio training has the potential to work in the prison sector for all its inmates and the people who work there also.

*'I think there's a great opportunity here to influence a lot of people other than just the small group that are on the course'*  
(Learning and Skills Council Representative).

As previously mentioned some of the CD Broadcasts are already being used in some of the prisons. However, some Regional and National stakeholders felt that this issue needed to be clarified and radio in prison had to ensure its future direction and motivations strategically clear for two reasons. Firstly, because from the employment, training and education perspective, a lot of resources would need to be invested in a relatively small number of people if the only beneficiaries of the programme are those who engage directly with the training. It was suggested that a way forward on this issue would be for radio in prison to specifically link their agenda to government and NOMS around ETE and reducing re-offending. One of the PRA's underpinning objectives is to utilise radio for the benefit of the whole prison population and they will continue to work in the prison service on developing a national radio network.

Second, some stakeholders felt that there was an apparent tension between PRA providing radio training to embed basic skills and developing a national prison radio network. Stakeholders however, did acknowledge that these two agendas are not mutually exclusive. Strategic prison staff reported that the PRA's engagement with the prison service was welcomed as working towards using radio training to support current education provision and to create content that will be appropriate for a national audience. It is important for PRA to ensure that the benefits of working towards both of their objectives are transparent to senior prison service staff.

## 6.3 Monitoring and Recording Basic Skill Development

A further view from the prison service in terms of improving the profile of radio training to embed basic skills in the prison service was also highlighted as introducing a way in which the benefits could be 'recorded somehow, because it's not actually recorded well at the moment' (Education Provider). This view was a common theme regarding potential improvements to the radio training which would ensure their profile remained high in the prison service. However, these changes may need to be given ample thought, as introducing structured monitoring procedures would entail the radio training as being taken into the education remit more fully, while some prison staff felt that this may not be the best way:

*'I think it'd be more valuable to actually sell it as a stand-alone project to engage people because if they see it as an annexe of education they're less likely to engage in it in the first place is my view. I'll give you an example. Prisoner induction used to be up in the education complex and trying to get prisoners to participate in that was difficult because they'd see it as part of education. And again that's offenders with low, literacy and*

*numeracy skills, who has had issues with learning in the past and see it as a gremlin sitting on their shoulder. When prisoner induction was moved elsewhere, you know, the engagement went through the roof' (SMT).*

Issues around the independence of radio training from mainstream prison education and any potential introduction of standard monitoring procedures may benefit from some further consideration by the PRA Executive.

#### **6.4 Outcomes for the Prison's Hosting the Radio Training**

Three out of the four prisons in which the PRA project took place are taking radio training forward enthusiastically for their residents.

*'The Director of City College Manchester has actually asked us that if the prison radio project is available that she would like City College to be involved with it' (Education Provider).*

*'At the moment we're in the throws of reviewing CVs and looking for a tutor which we will employ to carry it on. We're also going to link it in with a music technology course because the qualifications are very similar and the qualification that they're actually doing in this taster will be a core unit which is also in music technology, so we've then provided a link between the two. There are ample routes for progression within both courses whether they want to concentrate on production and sound production or move into broadcasting' (Education Provider).*

HMP Swinfen Hall have a permanent radio station with which they intend to begin NCFE Level's 1 and 2 for Radio Production with the support of Derby College. HMP Brockhill indicated their intention to adopt radio training, however due to the current integration of HMP Brockhill with 2 other prisons in the area to become HMP Redditch, these plans are currently on hold. Education staff at HMP Long Lartin are developing a media workshop and hope to begin delivering radio training courses at the end of 2008. Finally, HMP Brinsford are currently building a vocational employment focussed suite which will be equipped with a radio station. Derby College are working at HMP Brinsford to place radio training into core curriculum.

This chapter has provided evidence to illustrate that the West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project has succeeded in raising the awareness of the potential for radio training to support the embedding of basic skills education in the prison service. The project has been shown to have resulted in debates among prison SMT's who overwhelmingly felt radio training had been shown to improve confidence and communication skills. Three of the four establishments in which the project ran are taking radio training forward within their existing educational provision, which is the most explicit example of the prison service's commitment to the idea that radio training has the potential to be sustainable as a means of embedding basic skills within the present prison education remit.

## **Chapter Seven: Critical Success Factors and Mainstreaming Prison Radio Training**

---

### **7.1 Summary**

The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project has delivered five of the six two week training sessions successfully at four prisons. A radio-training course has been developed for project delivery in the prison sector. A total of 29 PRA learners have engaged with the radio training course. Twenty-five of the twenty nine PRA learners who engaged in the radio training course achieved an NCFE Level 1 Award 'Introducing Radio Production', which is equivalent to an NVQ Level One qualification. Three PRA learners were early leavers and one learner did not complete the appropriate course work required for the Level 1 qualification. An awards event was held at the end of course delivery in each establishment.

This evaluation report contains data regarding the positive impacts on learner's confidence, basic skills, self-esteem and potential ETE pathways. Details of the development and set up processes involved in the West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project have been evaluated along with the projects' impact and effectiveness as a whole. The report has identified the critical success factors of the West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project and presented the key findings concerning the objective of raising awareness of the potential of radio training in the prison service. Best practice points taken directly from the experience of project delivery have also been explored and presented. Finally, this report has communicated what, according to senior strategic prison service staff, strategic developments could be considered by the PRA as an organisation to inform and enhance their future interactions with the prison service.

### **7.2 Critical Success Factors**

The evaluation identified the following critical success factors of the West Midland's Prison Radio Taster Project:

- The project benefited from utilising PRA's existing prison contacts in the West Midlands and their wealth of knowledge and experience of working in the prison sector
- The project benefited from the engagement of key prison staff from Heads of Learning and Skills, Heads of Regimes and Reducing Re-Offending teams who were committed to supporting the project
- The engagement of enthusiastic delivery staff that were committed to motivating learners to fulfil their potential
- A training course that was designed specifically to embed basic skill development and focused on ETE pathways
- A training course that was delivered in a practical and supportive way so that learners felt valued as 'equals' and were 'not spoken down to'



### **7.3 Raising Awareness of Prison Radio Training**

The evaluation identified the following key findings with regard to the project's wider objective of raising radio training's profile within the prison service:

- The project successfully raised awareness of and interest in utilising radio training as a resource through which basic skills can be improved
- The project resulted in a debate among prison Senior Management Teams (SMT) who overwhelmingly felt radio training had been shown to improve confidence and communication skills
- Three of the four establishments in which the project ran are taking radio training forward within their existing educational provision

### **7.4 Best Practice Learning Points**

The evaluation identified the following best practice learning points from the delivery of the radio training project for dissemination:

- Projects accessing the prison service must be negotiated from the beginning with all the key staff from the prison, which ultimately includes members of security
- Projects working in the prison sector require the support of a named, key prison staff member with whom the radio trainer can liaise
- Different recruitment approaches need to be employed at different institutions which have different ways of working
- Each prison has a different inmate profile, any radio training course needs to be flexible enough to be tailored to these different training needs

### **7.5 Mainstreaming Prison Radio Training**

The evaluation identified the following points with regard to the potential of mainstreaming radio training provision in the prison sector:

- Senior prison service staff recognise the potential to embed formal basic skills accreditation through prison radio training programmes
- Strategic senior prison service staff realised the potential of utilising audio for a national audience and welcomes the PRA's intention to work in the prison service on developing a national network
- Strategic senior prison service staff reported that the future direction of PRA's engagement with the prison service was welcomed. The PRA are working towards using radio training to support current prison education provision. This includes creating programmes that deliver basic skills and also create radio content that will be appropriate for a national audience

## Appendix 1: PRA West Midlands Project: PRA Staff Interview Schedule

---

- Can you just give me your job title for the tape please?
- Can you clarify your role in the project for me and give me a brief overview of what it involves?
- When were you appointed?
- What attracted you to the role?
  
- What were the start and end dates of this project? Have there been any changes/ extensions to the original time scales?
- In what ways do you see this project as fitting into PRA objectives?
- Can you describe the contribution from your partners during the development and delivery phases of this project?
- Do you have regular meetings with partners or have a management committee? How often have you meet?
- Has a West Midland's section been added to the PRA web site?
  
- What was upper most in your mind when designing the course content?
- Can you 'draw' the tasks/activities you have to do before project delivery to learners please?
  
- Who is responsible for recruiting learners to the project?
- How do you feel the recruitment to the project has been handled?
- What has been the prison's reception to you and the project?
- Do you feel the project has succeeded in:
  - 1) Engaging disaffected learners?
  - 2) Enhancing their basic skills?
  - 3) Encouraging them to think about employment pathways (piece?)
- What has been the most challenging thing about running/ managing this project? Has this been different/ same in each prison?
- What has been the most rewarding thing about this project? Has this been the same/ different in each prison?
- What do you feel have been the essential elements needed to ensure a successful and productive delivery of radio training in prison?
  
- What do you feel is the potential for using radio training to embed basic skills and enhance employability?
- What responses have you received from each SMT regarding the potential for using radio training to embed basic skills and enhance employability in prison?
- What do you think is the potential for this project to be rolled-out across other prisons and what do you think it would look like?

## **Appendix 2: PRA West Midland's Project: Prison-Based Staff Evaluation Interview**

---

- For the tape can you just give me your job title and the name of the organisation you represent please?
- Can you just outline your involvement in this scheme? How did you hear about it? Who approached you? How were you approached?
- How do you think the project has gone in terms of the following:
  - Engaging educationally hard-to-reach offenders
  - Enhancing their basic skills and communication skills
  - Encouraging them to think about potential ETE pathways
- Are there any ways in which you think the project could be improved/enhanced to fit/ compliment existing prison education provision?
- What do you think is the potential for using radio training in prisons as a tool for embedding basic skills in the prison environment?
- After seeing what the men have been up to today- what do you feel about what they've achieved?
- What element/s of the radio-training course is best flagged up by PRA to 'pitch' radio training as a good option at the Prison Governors/ Education?
- What are your more general thoughts about how radio training could be developed in the prison sector? What do think this would need
- What would you say was the best things about this project in your opinion?
- What would you say is the biggest challenge to success of projects such as these?

That is all my questions- have I missed anything or is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you for speaking for me today.

## Appendix 3: West Midlands Project: Evaluation Self-Report Scale

---

### West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project

#### Evaluation Self-Report Scale

To be completed on entry and exit from radio training course

Date of entry interview:

Date of exit interview:

Please could you complete the following numbered ratings scale, with 0 meaning 'no or not at all' and 10 meaning 'very or extremely'.

#### Section 1: Confidence

a) How confident a person are you?



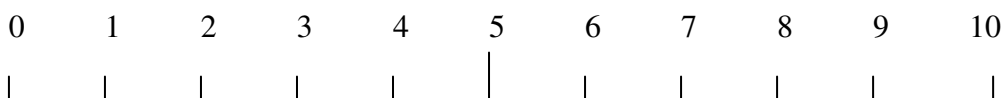
b) How confident do you feel about speaking up in a group?



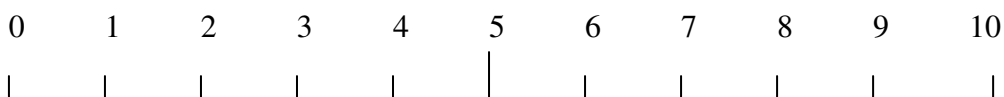
c) How confident do you feel about challenging other people's views in a group?



d) How confident do you feel about doing a presentation in front of other people?

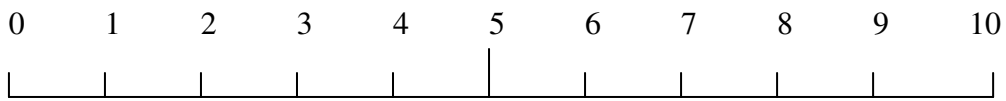


e) How confident do you feel about having your voice taped?

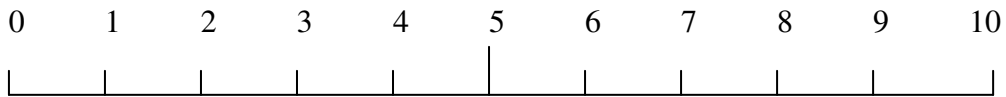


**Section 2: Skills**

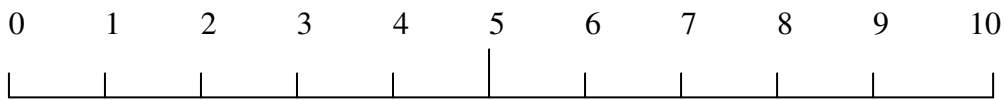
a) How comfortable do you feel about working in a team?



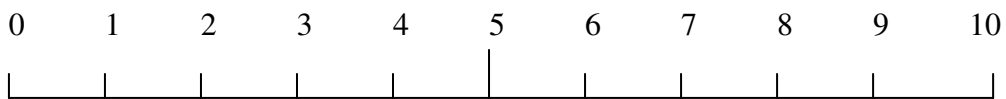
b) How would you rate your written skills?



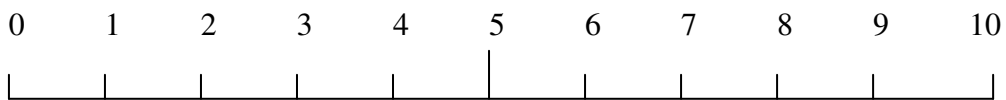
c) How would you rate your spoken communication skills?



d) How would you rate your listening skills?



e) How would you rate your confidence with numbers?

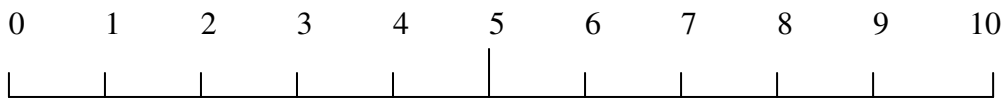


f) How would you rate your computer skills?

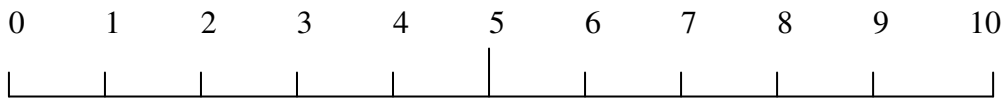


**Section 3: Self-esteem**

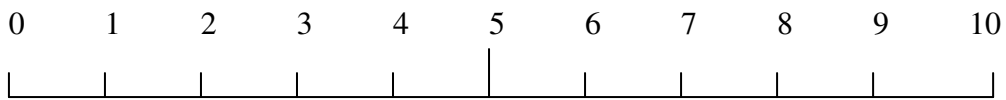
a) How proud of your life-achievements are you?



b) To what extent do you respect yourself?

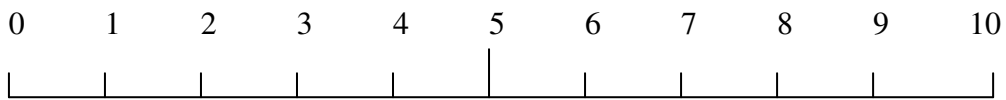


c) To what extent do you respect others?

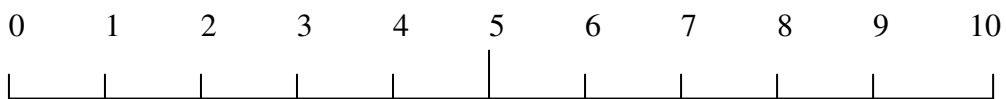


**Section 4: Employment**

a) How organised are you?



b) How organised are you when you have a task to perform?



c) How employable do you feel you are currently?



d) How confident do you feel about getting a job/training/education post-release?



## **Appendix 4: West Midland's Project: Learner Exit Evaluation Interview**

---

### **Scale data**

- Looking at the scale- do any of these changes surprise you?
- To what extent do you think any of these changes can be attributed to attending the radio training course?

### **Referral/ partnerships**

- How did you find out about the radio taster project?
- What did you expect/ hope to get out of it?

### **Course content**

- How did you find the course? Did you enjoy it?
- What topic did you choose to do for your audio-piece?
- How did you get on with the computer side of the course?
- What has been the best thing for you about attending this course?
- What has been the most challenging thing for you about attending this course?
- Has attending this course affected your employment choices in any way?
- Do you think the course could be improved? In what ways?

### **Skills**

- Do you feel your communication skills have improved having attended this course (reading, writing, listening and speaking)?
- Do you feel attending this course has effected your confidence in any way?
- On the course, you've done the planning and writing of scripts and written a journal: Do you feel any of your literacy skills have improved?

### **Educational expectations**

- How would you describe your previous experiences of education?
- Has attending this radio course been a different educational experience than that?
- Have you enjoyed the way this course has been delivered? (Interactive and not class-room based?)
- Have you done other courses in prison?
- Having successfully completed this course, has it inspired you do more courses in prison?

### **Potential future of project**

- Do you think this course would work in other prisons? Why?
- Would you consider attending any other courses laid on around radio production? Why?
- Would you want to get involved if the prison started up a Radio Station?

### **To close**

- Are there any areas you think I've missed?
- Is there anything your like to add?

Congratulations on passing the radio training course, I hope you enjoy the celebration today and best of luck in the future!



## Appendix 5: PRA Course Feedback Sheet

---

### Prison

### Radio Association

### Radio Course Feedback

Name:

Prison Number:

Course:

Finish Date:

Please rate the following statements using a 1 - 5 scale. Circle your responses.

<b>1 Strongly agree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>3 Undecided</b>	<b>4 Agree</b>	<b>5 Strongly Agree</b>	
The course sections were adequately covered	1	2	3	4	5
The course was well organised	1	2	3	4	5
I was given regular feedback and informed about my progress	1	2	3	4	5
Deadlines were clearly defined	1	2	3	4	5
I had enough time to finish my assignments	1	2	3	4	5
The trainers' explanations were clear	1	2	3	4	5
I was encouraged to participate	1	2	3	4	5
The training room was safe and welcoming	1	2	3	4	5
The computers were in working order, so I could do my work	1	2	3	4	5
Equipment problems were addressed promptly	1	2	3	4	5
I received adequate support to complete the course	1	2	3	4	5
This course met or exceeded my expectations	1	2	3	4	5

General Comments/ Feedback:

## Appendix 6: NCFE Radio Skills Level One Course Outline

### Week One:

Day	Morning 9.15 till 11.30	Afternoon 14.15 till 16.30	Homework
1: Introduction day	Course Basics, PRA goals & aims. Overview of radio, power point presentation & questions	Ice breaker, interviewing in pairs Course timetable-master classes, celebration day etc. Journals and constructing portfolio folders	Read the PRA basics handout and think about DJ/broadcasting name
2: Edi Rolls recording & Adobe 2 editing	Tutor Group is split into two halves Group One Edi Roll Interviews Group Two Adobe Audition Basics Reverse group activities	Explain the need to plan, script and record Potential discussion topics for both group and individual projects Individual IV BBC Master Class next week	Write down some suitable discussion subjects
3: Planning and Scripting an IV	Group 1 - On laptops scripting IV questions & planning IV Group 2 – Editing audio gathered on Day 2	Group 2 – Scripting & Editing IV & Questions Group 1 - Editing practise audio gathered on Day 2 Closedown discussion on personal IV's	Finalise questions for IV & script work and think about and plan your IV for tomorrow
4: Interview recording and edit session	Individually Interview guest and record IV Introduction to Vox Pops Personal portfolio work or discussion subject	All students editing their individual audio pieces on Adobe 2 Vote on final discussion subject for BBC Master Class	Think about some good questions for vox pops
5: Portfolio completion and Polishing Audio Interviews	Learning to use a digital time line to add music tracks to Interviews Finishing touches to their personal portfolio work	BBC Master Class Interview with experienced industry professional. A question and answer session and prep for the group discussion work to follow	

### Week Two:

Day	Morning 9.15 till 11.30	Afternoon 14.15 till 16.30	Homework
6: Where do we go from here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback exchange following BBC Master Class</li> <li>Group activity - Listening to each student's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss &amp; prepare for Thursday's Celebration event and Tuesday's CSV Master Class</li> </ul>	

	work in a constructive way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group activity – Last of the Student audio interview's to hear</li> <li>• Talking about personal strengths</li> </ul>	
7: CSV Master Class & Discussion Group Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSV guest visits to discuss outside volunteering opportunities and potential radio work placements</li> <li>• Interview CSV guest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSV IV is edited by students</li> <li>• Overview on the role of news in radio</li> <li>• Focus on group discussion session planned for second BBC Master Class. Editing exercise &amp; Journals</li> </ul>	Think about three lines of today's prison news and how you could best deliver it.
8: What's Already Been Achieved? & BBC Master Class Discussion Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select Radio Lockdown Newsreader</li> <li>• Tomorrow's Celebration Day</li> <li>• Final Prep for this afternoon's guest</li> <li>• Editing, fine tuning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBC Master Class &amp; discussion group</li> <li>• Journals</li> </ul>	Think of a few lines that describe what you've achieved so far on the Radio Skills Level One course
9: Celebration Event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students to edit broadcast at Celebration event</li> <li>• Plan, write, script and record today's prison news</li> <li>• Students record and edit a Vox pop on radio training</li> <li>• Penultimate journals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebration Event</li> </ul>	
10: Close down and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear up office space</li> <li>• Discussion: What did I get out the course</li> <li>• What now?</li> </ul>		

## Appendix 7: Demographic Targets

---

Fig 4.1 District/ Location Targets

District/ location	Target	Achieved
Staffordshire	5	6
Black Country	5	6
Hereford, Worcester and Shropshire	20	17
Total	30	29

Fig. 4.2 Age Targets

Age groups	Target	Achieved
Young people 16-19	15	3
Adults 20-24	5	13
Adults 25-49	5	13
Adults 50+	5	0
Total	30	29

Fig. 4.3 Ethnicity Targets

Ethnicity	Target	Achieved
White British	11	8
White other	0	1
Mixed other	3	6
Asian or Asian British Indian	3	3
Asian or Asian British Other	0	7
Black or black British Caribbean	4	2
Black or black British African	4	1
Other	3	1
Unknown	2	0
Total	30	29

Fig. 4.4 Unemployment Length/Status

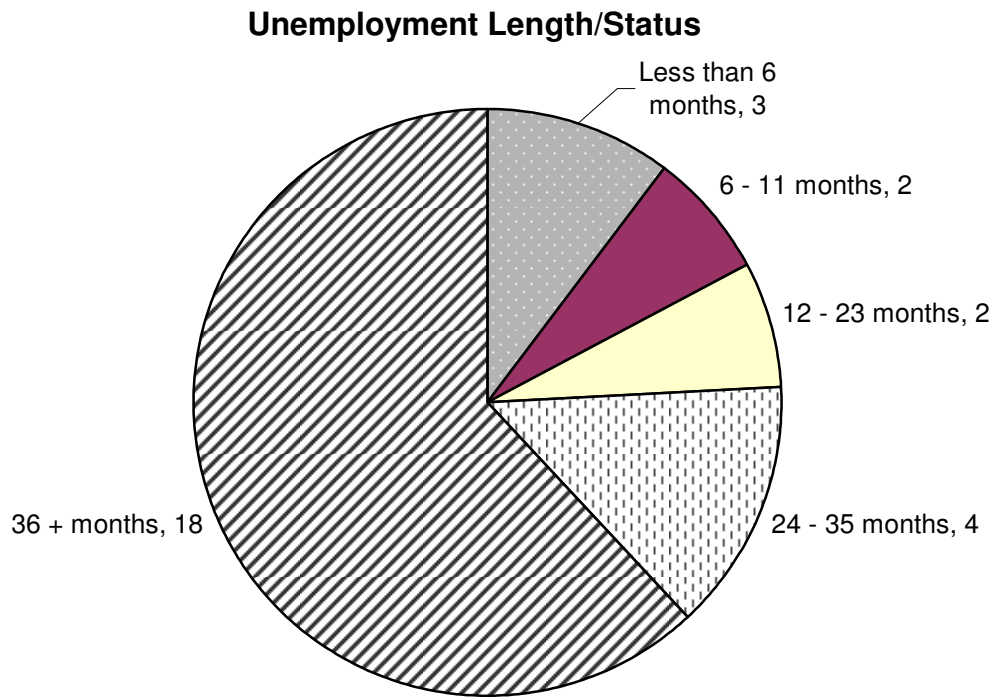


Fig. 4.5 Educational Attainment pre-Radio Training

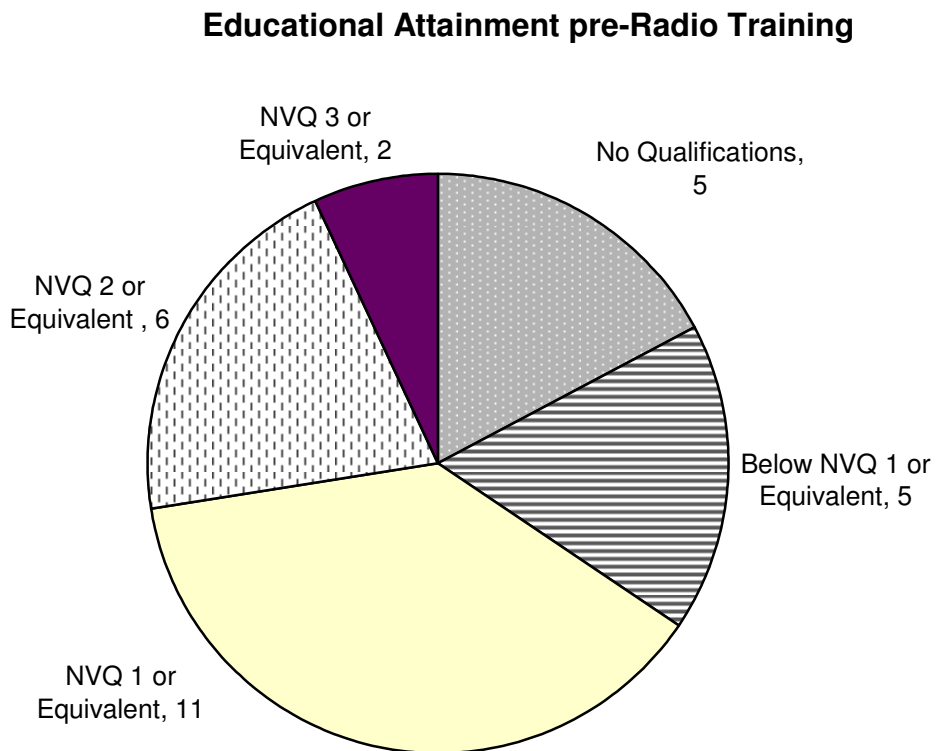
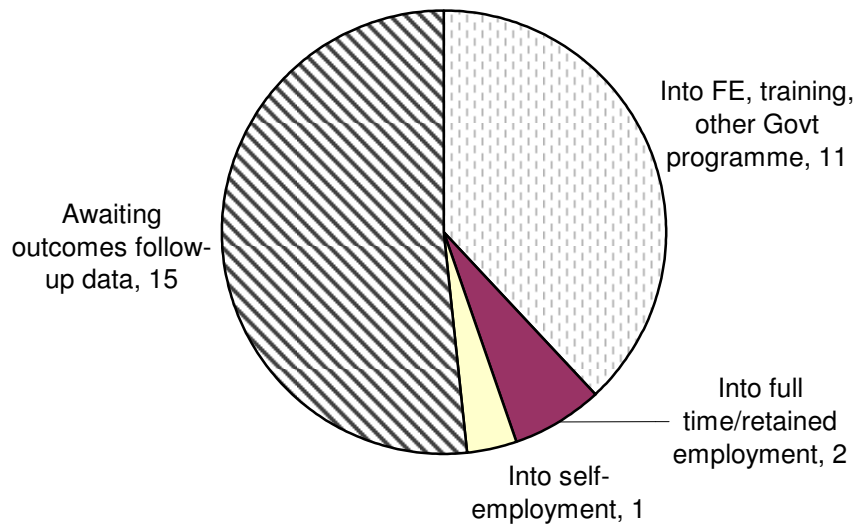


Fig. 4.6 ETE Outcomes for PRA Learners

### ETE Outcomes for PRA Learners



# Sheffield Hallam University

*An Evaluation of the Prison Radio Association's Activity Final Report Year 1 The West Midlands Prison Radio Taster Project*

WILKINSON, Katherine <<http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7708-1775>> and DAVIDSON, Joanna

Available from the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/7051/>

## **Copyright and re-use policy**

Please visit <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/7051/> and <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html> for further details about copyright and re-use permissions.